

**UNWIHT: SHIFTING BOUNDARIES OF HUMANITY IN EARLY  
MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

by

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*Dedicated to my parents, who made this journey possible in a million ways; to my husband, who came with me on the journey; and to Asher and Rowan for believing Mommy could write her book. I am more grateful than words can express. I love you.*

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## ABSTRACT

While the field of Monster Studies has proliferated across disciplines, particularly in relation to studies of the medieval period, often Early Middle English literature has been ignored. In some ways, this is sensible, since the term “monster” is not attested in English until Chaucer’s use of it in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century in *The Canterbury Tales*. However, nonhuman beings that might otherwise have been categorized as monsters are still present in the literature. Building on the idea of Hughes’ “non-human human beings” and Mittman’s and Heng’s reconceptualization of race and the “monstrous races,” I propose a new term: nonhuman person. I propose three criteria for determining if a particular literary being falls in this category. I use literary analysis to determine if each criterion is met. Then I examine the lexical choices made to identify and describe each of these nonhuman persons in two sample texts from each rough time period in the language: *The Wonders of the East* and *Beowulf* for Old English; *The Owl and the Nightingale* and Layamon’s *Brut* for Early Middle English; and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Canterbury Tales* for Late Middle English. Finally, I examine the shifts in the lexicon over time in order to examine how English re-envisioned the nonhuman person from the Old English period up through Chaucer’s use of “monster” in his *Tales*.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Monsters exist at social boundaries, serving the cultural purpose of reinforcing what is acceptable by highlighting those things that exist beyond. In other words, who or what gets classified as a monster demonstrates much about the culture that imposes the classification.<sup>1</sup> Since Tolkien's insistence on the centrality of the monsters in *Beowulf*,<sup>2</sup> and through the last 27 years since Cohen published his "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)"<sup>3</sup> monster studies have proliferated in medieval literature. However, no one has made specific examination of nonhumans in English vernacular literature from the period following the Norman conquest up through the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, more commonly known as the Early Middle English period. This constitutes a 250-year gap that encompasses a cascade of linguistic and cultural changes, including several crusades, the expulsion of Jews from England, and the Black Death.

So far, there have been two main categories of studies regarding the monstrous in the English Middle Ages. One has depended on Latin texts that outline monstrosity, with a focus on the function of monsters in culture.<sup>4</sup> The other has tended to focus on the monsters of the *Beowulf* manuscript and then to jump to the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, after the first attested use of "monster" in Chaucer's Monk's Tale.<sup>5</sup> However, studies of English words from the Early Middle English period have not been undertaken.<sup>6</sup> While many of the terms for nonhumans derive from those used in the Latin and Old English texts, their deployment within this transitional period in language and society is not well understood, even when the etymology is clear. This dissertation traces the uses of words and descriptions relating to nonhuman persons to decode the specific way that language

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<sup>1</sup> Paraphrasing from several scholars, including Asa Simon Mittman "Introduction," *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. Asa Simon Mittman and Peter J. Dendle (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 1-14.

<sup>2</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien "The Monsters and the Critics," *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*, in *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company 1984).

<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 3-25.

<sup>4</sup> David Williams, *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Medieval Thought and Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996) is an example; he establishes one theory through extensive use of Latin texts, then applies it to monsters from all kinds of places and times

<sup>5</sup> Dana Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature*, Gender in the Middle Ages 5 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010) is an example of this kind of study; she jumps from *Beowulf* to *Mandeville's Travels*, skipping the intervening 400+ years.

<sup>6</sup> Lisa Verner *Epistemology of the Monstrous in the Middle Ages*, Studies in Medieval History and Culture 33 (New York: Routledge, 2005) does trace the function of monsters in the middle period, but only in Latin texts.

choices reflect the beings represented and the social implications of those beings. Therefore, nouns naming these nonhuman persons, adjectives describing them, and the actions of these beings will be examined to determine the shifts in the dividing lines between the monster and the human in the Early Middle English period.

This work is in larger conversation with other critical fields (disability studies, postcolonial studies, gender studies, and environmental studies); this is standard for monster studies, which is on the intersecting borders of many other fields.

What is at stake in this study for current audiences? There are two aspects to that answer as well. First, there is the simple answer: a three-hundred year gap in the study of nonhuman beings in vernacular texts is a large omission from a historical standpoint. The other answer is also historical, but approaches the texts from the perspective of the history of race and racism in medieval England. White supremacists around the world embrace the medieval as a racially segregated imaginary space, where they are self-portrayed as crusaders and knights fighting against encroaching racial others. Studies like mine can serve as disruption of this supremacist narrative by demonstrating the humanity with which racial others are credited at this period and/or strengthen scholarly understanding of the history of dehumanizing human groups. I view this work as an extension of Heng's *Invention of Race* that creates a broader dialogue between racism in the traditionally pre-race medieval period and racism and ableism as they are presented in present-day texts.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.1 Concerning Monsters: A Literature Review of History and Theory

Regarding monsters in medieval literature, J.R.R. Tolkien was the first to openly argue that the monsters in *Beowulf* were “not an inexplicable blunder of taste” but “essential” to the poem, showing as it did a thematic, transitional fusion from the pagan to the Christian, with men under attack by the external forces of darkness embodied in the monsters.<sup>8</sup> John Block Friedman,

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<sup>7</sup> Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). See also: *Whose Middle Ages? Teachable Moments for an Ill-Used Past*, ed. Andrew Albin et al. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019) and Amy S. Kaufman and Paul B. Sturtevant, eds., *The Devil's Historians: How Modern Extremists Abuse the Medieval Past* (University of Toronto Press, 2020).

<sup>8</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, “Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics” 18-20; Tolkien addresses bluntly the widespread opinion of critics in his time that the monsters are mere folk-tale elements, or, as quoted from W. P. Ker's *The Dark Ages* (Edinburgh: Blackwood 1904), “a disproportion that puts the irrelevances in the centre and the serious things

responsible for coining the now-common name of the Plinian races, posited in *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* that the monstrous races serve a need as a fantasy rooted in “fear of the unknown.”<sup>9</sup> However, the commonly accepted beginning of monster studies as an academic field started with Jeffrey Jerome Cohen’s “Monster Culture (Seven Theses).”<sup>10</sup> These theses, which have been the starting point for myriad debates and studies, are as follows:

Thesis I: The Monster’s Body is a Cultural Body

Thesis II: The Monster Always Escapes

Thesis III: The Monster is the Harbinger of Category Crisis

Thesis IV: The Monster Dwells at the Gates of Difference

Thesis V: The Monster Polices the Borders of the Possible

Thesis VI: Fear of the Monster is Really a Kind of Desire

Thesis VII: The Monster Stands at the Threshold...of Becoming<sup>11</sup>

Cohen’s seven theses mark a starting point for contemporary theories and studies on monstrosity. They emphasize reading a monster as a cultural construct described in terms of difference but which escapes concrete definition, as it embodies boundaries and both the threat and the temptation inherent in crossing those boundaries. This understanding of monsters draws on both psychological and post-Colonial theory that places monsters as the perpetual “Other” against which “normal” can be constructed and defined.

Julia Kristeva’s concept of abjection is cited by Cohen in his discussion of his sixth thesis, and is frequently referenced in monster theory. Kristeva defines abjection as:

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on the outer edges” (Ker 253, qtd by Tolkien 10). Tolkien insisted that Beowulf was a transitional text placed between the doomed pagan heroic past and the Christian present of the poet, and this transitional positioning is what allows the poet to use monsters as the best choice of enemies for his hero. What Tolkien was doing, on the other hand, was challenging the hegemony of the elite aesthetic based on the features of certain novels in the realistic mode [i.e. as expounded subsequently in F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948)].

<sup>9</sup> John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981) Friedman also suggests that the Plinian/monstrous races could be misinterpretations of observed customs and actions of human peoples.

<sup>10</sup> Cohen, “Monster Culture” 4.

<sup>11</sup> Cohen, “Monster Culture” 3-25.

what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite. The traitor, the liar, the criminal with a good conscience, the shameless rapist, the killer who claims he is a savior. . . . Any crime, because it draws attention to the fragility of the law, is abject, but premeditated crime, cunning murder, hypocritical revenge are even more so because they heighten the display of such fragility.<sup>12</sup>

The abject, a part of the self that is rejected but that is nevertheless still connected to the self, reflects the unstable nature of a monster, as well as its unbreakable tie to its creator. In addition, the role of a monster in marking the boundaries of acceptable behavior for a society is closely tied to Kristeva's conception of crime as abject because it shows the "fragility of the law" in actually preventing crimes. A monster, after all, can be a human who exceeds the boundaries set by their society. Drawing from both Cohen and Kristeva, Asa Simon Mittman states that "monsters show us how a culture delimits its own boundaries, how it sees itself; what it respects and desires is revealed in these portraits of scorn and disgust."<sup>13</sup>

Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock's introduction to *The Monster Theory Reader* provides an excellent summary of contemporary monster theory as it will be used in this study:

What differentiates contemporary monster theory from the theorization of monsters in earlier periods is primarily the position that monstrosity is a socially constructed category reflecting culturally specific anxieties and desires, and often deployed—wittingly or not—to achieve particular sociopolitical objectives. Contemporary monster theory thus disavows (or at least sidesteps the question of) the monstrosity of human subjects based on morphology and instead focuses on the means through which such subjects are "monsterized" and the implications of this process.<sup>14</sup>

Essentially, I see monsters, human and nonhuman, as marking the boundaries of acceptable deviation from a culturally established normative set of appearances and behaviors. The kinds of

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<sup>12</sup> Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4. Quoted from, Julia Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection," in *The Monster Theory Reader*, edited by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 95-107 at 97

<sup>13</sup> Asa Simon Mittman, "Introduction" 13.

<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, "Introduction: A Genealogy of Monster Theory" in *The Monster Theory Reader* 1-36 at 25.



difference that are represented as unacceptable in a given text give a view into the behaviors, appearances, and beliefs that are considered valuable in the time, culture, and place of composition. When Plinian nonhuman peoples, Grendel-esque monsters, or giants living in post-diluvian Albion are the monsters, that can serve a different “sociopolitical objective” than the monsterization of Jewish, Islamic, or other human peoples. However, as Debra Higgs Strickland argues, nonhuman peoples like the monstrous races can also serve as examples for the treatment and understanding of “other types of ‘monsters,’ namely Ethiopians, Jews, Muslims, and Mongols.”<sup>15</sup>

What, then, of teratology? Dana Oswald, among others, would suggest that:

Monstrous action or behavior alone does not make the actor a monster. In order to be a monster, one must possess a monstrous body, largely because actions are temporary and can be changed. Aberrant behavior holds the possibility for reform, whereas a monstrous body allows far less possibility of such modification...If this definition of the monster seems to rely on essential categories, that is because it does. A monster, in the Middle Ages, is a creature with a body that differs from the norm in significant ways.<sup>16</sup>

Partially, Oswald is correct. In order for a being to be categorized as “nonhuman,” it must have a body that differs from the “norm” of a human body “in significant ways.” Teratology does play a role in that I have marked human-animal hybrids, the Plinian-type peoples of *The Wonders of the East*, and giants as nonhuman, as do the authors of the primary texts; however, I also would contend that a human who is acting beyond the cultural boundaries established in a text is described with the same kinds of terms as a nonhuman. In addition, as noted by Edward Wheatley, “What must be acknowledged before turning to the literature of this period is that historically, not all disabled people were considered monsters.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, simply having a physical disability, some form of physical difference, was insufficient; the variation from human

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<sup>15</sup> Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 42.

<sup>16</sup> Oswald, *Monsters* 7.

<sup>17</sup> Edward Wheatley, “Monsters, Saints, and Sinners: Disability in Medieval Literature,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Disability*, 17-31 at 17. Wheatley also points out that “disabled” was not an overarching category in the medieval period; much like monsters, specific subcategories like “lame” or “blind” were commonly used.

standard (two eyes, two legs, two arms, one mouth, etc.) had to be “significant” for it to be remarked upon as monstrous.

Hybrid creatures, part homo sapiens and part other, are particularly threatening as monsters; Oswald notes:

“it is those monsters whose bodies bear markers of sex and sexuality that most clearly threaten the boundaries of human communities precisely because they are capable of creating their own communities... The reproductive monster frightens by both replicating itself and by invoking the specter of miscegenation.”<sup>18</sup>

A reproductive monster is a both an internal threat to the community if a community member chooses to reproduce outside the community, as well as an external threat to the community as it can perpetuate its own kind, providing a threat of not just possibly increased numbers, but of a potential multi-generational conflict.

Ruth Waterhouse, in her essay “Beowulf as Palimpsest,” suggests the following about the semantic field of monsters based on the *OED* definitions:

The semantic field combines various possibilities, such as the following:

— natural or human

+ deformity (physical and/or moral)

+ large size

Not all of these need be co-present; for instance, cruelty and wickedness are not necessarily applicable to animals—like the original King Kong — who lack moral awareness and whose behavior is appropriate to their nonhuman status. The definitions stress that monsters are Other, as contrasted with the subjectivity of Self that classes them as alien in some way, though they do not include one aspect

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<sup>18</sup> Oswald, *Monsters* 12.

relevant to most “monsters”: the emotive impact that they make as Other, usually terror or dread, while an aura of mystery also surrounds them.<sup>19</sup>

However, I am here positing that the appropriate defining factors of the semantic field depend mostly on the *expectation* of non-conformity to the community that encloses the author. The expected non-conformity is both in terms of the body or mind, which demonstrates a physical or preternatural difference, as well as behavioral deformity or non-conformity. Certainly the body or behavior will be seen as non-normative according to that same social community. This is in keeping with the definition given within *Mandeville's Travels* as quoted by Dana Oswald, “a monster is a þing difformed aȝen kynde bothe of man or of best or of ony þing elles & þat is cleped a Monstre.”<sup>20</sup> However, I expand the definition of “difformed” to the realm “kynde” behavior, monsterring beyond physical difference.

Lisa Verner traces the philosophical uses of the monster from early uses in the ancient world through Anglo-Saxon England, the bestiaries of the 12<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, and into the early 15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscripts of the 14<sup>th</sup> century *Mandeville's Travels*. She finds that the view of monster's transitions chronologically from relatively stable symbols of theological or moral significance in the ancient and Anglo-Saxon works to more fluid symbols with more troubled moral considerations in later works.<sup>21</sup> The final result, however, is that the Middle Ages constitute a period distinct from later periods due to the insistent emphasis on moral and religious meanings.<sup>22</sup> Surekha Davies says that the “category of monster expanded enormously, while its subdivisions became less pronounced” starting in the sixteenth century, partially due to further exploration and expeditions by Western Europeans. With less room at the edges of the known world, there was less room for mythical monstrous races with all their catalogued differences. Davies explains that “[d]uring the Renaissance ... the classical typology of prodigious, natural, and distant monsters (and their medieval variants) continued to inform expectations [but] the three categories

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<sup>19</sup> Ruth Waterhouse, “Beowulf as Palimpsest” in Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 26-39 at 27-28.

<sup>20</sup> Oswald, *Monsters* 2; Oswald is quoting from *Mandeville's Travels, Translated from the French of Jean d'Outremeuse, Edited from MS. Cotton Titus c.XVI in the British Museum*, ed. P. Hamelius, 2 vols., Early English Text Society, o.s. 153-154 (London: Oxford University Press, 1919-1923), 30.

<sup>21</sup> Verner, *Epistemology* 155.

<sup>22</sup> Verner, *Epistemology* 158.

overlapped and intersected in practice.”<sup>23</sup> She shows a continuation of the categorical destabilization marked by Verner.

Several scholars have emphasized the literal liminality of the monster as a creature outside the boundaries of human society. Dorothy Yamamoto posits that:

Centre and periphery are illustrated in the Hereford world map, with its focal Jerusalem the site of a fully achieved humanity and its borders populated with a variety of visibly deviant forms. They are also thematically present in the world of romance, in which the knights, leaving their castle, move out into a wild and unpredictable environment in which normal laws do not apply and out of which strange bodies rise up to challenge them.<sup>24</sup>

Heng also uses the Hereford map as an illustration of the center-periphery positioning of human versus nonhuman figures, though she also equates what Yamamoto had called “deviant forms” with racial profiling of humans.<sup>25</sup> The center-periphery structure agrees with the “horizontal” structure described by Hughes as common in the Old English/Old Norse worldview; Hughes argues that the boundary becomes permeable to monsters and nonhumans under certain specific situations, like the violation of *geas* or prohibitions that govern particular places.<sup>26</sup> Weinstock adds social spaces to the physical spaces in arguing that behavior most in line with the ideals of a particular culture place an individual at the center, while deviant or excessive behavior places an individual towards the social periphery.<sup>27</sup>

## **1.2 Nonhuman Peoples and Persons: Terminology, “Monstrous Races,” and Race**

When it comes to race in the medieval period, there are three main viewpoints. The first is the one that use “race” without modern cultural understanding to mean the people of a particular

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<sup>23</sup> Surekha Davies, “The Unlucky, the Bad and the Ugly: Categories of Monstrosity from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* 49-77 at 51.

<sup>24</sup> Dorothy Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2000), 4.

<sup>25</sup> Heng, *The Invention of Race* 33.

<sup>26</sup> Shaun F D Hughes, “The Evolution of Monster Fights: From Beowulf versus Grendel to Jón Guðmundsson Lærði versus the Snæfjalladraugur and Beyond,” *Telling Tales and Crafting Books, Essays in Honor of Thomas H. Ohlgren*, ed. Alexander Kaufman, Shaun F. D. Hughes, and Dorsey Armstrong, *Festschriften, Occasional Papers, and Lectures 24* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Press, 2016), 49-91 at 51-52.

<sup>27</sup> Weinstock, *The Monster Theory Reader*.

country or place; it is this view that spawned the “monstrous races” label, as seen in John Block Friedman. The second view, that supported by Asa Simon Mittman, proposes replacing the terminology of race in favor of “monstrous peoples” or “wonders”. His reasoning is twofold; one, due to the fact that “race” was not understood in the same way by medieval audiences as it is by modern audiences; and two, in order to avoid the implicit bias that arises in modern discussions of race where one race or type is held to be the “normative” against which other races are marked, which can lead to unwanted associations of the norm with superiority.<sup>28</sup> This view is challenged by Geraldine Heng, who argues that race was marked in the medieval periods on religious and cultural grounds, and that only the label of race as a means of distinguishing one group from another on deterministic grounds allows scholars to comprehend the institutional level of action taken against groups of people based on their cultural and religious differences (e.g. the expulsion of Jewish people from England in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, etc.).<sup>29</sup> However, I agree with both Mittman and Heng in this matter; first, that modern conceptions of race will inevitably lead to some bias when applied to the “monstrous races,” and that religious and cultural differences between humans on a widespread institutional level should be read in context of race in order to appropriately capture the ways that racism has developed and evolved from pre-modern times through the present day. Based on this stance, what should we call the “monstrous races”?

In the history of English language and literature, “monster” is not attested until Chaucer’s use in the 1380s. However, modern translators and scholars of Old English and Early Middle English have often used the term “monster” in reference to the variety of nonhuman creatures in the literature. There are many entirely good reasons for doing so; “monster” is a recognizable category for modern readers, one that attracts general attention, and one that neatly avoids the need to define creatures for which we have no specific modern equivalent.<sup>30</sup> In addition, the word itself has a long history in Latin and in French medieval literature, so it is not exactly anachronistic to use it. However, by avoiding the specific terms used in early medieval English literature, some dimensions of the original are necessarily lost. While I, like Merkelbach and Neville, argue for a

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<sup>28</sup> Asa Simon Mittman, “Are the ‘Monstrous Races’ Races?” *postmedieval* 6:1 (Spring 2015): 36–51.

<sup>29</sup> Heng, *The Invention of Race* 6–11.

<sup>30</sup> Rebecca Merkelbach, *Monsters in Society: Alterity, Transgression, and the Use of the Past in Medieval Iceland, The Northern Medieval World* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Press, 2019), 9; argues for the use of “monster” because it “has clear advantages: it provides me with a term that is readily understandable to a modern audience as denoting socially disruptive figures across the ages.”

socially based theory of monstrosity, glossing all possible human and nonhuman disruptions as “monsters” would undermine the discussion of the actual linguistic data from the corpus.

I agree with Merkelbach that a term like troll is inappropriate, as it predisposes readers to both fail to distinguish categorical differences between, and to be unquestioning about the humanity of a given subject regardless of teratology or difference<sup>31</sup>. Shaun F. D. Hughes suggests “non-human human beings”, following a distinction that appears to have been important in Old English and Old Norse literature. Hughes notes a place in Ælfric’s *Catholic Homilies* where he says: “swa micel werod menniscra manna sceal astigan þæt heofonlice rice, swa fela swa ðæra gecorena engla on heofonon belifon æfter ðæra modigra gasta hryre;” Hughes translates “so great a troop of human human beings shall ascend to the heavenly kingdom, as so many remain of the chosen angels after the fall of the proud spirits.”<sup>32</sup> The need to reiterate that the people are not just *men*, but *menniscra men*, suggests that there is a different, distinct other kind of human beings.<sup>33</sup> “Non-human human beings,” is the logical opposite of his literal translation from the Old English *menniscra manna*, “human human beings.”<sup>34</sup> This terminology, however appropriate from a literal standpoint, lacks easy utility for discussions. Nonhuman is too broad of a category as well, encompassing objects, environment, animals, and preternatural subjects.<sup>35</sup>

I use the term “nonhuman people” to indicate a collective or society of sentient persons who are not human by the measures of a given text, which Mittman might call “wonders,” “marvels,” or “monstrous peoples.”<sup>36</sup> Nonhuman peoples are groups of humanoids recognized as people by medieval authors who are shown to have their own cultures. An individual who differs from what is presented as standard human by a given text is a nonhuman person, while a creature that is not recognized as human in any way by a text will be called a nonhuman being. This study,

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<sup>31</sup> Merkelbach, *Monsters in Society* 6-10.

<sup>32</sup> Shaun F D. Hughes, “Reading the Landscape in *Grettis saga*: Þórhallur, the *meinvættur*, and Glámur,” in *Paranormal Encounters in Iceland 1150-1400*, ed. Ármann Jakobsson and Miriam Mayburd, The Northern Medieval World (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Press, 2020), 367-94 at 380, referring to “Dominica septuagesima,” *Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*, ed. Malcolm Godden, EETS, ss 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), No. V: 47, lines 188-98.

<sup>33</sup> Hughes, “Reading the Landscape 380; Hughes Notes these terms are paralleled in the Old Norse literature as well; human human beings are “*mennskir menn*” and non-human human beings are “*vættir*.”

<sup>34</sup> Hughes, “Reading the Landscape” 380.

<sup>35</sup> For uses of nonhuman in ecocriticism, see Karl Steel, *How Not to Make a Human: Pets, Feral Children, Worms, Sky Burial, Oysters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019) and Ármann Jakobsson, *The Troll inside You: Paranormal Activity in The Medieval North* (New York: Punctum Books, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.21983/P3.0175.1.00>.

<sup>36</sup> Mittman, “Monstrous Races” 48.

while it will touch lightly on nonhuman beings, is most concerned with nonhuman persons and nonhuman peoples. I posit three specific criteria to determine if a particular being is a nonhuman person (See Section 1.5.1).

When referring to real-world peoples that are racially marked as other in a given medieval text (largely referred to as Saracens, heathens, pagans, and Jews), I will refer to them as human beings that are being dehumanized or treated as nonhumans. This study does not tackle the historical reality of texts beyond needed contextual information, and so will not necessarily need to address issues of medieval racism at large, but for further information, see Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the Middle Ages*.

### 1.3 Etymologies

#### 1.3.1 English Words for Nonhuman Persons and Peoples

A variety of terms used in the Old English and Early Middle English will reappear throughout this study. I am providing an overview of the etymology of some of the most important terms as a reference here; these same etymologies will occasionally be referenced in later chapters. Entries are given in alphabetical order according to my standardization.

**Ælwiht:** A collective term for nonhuman beings, defined briefly as “monsters” by *A Thesaurus of Old English*.<sup>37</sup> *Æl* here is probably a variant “el-” “other,” “foreign” plus “with,” a person or being;<sup>38</sup> therefore, “*ælwiht*” is a foreign being. It appears twice in Old English literature according to the *Old English Dictionary Web Corpus*, once in the Vercelli Book and once in *Beowulf*. Unattested after the Old English period.<sup>39</sup>

**Elf:** A term of Germanic derivation, appearing as *ælf* or *ylfe*, cognate with Old Norse *ālf*. The variety of elves in Old English is vast; Jane Roberts and Christian Kay’s *A Thesaurus of*

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<sup>37</sup> Jane Roberts and Christian Kay with Lynne Grundy, *A Thesaurus of Old English: In Two Volumes*, 2nd Impression, Costerus, New Series, v. 131-132 (Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000) v. 1, 95.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Based on the Manuscript Collection of the Late Joseph Bosworth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), 245; T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Based on the Manuscript Collection of the Late Joseph Bosworth, Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), 185

<sup>39</sup> Roberts, Kay, and Grundy, 903

*Old English* lists thirteen separate compounds containing “ælf” along with the main entry.<sup>40</sup> Additional terms under this “Elfin” section include “pūca” or “pūcel” for elves or goblins, “wudumær” and “wuduwāsa” for wood elves, and terms for incubus and succubus, “mera” and “lēof” respectively.<sup>41</sup> The term has been in continuous use throughout, though the term has undergone semantic narrowing.<sup>42</sup>

**Eoten:** According to *A Concordance to the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, the term only appears in *Beowulf*, though it appears eleven times in various forms.<sup>43</sup> According to the Vladimir Orel, *A Handbook of Germanic Etymology*, the term might be reconstructed as \**etunaz*, from which ON *jötunn* and OE *eoten* “giant” are derived. It is also potentially connected to \**etanan*, meaning “to eat/devour/consume.”<sup>44</sup> The form “eten” and several alternate spellings are listed by *The Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* as derived from “eoten;” these forms are attested up through 1611.<sup>45</sup>

**Fairy:** The earliest attestations of fairy in English date from 1330.<sup>46</sup> Fairy is borrowed from French *fée*, likely deriving from the Latin *fāta* for “fate”.

**Giant:** A term of Latin derivation with many variant spellings in the Old and Middle English periods. *Gigant* was attested from the Old English period up through at least 1432, while *giant* is first attested circa 1297.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See also Alaric Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity*, *Anglo-Saxon Studies* 8 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), and Evgen Tarantul, *Elven, Zwerge und Reisen: Untersuchung zur Vorstellungswelt germanischer Völker im Mittelalter*, *Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 1: Deutsche Sprache und Literatur* 1792 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 303-76.

<sup>41</sup> Roberts, Kay, and Grundy, 658.

<sup>42</sup> Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England* 176-81.

<sup>43</sup> J.B. Bessinger, Jr. and Philip H. Smith, Jr., *A Concordance to the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Record* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 283. See also: Katje Schulz, *Reisen: Von Wissenshiitten und Wildnisbewohnern in Edda und Saga*, *Skandinavische Arbeiten* 20 (Heidelberg: Winter, 2004) and Tarantul, *Elven, Zwerge und Reisen* 186-239.

<sup>44</sup> Vladimir Orel, *A Handbook of Germanic Etymology* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 86.

<sup>45</sup> Roberts Kay, and Grundy 903.

<sup>46</sup> *OED*, “fairy”.

<sup>47</sup> Roberts, Kay, and Grundy 903.



**Pyrs:** A term of Germanic derivation according to the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, which also provides an alternate entry under *orcþyrs*.<sup>48</sup> Old High German *duris* for “devil or evil spirit” was translated into Latin *Dis* or *daemonium*. Cognate with Icelandic/ Old Norse *þurs*, “giant”. It is possible that Old High German *\*þurēnan* is cognate to Skaldic *turá-*, for “strong,” or related to Old Norse *þora*, meaning “to dare.”<sup>49</sup> *The Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* lists “thurse” under 01.07.03.03(n.) *fairy/elf*, subheading .19 *imp/goblin/hobgoblin*, and claims dates of usage up through circa 1700.<sup>50</sup>

**Unsceaft:** A collective term for nonhuman beings, defined briefly as “monsters” by *A Thesaurus of Old English*.<sup>51</sup> *Sceaft* means “being” or “creation,” so literally, an *unsceaft* is an “unbeing.” This term only appears once, according to the *Thesaurus of Old English*; the *Old English Concordance* lists that appearance as Riddle 84, line 29: “Nu mec unsceafta innan slitað, / wyrdap mec be wombe; ic gewenden ne mæg.”<sup>52</sup> According to *The Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, not attested after the Old English period.<sup>53</sup>

**Untýdre:** A collective term for nonhuman beings, defined briefly as “monsters” by *A Thesaurus of Old English*.<sup>54</sup> According to Thalia Phillis Feldman, *týdre* appears to mean “weak” or “frail;” the negated form of this word indicates that an *untýdre* is something not weak.<sup>55</sup> *The Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* does give the term *tiedre* as an Old English entry for “physically weak.”<sup>56</sup> However, the more probable etymology derives it from *tudor* meaning “offspring”<sup>57</sup> and this is the form recognized by the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of

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<sup>48</sup> Bosworth-Toller, *Anglo Saxon Dictionary* 764, translating the Latin “Orcus” (God of the Underworld).

<sup>49</sup> Orel, *Handbook* 429-30.

<sup>50</sup> Roberts, Kay, and Grundy 902.

<sup>51</sup> Roberts, Kay, and Grundy 95.

<sup>52</sup> Craig Williamson, ed. *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 117. “Now ‘uncreatures’ [i.e. pens] tear me within, harm me along the belly; I am not able to turn away.” The solution to the riddle is “inkhorn.”

<sup>53</sup> Roberts, Kay, and Grundy 903.

<sup>54</sup> Roberts, Kay, and Grundy 95.

<sup>55</sup> Thalia Phillis Feldman, “Grendel and Cain’s Descendants,” *Literary Onomastics Studies* 8 (1981): 71-84 at 75.

<sup>56</sup> Christian Kay et al. *The Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary: With Additional Material from “A Thesaurus of Old English, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 1: 204.*

<sup>57</sup> Bosworth-Toller, *Anglo Saxon Dictionary* 1018.

Klaeber's *Beowulf*.<sup>58</sup>,” the *untȳdre*, then, are “anti-offspring,” which makes sense in line with *unwiht*, *unsceaft*, and other similar terms in Old and Middle English.<sup>59</sup> *Untȳdre* only appears in *Beowulf*, line 111 according to the *Old English Concordance*.<sup>60</sup> Unattested after the Old English period.<sup>61</sup>

**Unwiht:** A term meaning “un-being” or “non-creature.” The opposite of *wiht*. The Old Norse cognate was *óvættur*.<sup>62</sup> In use through the Middle English period to refer to both human and nonhuman beings, persons, and peoples, it was also used for the Christian Devil.

**Wiht:** A term meaning “being” or “creature.” The Old Norse cognate is *vættur*.<sup>63</sup> Used through the Middle English period to refer to both human and nonhuman beings, persons, and peoples.

**Woodwose:** The term *wuduwāsa* was listed for “wood elf” by Roberts, Kay, and Grundy.<sup>64</sup> However, this meaning is only attested through the Old English Period.<sup>65</sup> Dorothy Yamamoto interprets the “wodwos” as a typical “wild man” opponent for a knight.<sup>66</sup> According to *The Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, this use of “wodwos” is a shift occurring after 1355.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Beowulf*, ed. Frederick Klaeber, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., ed. Robert Bjork, Robert D. Fulk, and John Niles, Toronto Old English Series 21 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), “Glossary” 450.

<sup>59</sup> Santiago Barreiro, “El país del que vienen los monstruos: sobre el *fiſelcynnes eard* en *Beowulf*, v. 104,” *Medievalista*, 27 (2020) (<https://journals.openedition.org/medievalista/2846>)

<sup>60</sup> Antonette DiPaolo Healey, Richard L. Venezky, *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English*, 423 Fiche + Intro (3) (Newark, DE: University of Delaware, 1980), U121.

<sup>61</sup> Roberts, Kay, and Grundy 903

<sup>62</sup> Hughes, “Reading the Landscape” 380-81. *Unwiht* is also used as an insult in the *The Owl and the Nightingale* (c. 1200) that inspired the title of this project.

<sup>63</sup> Hughes, “Reading the Landscape” 380-81.

<sup>64</sup> Roberts, Kay, and Grundy 658.

<sup>65</sup> Roberts, Kay, and Grundy 903.

<sup>66</sup> Yamamoto, *Boundaries of the Human* 145

<sup>67</sup> Kay et al, 1495; “03.08.04.07.01.05(n.) *Representations of human/divine beings* .01 *savage woodwose/woodhouse* 1355-1920.”

## 1.4 The Monster in the Room

As I have already indicated, “monster” will not be the term used for nonhuman actors in this study except where indicated specifically by a particular text. However, my work engages centrally with studies of monsters and monstrosity, and so I am providing a brief etymological history of the term.

Monster is originally from a Latin root *monēre* meaning “to warn,” but even by the classical Latin period, *mōnstrum* referred to a “portent, prodigy, monstrous creature, wicked person, monstrous act, [or] atrocity.”<sup>68</sup> St. Augustine, in his *City of God*, defined humans and acknowledged that monstrous humans could exist,<sup>69</sup> but mainly described the function of monsters in Creation:

[W]hat if God willed to create some races of this sort expressly to prevent us from thinking that the wisdom by which he moulds the forms of men was at fault in the case of such monsters as are duly born among us of human parents, as if it had been the craft of an unskilled artisan? It should not then seem to us unnatural that, even as there are certain monsters among individual races of men, so also within the human race as a whole there may be certain monstrous tribes.<sup>70</sup>

Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies* tried to define monsters, first by dividing them by physical types, then by examining the etymology of the word, which he derived from the Latin *monstrare*,

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<sup>68</sup>“monster” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 11 November 2021.

<sup>69</sup> St. Augustine brings up monstrous races, “monstrousa hominum genera” in *De Civitate Dei*, XVI, cap. VIII, 1.3. He refers to monstrous individuals as “monstrosus apud nos hominum partibus” in ll. 29-30.; Augustine, *De civitate dei*. Ed. Bernard Dombart and Alphonse Kalb, CCSL 47-48 (Tutnhout: Brepols. 1955), 508-09.

<sup>70</sup> “[Q]uid, si propterea Deus uoluit etiam nonnullas gentes ita creare, ne in his monstros, quae apud nos oportet ex hominibus nasci, eius sapientiam, qua naturam fingit humanam, uelut 27tem cuiuspiam minus perfecti opificis, putaremus errasse? Non itaque nobis uideri debet absurdum, ut, quem ad modum in singulis quibusque gentibus quaedam monstra sunt hominum, ita in uniuerso genere humano quaedam monstra sint gentium.” ll. 71-79. Augustine, *De civitate dei*. Ed. Dombart and Kalb 510. English translation by Eva M. Sanford and William M. Green, Augustine, *City of God*, 7 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957-1972), 5 (1965), quoted in Lisa Verner, *The Epistemology of the Monstrous in the Middle Ages*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 37.

meaning “to instantly show”:<sup>71</sup> “Monsters, in fact, are so called as warnings, because they explain something of meaning, or because they make known at once what is to become visible.”<sup>72</sup>

From Latin, the term was adopted into French, where it was attested beginning in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and from there it eventually made its way into English.<sup>73</sup> The first attestation of the word “monster” in English was Chaucer’s “Monk’s Tale,” circa 1375 CE.<sup>74</sup> There it is said of Hercules: “Was nevere wight, sith that this world bigan, / That slow so manye monstres as dide he.”<sup>75</sup> Other early uses of “monster” include both Chaucer’s *Legend of Good Women* in reference to the minotaur (ca. 1384), and in John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* (ca. 1393) in his description of the centaur Sagittarius: “The whos figure is marked thus, / A Monstre with a bowe on hone” (VII.1144-45).<sup>76</sup>

## 1.5 Methodology and Theoretical Overview

### 1.5.1 Drawing the Line: Working Theory of Nonhuman Boundaries in this Study

In his introduction to the *Monster Theory Reader*, Jeffrey Weinstock references Foucault:

Foucault shows how monstrosity is not only a relational term—monstrosity is always defined against that which is not monstrous—but also part of a regulatory regime that disciplines human beings into acting and thinking in particular ways.

In relation to the human monster, Foucault in his lecture of January 22, 1975, asserts that the “frame of reference” for the human monster is always the law. The human

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<sup>71</sup> Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies*, trans. Stephen A. Barney, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Book XI.iii, 244.

<sup>72</sup> Lisa Verner’s translation, as given in Verner, *The Epistemology of the Monstrous in the Middle Ages*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 3. The original text reads, “Monstra vero a monitu dicta, quod aliquid significando demonstrent, sive quod statim monstrent quid appareat; et hoc proprietatis est, abusione tamen scriptorum plerumque corrumpitur.” *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), XI, iii, 3. Verner’s translation, given above, differs from that of Barney: “But omens (*monstrum*) derive their name from admonition (*monitus*), because in giving a sign they indicate (demonstrare) something, or else because they instantly show (*monstrare*) what may appear; and this is its proper meaning, even though it has frequently been corrupted by the improper use of writers.” *The Etymologies* trans. Barney et al., 244.

<sup>73</sup> Oxford English Dictionary. 15 August 2015.

<sup>74</sup> “monster” Oxford English Dictionary, 15 August 2015.

<sup>75</sup> Chaucer, Geoffrey. “The Monk’s Tale.” In *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed.. ed. Larry Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), 240-53 at 243 (VII 2111-12; B<sup>2</sup>. \*3301-02).

<sup>76</sup> John Gower, *Confessio Amantis, The Complete Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, 4 vols. (1899-1902; Rpt. Grosse Point, MI: Scholarly Press, 1968), 3: 264.

monster, according to Foucault, violates both the laws of society and the laws of nature. Beyond this, though, the human monster exceeds the capacity of the law to respond to it: “the monster’s power and its capacity to create anxiety are due to the fact that it violates the law while leaving it with nothing to say. . . . [It] is a breach of the law that automatically stands outside the law.” As a consequence, the response evoked by the human monster is either violence or pity.<sup>77</sup>

In other words, in order to be human, a person must be lacking in major difference of mind or body and preternatural power (“the laws of nature” that they have to obey), as well as obeying human laws well enough to fit into the society that institutes such laws. If they violate “laws of society,” they would still need to submit to those laws for punishment in order to remain human. If, instead, these laws either do not apply due to preternatural difference or the total dismissal of the social system that is meant to contain them, then they are what Weinstock would call “a human monster” regardless of any actual teratological difference from the normative human form.

My theory, based on those of Cohen, Weinstock, and Merkelbach, among others, will be used to analyze the boundaries between human and nonhuman persons in this project. In order to be a nonhuman person, a being must fulfill three criteria:

- 1) It is marked by the author as a person either by terminology or description as a rational, mortal being;
- 2) it is marked by the text as not human by terminology or description as having significant physical and/or preternatural differences from a normative, non-supernatural human person; and
- 3) it must be expected to operate outside the laws of human society as established by the particular text.

If all three of these conditions are not present, the being is either a non-person, or is a human person. These human persons may be existing in a hybrid category that can demonstrate the permeability of the human-nonhuman boundary in a particular text.

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<sup>77</sup> Weinstock, *The Monster Theory Reader* 26.

My criteria are meant to be applied to literary texts, and therefore are subject to some challenges and limitations. The largest challenge has to do with the limitations of needing to evaluate a particular creature based on the information given solely in a particular text. While there are textual traditions regarding different kinds of nonhumans, my criteria will need to be applied to each separate text in order to be applicable. This also means that the limited information in a given text must be interpreted to determine the nonhuman or human status of any given person or people. In many cases, authors simply write based on assumptions without specifically delineating if a particular people are, for example, able to speak or to be killed. In some cases, it is unclear if the people have differing customs because they supposedly flee outsiders. In all cases, I have interpreted unwillingness to engage with outside populations as a difference of social frame. I have also interpreted silences to indicate that there is no marked difference between the described people and what the author considers “normal.”

### **1.5.2 Methodology**

My overall approach is different from many literary scholars as I am reaching the textual implications through establishing the semantic field of Nonhuman Person, and then examining the shifts in semantic field across texts. In order to achieve this, there are two parts within each chapter of this dissertation. The first part will be a fairly standard exercise in philology based on close reading, with occasional reference to parallel texts, other cultures, and historical context. These readings form the evidence to be compared to the three criteria that mark the semantic field of Nonhuman Person. The second part of each chapter, which is quantitative, requires some explanation.

Middle English was a dynamic language, full of regional variations and shifting vocabulary based on population shifts and personal idiosyncrasies. However, this dynamism comes at the expense of standardized spelling and vocabulary. When I decided to place so much emphasis on the specific terminology and language used for nonhumans, I knew that I needed to do some additional work to be sure I captured all the variants within my individual texts. Naturally, that led

me to concordances. However, while *Beowulf*<sup>78</sup> and Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* had existing concordances, there was no complete existing concordance for the *Wonders of the East*, either manuscript of *Lazamon's Brut*, or any of the manuscripts of *Mandeville's Travels*. In the cases of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Owl and the Nightingale*, I did not have easy access to either existing concordance. Where I could not access a concordance, I utilized the digital Early English Text Society editions of the Middle English texts from the University of Michigan's Middle English Corpus to create concordances using a free software tool called *Tesseract*. First, each text was cleaned of modern English textual notes and I inserted line numbers for each line of the texts. Then the text files were loaded into *Tesseract*. The completed concordances were loaded into *R* and searched for all terms relating to all human beings and nonhuman beings and their spelling variants. The combined concordance list was manually checked to ensure that no terms were left out.

Once I had complete lists of human and nonhuman beings, I then further refined the categories of nonhuman persons and peoples by designating a standardized spelling for each term (*lemma*). So, for example, "ettin" and "etayn" would both be standardized to the lemma "eoten"<sup>79</sup> I obtained counts of nonhuman persons and beings, and for specific terms and categories from each of my texts. This provided total counts for each term or category for each time period and for the study as a whole. Where I had existing concordances, I manually entered information from the concordance into the larger spreadsheet for each term that I found corresponding to the study.<sup>80</sup>

Furthermore, as I completed close readings of each text, I was able to mark where terms that were not on my original list corresponded to nonhuman persons and peoples, and where terms associated with nonhumans were repeated in association with humans. This allowed me to further refine my lists and tables to mark where terms were specifically about humans, about nonhumans, or about both. In each chapter, I have included quantitative data showing the distribution of terms relating to nonhuman persons and peoples in each text and the combined count which I label as

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<sup>78</sup> In the end, I was unable to use the *Beowulf* concordance as much of a guide; the combination of poetic compound words and kennings, as well as heavy overlap in terminology used about all the main characters, meant that I had to take a somewhat different approach to this text. See 2.2 for further information about the methodology applied for the Old English texts.

<sup>79</sup> See Appendix C. The overall goal of Appendix C is to provide a data set for beings and bodies of both human and nonhuman terms, including animals. Eventually I hope to revise this table into a complete concordance that can be sorted by lemma, by orthographic example, and by text or period. This is not yet possible, as the concordance data for the *Canterbury Tales* and for *Wonders of the East* and *Beowulf* would need to be revised.

the “period totals”. By comparing distribution of specific terms across periods, I hope to illustrate the collapsing of specific divisions of nonhuman peoples and persons into broader categories.

Beyond the scope of this project, I hope to provide data for further scholarship. In particular, I have noted that divisions in nonhuman categories collapse in inverse relationship to both the rise of dehumanized humans and to the rise in terms related to inheritance, supporting Bynum’s claim that increasing confusion and instability in social categories related to the rise of patrilineal inheritance led to increasing focus on marking human difference as a larger threat.<sup>81</sup>

The data tables for each chapter were gathered in the following way. First, I read each text and marked all passages that included possible nonhuman persons, including passages containing magic or prophecy. Then I established if each character or group of characters was nonhuman according to the three criteria. For all nonhuman persons and for a few other kinds of characters, I gathered all of the words associated with those beings. I broke apart quotes as needed in order to create lists of nouns related to each being, including adjectives where they seemed important for comprehension. I standardized orthography usually through reference to the Bosworth-Toller *Old English Dictionary*, the *Middle English Dictionary* from the University of Michigan’s *Middle English Compendium*, or the headword from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The standardized spellings were then used to count word frequency in these passages.

## 1.6 Overview of the Dissertation

This study will move chronologically from Old English through Early Middle English and into Later Middle English. Most of the texts selected are prominent choices in syllabi for medieval English literature: *Beowulf*, *Lazamon’s Brut*, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. The other two texts, *The Wonders of the East* and *Mandeville’s Travels* are part of a long tradition of imaginary travel narratives that place nonhuman peoples and other wonders beyond the Eastern boundaries of the European world. *Beowulf* has long been considered a “monster” text; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* has its half-giant green knight and its brief descriptions of the creatures with which Gawain contends on his journey. *The Canterbury Tales* contain many nonhuman marvels, from the Wife of Bath’s loathly lady to the creatures slain by Hercules, as well as containing the first English language attestation of “monster”

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<sup>81</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, (New York: Zone Books, 2001), .



given by the Oxford English Dictionary. So far, all of my other choices are conventional. So why have I chosen to include the *Brut* and *The Owl and the Nightingale*?

The first reason is that they are both secular texts of substantial length in Early Middle English. This has the benefit of keeping my texts in the secular domain, as much as most texts of this period can be regarded as secular, rather than having to contend with theological questions of the relative humanity of Jesus Christ or martyrs and saints. In addition, the length of these texts provide more potential examples of nonhumans. The insults of the *Owl and the Nightingale* and the accusation of preternatural power held by the Owl provides some language related to nonhumans, and the *Brut* of Lazamon was the first to include the innovation of elven/fairy blessings for King Arthur. In addition, both of these texts were popular enough to still have two extant manuscript copies, demonstrating the social worlds of the texts were more likely to be in keeping with actual cultural expectations. There are few other texts in early Middle English that can match these criteria.

Chapter 2 will establish the Old English background on nonhuman people, including a brief discussion on treachery and outlawry. First I will measure the examples in *The Wonders of the East* and *Beowulf* against my proposed three criteria separating human and nonhuman persons. I will then review the language choices made in each text while discussing nonhuman persons and discuss the implications of those choices. In Chapter 3, I will examine curses, witchcraft, and prophecy. I will consider *The Owl and the Nightingale* and major possible nonhumans from Lazamon's *Brut* against the criteria for nonhuman persons. I will then review the language choices for nonhuman persons made in each text and consider any implied shifts. After examining Early Middle English texts, in Chapter 4, I will be moving to the well-worn paths of examining the nonhuman persons and peoples in later Middle English texts, particularly *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. As in earlier chapters, I will first compare major characters to the nonhuman criteria, then examine specific language choices using insights gained on nonhuman actors in the Old and Early Middle English periods to consider the implications in later Middle English texts. In my conclusion in Chapter 5, I will consider how the shifts in language may reflect changes in cultural assumptions about nonhuman persons, along with determining if the three criteria I have proposed are useful across texts of these different time periods.

## 2 PYRS AND ENTNA GEWEORC: NONHUMAN PERSONS IN OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE

### 2.1 Introductory Materials

*Beowulf* is a text that arguably could not exist without its monsters. Indeed, within the poem there is a veritable catalog of various nonhuman entities, from the Devil to Grendel, the dragon, *niceras*, giants and ents, elves and *pyrs*. *The Wonders of the East* contained another set of creatures at whom the audience could marvel. These texts have a long history of studies associated with them, but make a suitable starting point for establishing a kind of baseline understanding of English literary nonhuman persons against which later texts and language shifts may be measured. This chapter will begin with a brief examination of Old English legal and literary conventions surrounding treachery, murder, and oath-breaking; in other words, an examination of the circumstances that could make a human person into an outlaw. Next, I will compare each of the possible peoples in *The Wonders of the East* to my proposed criteria for nonhuman persons. Then I will examine the “monsters” of *Beowulf* against my proposed criteria for nonhuman persons. Finally, I will examine the specific language choices that refer to the nonhuman persons in each text and draw some conclusions about the role of nonhuman people in these examples of Old English literature.

#### 2.1.1 Revisiting the Nonhuman Criteria: A Brief Overview of the Old English Context

In the Introduction, I suggested that three criteria must be met in order to classify a being as a nonhuman person. I will briefly examine each criterion as it would be understood in an Old English context.

Several scholars have iterated that the overall social frame of reference in medieval England was religious; while actual belief and practice may have varied on an individual basis, the overall structure of the Christian church was present in significant ways through much of the governance and customs of daily life. In terms of my own subject, this means that the religious implications of nonhumans was of concern. The main division between nonhuman creatures and nonhuman people would be in the ability of nonhuman people to be redeemed or integrated into the service of the human society of a given text.

***Criterion 1: The being is rational and mortal.***

In order to distinguish between nonhuman persons and nonhuman beasts, I have drawn on the work of Augustine. Under this Augustinian view, all people, including nonhuman people, are descended from Adam and Eve, and therefore, are redeemable through the model of Christian salvation. The ability of a particular being to be humanly redeemable in this model requires that the creature in question be both rational and mortal, since only these kinds of beings are capable of understanding the Christian gospel of redemption and exercising their free will<sup>82</sup> The thread of redemption is evident as well in legal conventions of the time, which distinguish crimes that can be compensated from those that cannot. A crime that could not be compensated might lead to outlawry unless the guilty person repented and was given mercy by the king (a fairly direct corollary to the Christian concept of confession). In cases where a word like *man* or *folc* is used in the description of a being, it is relatively simple to claim that they are a person, unless there is distinct textual evidence to the contrary (they are shown to have no rationality, no free will, or to be immortal/religious beings like angels, demons, or saints). In other cases, where no specific words indicate personhood, I have looked to the textual evidence to see if the author gives them speech (an indicator of rational thought),<sup>83</sup> or interiority demonstrating thought, exercises of free will, or forward planning beyond what might be expected from a hunting animal. I do not see indications in most of the texts regarding the subjugation of animals, Augustin's litmus test for rationality.<sup>84</sup> I also look for indications that a being is mortal or immortal, such as mentions of immortality or death scenes. If an author says nothing about the creature's longevity or mortality, and no other evidence contradicts, I assume beings to be mortal.

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<sup>82</sup> The issue of mortality does add a layer of complication, to be sure; one could argue that angels and demons are outside the model of nonhuman persons. The theology inherent in the nature of angels and demons, whether they are immortal, and whether they are redeemable, is beyond my scope at this time, but they are assumed to be beyond the power of persons to kill or injure, and so do not fulfill Criterion 1.

<sup>83</sup> While Isidore and Augustine might agree with the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*, might argue that "some people without brains do an awful lot of talking," I am using a more practical background regarding the ability to speak; *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), directed by Victor Fleming, produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and based on the book of the same name (1900), by Frank L. Baum.

<sup>84</sup> Karl Steel, *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages*, (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 24.

***Criterion 2: The being differs from “standard” human persons in explicit physical and/or preternatural ways.***

The second requirement is that the rational and mortal being is marked by some difference (either in shape or preternatural abilities) from a “standard” human.<sup>85</sup> This requirement is to make it clear that this kind of person is not the same as a normal human person; the general alignment of limbs and the ability to speak seem to be sufficient to indicate shared descent from Adam and Eve in the case of most nonhuman persons, with a few exceptions. I have also chosen to interpret natural differences of skin coloration as insufficient to fulfill criterion 2. If the author does not comment on the differences between the being and the “standard” human person (presumed to be rational, mortal, lacking inherent preternatural gifts or magic, within a range of physical characteristics that the author does not feel compelled to explain).

***Criterion 3: The being is not expected to abide by the rules and laws of the social structure of the author.***

This is the most complex of the three criteria in some ways; after all, people in England in the Old English period had interactions with travelers all over Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. They likely recognized that not all humans necessarily had the same customs as they did. However, the basic idea is that laws and customs vary widely, but that a nonhuman would not be *expected* to comply with the laws and customs of any particular land. A nonhuman person who abides by the laws and standards of society is often remarked upon as something unusual; for example, in later romances, giants who become knights rarely appear without some reminder of their unusual nature, whether it be their size or a reminder of their redemption through conversion. Perhaps a more exact nuance of this requirement is that a nonhuman person is not expected to act in *service* of a human society. A human person who would not be marked as nonhuman through outlawry, however, is subject to the judgment and punishment given in the law for the described society. It might be harder to tell a nonhuman apart from a human in a culture different from that of the author, but that is why all three criteria must be met.

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<sup>85</sup> This assumption of what is “standard” is a difficult issue, and one better handled in full discussion with critical disability studies. In this case, I have taken the commentary of an author as my starting point; if the author has commented upon it, then it is apparent to the author as being different, and that is therefore “non-standard”. This may be seen as a way of ducking the issue, but it is the only way to make reasonable progress on the study at hand rather than miring myself in an endless marsh of philosophy.

Consider: a cannibal is a human with a very different set of social conventions than what might be considered “normal” to a human person in old English society; however, unless the cannibal also has a marked physical or preternatural difference outside the standard range (e.g.: they are thirteen feet tall, or they have prophetic knowledge, etc.), they are still just a human person. However, even adopting the same customs as human persons does not make a nonhuman person into a human person; a thirteen-foot tall giant who is a person and who *chooses* to act within the bounds of a human society is still not *expected* to conform to that society, and so always maintains outsider status.

### 2.1.2 Murder, Treachery, and Outlawry: Legal Nonhuman Status

Many older scholars posited a horizontal structure in which to place in Old English literature, where the center is opposed to the periphery, although this has been challenged by more recent critics.<sup>86</sup> The center was the place of human persons, where there was an expectation of compliance with human legal and social structures. In Old English literature, this center was often presented as a hall where a king or lord would provide rule and judgment, give gifts, and receive service from his thanes, while his wife would serve mead and present gifts in order to reinforce the social order. The hall is the place where community is performed through ritual actions of feasting and gift exchange. It is where men drink together and make boasts, and where the lady bears an ale cup from one man to another to remind them of their hierarchy and their interdependence.<sup>87</sup>

The boundary between center and periphery was based largely on the swearing of oaths and the expectation of spoken truth. The emphasis on speaking wisely is repeated throughout the *Maxims*, the *Advice from the Father to the Son*, and in Hrothgar’s so-called “sermon.” Beowulf’s *beot-word* (“boasts”) are taken as a declaration of truth, a solemn undertaking, rather than the modern sense of boasting.<sup>88</sup> In a society where legal cases were usually settled through the sworn

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<sup>86</sup> See John D Niles, *Old English Literature: A Guide to Criticism with Selected Readings* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 91.

<sup>87</sup> This is, of course, a particularly aristocratic view of society. This viewpoint, which leaves out the lower social classes, is a major limitation of this study. It is unfortunately true that the textual records were created by the educated, which largely meant religious clergy and wealthy aristocratic patrons, especially earlier in the medieval period. These persons were almost exclusively considered of high social class and were almost exclusively men.

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, *Beowulf*, lines 631-38, All references to *Beowulf* are to the text in Klaeber’s 4<sup>th</sup> edition.

oaths of witnesses, being unable to trust the word of particular persons would undermine the entire society.

As a human person, one could be forced into the peripheral nonhuman space through certain crimes. Most crimes could be paid for by *bot* (monetary compensation). However, a few crimes were *botleas*; that is, impossible to compensate.<sup>89</sup> These crimes did not much vary from early to late law codes; Cnut's law code specifically says that "Husbryce 7 bænet 7 open þyfð 7 æbære morð 7 hlafordswyce æter woruldlage is botleas." ("house-breaking, arson, open theft, murder that cannot be denied, treachery towards a lord, are without compensation according to wordly law.")<sup>90</sup> In each of these cases, the common factor seems to be the ability to trust the other people in the community. *Morð* is premeditated killing or killings involving concealment or guile. Treason involved actions against one's oaths to a sworn lord or king. Both theft (open or housebreaking) and arson would establish a general distrust of others in the community along with any actual damages. In any of these cases, the punishment was likely to be death, or else exclusion from society in the form of banishment, exile, or outlawry. As *Maxims I. C.* makes clear, it is exile from the community that is the worst of earthly punishments: "Earm biþ se þe sceal ana lifgan, / Wineleas wunian hafaþ him wyrd geteod" ("Wretched is he who must live alone, / Fate has appointed for him to dwell friendless.")<sup>91</sup>

The periphery is not just the place where human law does not apply, but the space where there is no expectation that it would apply. The periphery is a nonhuman space, one associated with both nonhuman creatures and persons and with outlaws. The wilderness is the place outside of the hall, where exiles dwell.<sup>92</sup> This space is uncontrolled and not subject to the laws of human persons.<sup>93</sup> In addition to the actual physical hardships that might be experienced, cold and discomforts described in such poems as *The Wanderer*, *The Sea Farer*, or *The Wife's Lament*, there

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<sup>89</sup> See Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols. (Halle: Niemeyer, 1903-1916; Rpt. Clark, NJ: The Lawbook Exchange, 2007), volume 2.1: *Wörterbuch*, 26-27. On *botleas*, see John Hudson, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, Vol. II: 871-1216 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 181; *botleas* was first used in the laws of Æthelred. See Liebermann, *Gesetze*, 1L 228 (III Æthelred 1).

<sup>90</sup> "Liebermann, *Gesetze* 1: 352 (Cnut, II, 64). Translation from Hudson, *Oxford History* 181.

<sup>91</sup> "Maxims," I.C. (36-37), in *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English*, ed. T. A. Shippey (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1976), 72. *Wineleas* can also be translated as "lordless," which could be seen as more appropriate given the actual circumstances under which exile could actually occur

<sup>92</sup> See the essays in Laura Feld, ed. *Wilderness in Mythology and Religion: Approaching Religious Spatialities, Cosmologies, and Ideas of Wild Nature, Religion and Society* 55 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012).

<sup>93</sup> It might, of course, have nonhuman rules and restrictions, like those posited by Hughes, "Reading the Landscape" 369-70.

was the very real danger that one could be killed by anyone without consequence. Indeed, the dangers of existing outside the structure of civilization are made even clearer by the laws that allowed people to slay any man who could not find a lord to serve.<sup>94</sup>

The Old English Maxims are very clear in giving prescriptive images of how the world must be or ought to be. The following sayings detail what should be in terms of criminals and monsters:

Maxims I. A. Sceomiande man sceal in sceade hweorfan, scir in leohte geriseð.

(A shamed man must in the shadow dwell, bright things in light shine.)<sup>95</sup>

Maxims II. Peof sceal gangan þystrum wederum. Þyrs sceal on fenne gewunian,

ana innan lande.

( A thief must go in dark weather. A *þyrs* must dwell in the fen, alone within the land.)<sup>96</sup>

A man who is a criminal or who has been shamed is clearly described as dwelling in the darkness, something that is in common with the so-called monsters of *Beowulf*. The monsters are only ever described as emerging at night. In addition to the confinement to darkness, the *þyrs*, (ON *þurs*, giant), must live in the fen, a place of wilderness, and is expected to live alone. Likewise, a dragon has a given place to exist; it is in its nature to guard treasure in a barrow. The ties between thieves and *þyrs* are made by implication through proximity, where the two are placed as alliterative half-lines of Maxims II. The *þyrs* and the thief seem of to occupy similar spaces in the imagination of the Maxims author; neither are “bright things” that are welcome within human society. The outlaw, during the period of their outlawed status, was literally outside of human law, for better or worse.

Outlawry was a punitive exemption from human law, either temporary or permanent. The outlaw could not access their property if it was held through the king punishing them. The

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<sup>94</sup> Liebermann, *Gesetze* 1: 152 (II Athelstan 2.1). See Huston, *Oxford History* 197.

<sup>95</sup> *Poems of Wisdom*, ed. Shippey 68-69.

<sup>96</sup> *Poems of Wisdom*, ed. Shippey 43-44.

harboring of an outlaw was discouraged, similarly to the harboring of a thief.<sup>97</sup> In addition, an outlaw had no legal status at all, and thus could be killed without penalty or compensation paid to the family of the outlaw.<sup>98</sup> Likewise, an outlaw was not expected to abide by human laws. He could steal or kill in order to survive, and not pay compensation. While this is largely because such a person could not be punished with anything worse than their current situation, it is also true that an outlaw was a legal non-entity in all aspects.

However, that does not necessarily mean that the outlaw became a nonhuman person under the three criteria established in Chapter 1. Most outlaws probably met only Criterion 1 and Criterion 3; in other words, they were rational mortal beings placed outside the expectation of adherence to human laws and society. However, unless the outlaw was also significantly different from the human standard in terms of their physical bodies or preternatural abilities, they would not fulfill Criterion 2, which leaves them as human persons. This “larger than life” characteristic of preternatural strength or extreme size is associated with many literary outlaws, like Grettir Ásmundarson, for example. In those particular cases, perhaps, the movement from legal human to outlaw can be viewed as placing the person into the nonhuman category. However, in most cases, if an outlaw could gain pardon, they could rejoin human society. In contrast, a nonhuman person can never become a human person regardless of their behavior, because unless there is an outside force, such as a miracle or magic, acting upon them that erases their Criterion 2 traits, they will always have a mark that places them beyond the expectation to adhere to human social structures.

## 2.2 Methodology

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Old English works posed particular challenges to the simpler concordance-and-count system used to catalog terms for Appendix D in later works. While I had to refine my catalog of terms with each text based on reading, in the case of *Beowulf* and *The Wonders of the East*, my search terms, such as “eoten” and “ent” yielded almost nothing. This can be put down to the use of poetic compounds in some cases, but usually because nonhuman persons are rarely labelled in this way within the actual texts.<sup>99</sup> Grendel and his mother are in the shape of

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<sup>97</sup> Liebermann, *Gesetze* 1: 50 (Ælfred, 4.4.1-2).

<sup>98</sup> Liebermann, *Gesetze* 1: 132 (Eadward and Guthrum 6.7). The term for “uncompensated here is “ærgylde.” See Lieberman, *Wörterbuch* 5.

<sup>99</sup> Indeed, as I discovered in all of the chapters, the concordance data was nearly useless for nonhuman person studies without also completing close readings.



people, only larger,<sup>100</sup> while in *The Wonders of the East*, most of the nonhuman persons are simply described as “a kind of person.”

In *Beowulf*, I hand-recorded every time a nonhuman being was mentioned (including animals), transcribed the quote in question, determined which being(s) were described, and catalogued them as human person, nonhuman person, both, animal, or extraordinary animal, denoted as animal (ext.). In the cases of kennings and compounds, I searched for the main noun that captured the description, and recorded the “root” form of the word, so that it could be combined with other spellings and variations on that root form both within the chapter and within the study as a whole.

For *The Wonders of the East*, I followed a similar process: First, I transcribed the Old English text from the digitized manuscripts, then translated the text, and checked my translations against those of other scholars. I then catalogued the beings described in the text, and labelled them as human person, nonhuman person, animal, or extraordinary animal. In all cases, all nouns related to a nonhuman person entry are noted. This means that a nonhuman people described as “a kind of man” and also with a particular/proper name will have at least two entries.

## 2.3 *The Wonders of the East: Human Peoples and Nonhuman Peoples as Examples*

### 2.3.1 Manuscript History: *The Wonders of the East*

Since a detailed history of what A.J. Ford calls “the learned tradition of marvels” has been produced elsewhere, I will only summarize here.<sup>101</sup> Two Greek texts, the *Indika* written by Ctesias in the late fifth century BCE and the *Indika* composed by Megasthenes in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, contained descriptions of both ordinary and fantastic beasts and peoples supposedly to be found in India. Portions of these texts were studied by Latin authorities, and it is through the Latin tradition that medieval authors would have gained access to the tradition. The earliest text accessible to the

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<sup>100</sup> “Ic þæt londbuend, leode mine, / selerædende, secgan hȳrde / þæt hīe ġesāwon swylce twēgen / micle mearcstapan mōras healdan, / ellorgæstas. Ðæra oðer wæs, / þæs þe hīe ġewislicost ġewitan meahton, / idese onlīcnæs; oðer earmsceapen / on weres wæstmum wræclāstas træd” (I heard the inhabitants of the region, my people, the hall-counselors, say that they say two such large wanderers of the border-land, alien spirits, hold the moors. One of them was, to the extent that they were able most clearly able to ascertain, in the form of a woman; the other trod the paths of exile in the appearances of a man), *Beowulf*, lines 1345-52.

<sup>101</sup> See his chapter, “The *Wonders of the East* and the Learned tradition of Marvels,” in *Marvel and Artefact: The ‘Wonders of the East’ in its Manuscript Context*, Library of the Written Word 45; The Manuscript World 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 6-15 on which the following account is based.

medieval writer might have been the *Historia naturalis* of Pliny the Elder (23-79 CE). This author's work is responsible for the naming of the "Plinian races." Solinus used Pliny to compose his *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* around 200 CE, and in turn, Isidore of Seville used Solinus in the composition of the *Etymologiae* in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. Additional material from texts in the tradition of Alexander the Great, particularly *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* and the *Letter of Pharasmenes to Hadrian* were incorporated into the Anglo Saxon text known as the *Liber monstrorum* composed between 650 and 750 CE. All of these texts, and the bestiaries and natural histories based upon them, remained popular for centuries. Specifically, however, "the *Wonders...* are a subset of the P-group texts within the large and complex family of texts known as the *Letters of Pharasmenes to Hadrian*" though the *Wonders of the East* no longer has the structure of a letter.

*The Wonders of the East* is extant in three manuscripts: Bodleian 614, Cotton Vitellius A XV, and Cotton Tiberius B V/1. Bodleian 614 contains a Latin version of the text (*Mirabilia de oriente*) that include 49 described wonders. In the Tiberius manuscript, the text appears in both Latin and Old English, and there are 37 wonders. The Vitellius manuscript (better known as the Beowulf Manuscript or the Nowell Codex) contains an abbreviated version of the Old English text with only 32 wonders.<sup>102</sup> For the purpose of my study on English-language traditions of nonhuman peoples, I will only examine the Tiberius and Vitellius manuscripts.

### 2.3.2 *The Wonders of the East* as Trial of Criteria for Nonhuman Persons

As the examples in Cotton Tiberius B V/1 are more complete, and include all those appearing in Cotton Vitellius AX, I have numbered the entries according to their appearance in Tiberius. Rather than trying to divide the text by wonder, I have numbered by paragraph based on the initial colored capital letter in the manuscript.<sup>103</sup> Any differences in text between manuscripts will be briefly examined when relevant.

Since my goal is to test my three criteria as a tool for evaluating if a particular person or set of people is nonhuman or human, I have only included the paragraphs that mention humanoid

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<sup>102</sup> Ford, Marvel and Artefact 7.

<sup>103</sup> All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. See Appendix A and Appendix B for my full transcription and partial translation of both Old English texts from the digital facsimiles provided by the British Library.

figures.<sup>104</sup> A table summarizing my evaluation may be found at the end of this section (see Table 2.1).

**Paragraph 2:** This land is said to be settled by *ceapmen* (merchants). Criterion 1 is satisfied if we assume that the reference to the merchants as a kind of *man* means that they are a rational mortal, i.e. a person. Criterion 2 is not met, as the author does not note any forms of physical or preternatural difference from their “normal” frame of reference. Criterion 3 is not met, as the author does not indicate anything in particular about the culture of these merchants; the implication is that the merchants live according to a cultural model that the author recognizes as sufficiently close to their own standard. The *ceapmen* are therefore human people.

**Paragraph 9:** The land of Corsias contains goat-horned serpents which are not only deadly, but are the guardians of peppercorns. In order to access the spices, people have to throw fire at the serpents, which both makes the serpents drop the peppercorns and turns the peppercorns black. The people here seem to be non-resident of this place, which is described multiple times as a wasteland due to the serpents. The serpents can kill the people, suggesting that the “mortal” part of Criterion 1 is met, and these people are rational enough to create a plan to avoid the serpents while acquiring spices. More conclusively, they are labelled as “mon” by the author. The people do not have any mentioned physical or preternatural differences from the author’s perspective, so they do not meet Criterion 2. Criterion 3 is also not met, since no social differences are noted by the author. The combination of positive for Criterion 1, but negative for 2 and 3 suggests that these are human people.

**Paragraph 10.** In the southern part of Egyptian lands, there are *halfhundingas*, literally half-hounds. These *cynocephali* are labelled here as “Conopoenas.” There is no suggestion that these “conopoenas” are people. They do not appear to meet Criterion 1, as they are not labelled as any kind of “man,” nor is there any indication by the author that these are rational beings. This is in line with the reasoning of Isidore, where he specifically points to the dog-headed beings as not rational, and therefore not descendants of Adam and Eve. The author must have either had knowledge of Isidore’s work, or been transcribing from a source, like *the Liber Monstrorum*, that took Isidore into account. While they meet Criterion 2 through both physical

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<sup>104</sup> I have excluded from my analysis the “Iamnes and Mambres” section; while it is often counted as part of the *Wonders of the East*, I felt that it did not contain any useful examples for my dissertation, as the magician is alive, but a human person with borrowed power, the deceased brother and other tormented souls are no longer mortal, and the God, the devil, and arguably Moses are immortal.

and preternatural differences including dog heads, boar tusks, lion manes, and fiery breath, they do not meet Criterion 3, as there is no description of a social structure or culture. By failing to meet Criterion 1 and 3, they are not considered people, either human or nonhuman, by the author.

**Paragraph 11.** There are two kinds of people labelled as “Homodubii,” literally “doubtful people.”

In this section, they are described as *menn*, people, that are six feet tall and have very long hair. They are also described as having a diet outside the social framework of the author’s “normal,” as they live on raw fish and honey. While these described physical differences are minor enough that it could be argued that they are just people of a different culture, the author goes on to say that they “bioð tpylice.” This is a little unclear; other examples that describe people as having more than one part usually describe various body parts as varying in color or as being like certain animal features, as in the second example of Homodubii in Section 21. Here, the lack of specificity could indicate that they have some animal feature that remains undescribed, or that they are literally two-like, two-bodied. This could be a reference to either hermaphroditism or to a kind of shape-changing. In any case, they fall firmly in the category of nonhuman people.<sup>105</sup>

**Paragraph 12.** Capi is the name of a river in the vicinity of which live giant, grasshopper-footed, red and black ants that dig up gold for hours at a time. They are clearly not people. There is an explicit example of inserted translation in this section: the River Capi “is in ðare ylcan stope þe is haten gorgoneus [pæt] is pælcyrinc” (is in that same place which is called Gorgoneus, that is demonic). The word translated as “demonic” is literally “place of the choosers of the slain.” In a homily preached in 1014 during a period of Viking incursions into England by Wulfstan II, Archbishop of York, is found the collocation “wiccan 7 wælcyrrian” (witches and sorcerers).<sup>106</sup> But elsewhere in Old English the word clearly means female practitioners of magic,<sup>107</sup> and is cognate with ON *valkyrja*, the women who ride through the air and choose on Óðin’s behalf those who will die in battle. The significance of the equivalence between gorgons

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<sup>105</sup> The phrase is translated as “doubtful one” in Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), 189 and as “doubtful people” in Asa Simon Mittman and Susan M. Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts: The Wonders of the East in the Beowulf Manuscript*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 433 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance studies, 2013), 44.

<sup>106</sup> *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. Dorothy Bethurum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 273.

<sup>107</sup> Bosworth-Toller, *Anglo Saxon Dictionary* 1153. The problem is no information has been preserved which explains what the functions of these individuals may have been.

and valkyries merits a brief note about the possible significance of the equivalence between gorgons and valkyries as simultaneously protective and terrible feminine beings: Gorgon, derived from γοργός “grim, dreadful,” is explicitly translated in the Tiberius MS as “valkyrie” in the Old English. The choice of “valkyrie,” suggests that the version of Gorgon known to the translator is the most famous one, Medusa, and possibly her two sisters Euryale and Stheno, who were depicted with large eyes that could turn those who gazed on them into stone, as valkyrie has specific feminine associations, both in terms of the female “choosers of the slain” who took heroes to Valhalla in Old Norse myth, and in the connection between “wiccan and wælcyrrian” constructed through parallel structure in Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*.<sup>108</sup> Either in the form of minor goddesses or as magical women who could inflict harm, the eyes of these beasts have deadly and feminine connotations. In this next section, note how the female camel is the one spared, while the male camel is the one sacrificed.

**Paragraph 13.** In Capi, described in Paragraph 12 as the home of gigantic ants that dig up gold, the author explains that *dyrseig* (daring) people can take the gold through the sacrifice of a male camel. These people are labelled by the word “men,” suggesting they fulfill Criterion 1. There is no authorial description of physical or preternatural differences, so these people do not meet Criterion 2. Criterion 3 is also not met, as the author includes no notes that suggest that the people are outside of a human social structure. This means the people in this section are just bold human persons.

**Paragraph 15.** The non-animal inhabitants of Locotheo<sup>109</sup> are the fifteen-foot tall people, who have red knees, dark hair, white bodies, and two long noses each. These people are also said to travel to India when they want to give birth. They are assumed to be rational and mortal, based on the authorial introduction of them as “men,” as well as on the descriptions of their reproductive choices. They are two-nosed and giant, showing physical differences. Their custom of going to India to give birth suggests that they are not expected to conform to the social structure of the author. These are definitively nonhuman people.

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<sup>108</sup> Homilies of Wulfstan 103.

<sup>109</sup> Locotheo has a few possible interpretations. It seems to be a combination of *loco* and *theo*. *Loco* can either be an adverb “instead of,” a verb *loco*, *locare* “to arrange”, or a variation of *locum*, the noun meaning “place.” The second half is probably an abbreviation of a word derived from the Greek root θεός meaning “god/ gods”. This suggests that this may be a place where something is valued “instead of God,” or “a place of God/gods,” or of a variant word using the same root, like *theologia* (“theology”), *theosophia* (theosophy, “wisdom of god”), *theoria* (“theory”), *theorice* (philosophical speculation)s, and *theolonium*. (levy, toll”)

**Paragraph 16.** The inhabitants of Ciconia are said to have three “sellices hipes.”<sup>110</sup> The reader is not told what these “excellent colors” are; instead, they are described as 20-foot tall giants with lion manes and mouths as large as “fans,”<sup>111</sup> who sweat blood and flee if they encounter other people. Even the author seems a little unsure if they are people, explaining “þas beoð menn gepenede,” or “These are believed to be people.” Based on that belief, one could assume that they are rational and mortal and the first criterion is fulfilled. Their 20-foot tall frames, three colors, lion manes, and tendency to sweat blood all show distinct physical difference from “standard” human, fulfilling criterion two. While no particular social structure may be observed in these people, the fact that they flee outside contact suggests that they are not likely to be held to the social standards of the author’s own people. These are therefore nonhuman people.

**Paragraph 17.** The Hostes, literally named with the Latin word for “enemies,” are 19-foot tall, strong giants that eat any person they capture. The Vitellius manuscript does not describe them further, though the Tiberius manuscript adds that “hi beoð speartes hipes,” which I translate as “they are of dark colors.” Whatever their described colors may be, they are “men” who have a distinctive physical difference shown in their gigantism and who have a social custom of eating captive persons, which is definitely outside the normative social structures of both the Romans and the English at this period. The Hostes are a nonhuman people.

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<sup>110</sup> *Ciconia* is classical Latin for “stork,” though it apparently also referred to a particular kind of rude hand gesture. This is another place where the place name may either have been confused, changed, be making an obscure reference, or simply be insulting the inhabitants of this imaginary location.

<sup>111</sup> A note on *fans*: Most translators, like Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* 193 and Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts* 46 translate the Old English *fann*, Latin *uannus*, as modern English “fan.” This is both accurate and misleading. The Roman *uannus* does not refer to a wind-producing instrument for cooling bodies, but to a “winnowing fan,” an implement for the harvest of grain. The Old English *fan* is likewise a reference to this tool. An Old English winnowing fan was a large round implement, illustrated as approximately the same size as a round shield of the era, with an open basket-weave of thick strands, as shown on f. 8v of MS. Cotton Tiberius B V/1 and also in f. 8v of MS. Cotton Julius A VI. This implement bears no resemblance to the ears in the illuminations accompanying the people in section 25, who are said to have “earan / spa fann” (ears like winnowing fans). Instead, the illumination must be inspired by earlier Latin manuscripts, since Latin *uannus* (cognate to the Greek αἴνω, “to winnow”), means a winnowing fan that was a large basket, oval, high sided, and enclosed on one end, with the other side flat and unenclosed. This irregular, more oval shape, large enough for the offering of first fruits or to use as an infant’s cradle, is a better fit for the illuminations accompanying section 25 of both Old English manuscripts of *The Wonders of the East*, and also may provide a bit of insight into future studies on manuscript transmission of the texts and their illuminations. On *uannus*, see: A. Walde, *Lateinisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. J. B. Hofmann, 3 vols., Indogermanische Bibliothek 1: Lehr und Handbücher, 2: Wörterbücher 1 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1938-1956), 2: 731.

**Paragraph 19.** This section is a description of what other texts have labelled as “Blemmyes”. In *The Wonders of the East*, these are described as eight feet tall and eight feet broad, with no heads, but mouths and eyes on the chest. These are nonhuman people: they are explicitly described as “menn,” satisfying criterion 1; they are physically different, satisfying criterion 2, and they are not expected to conform to the conventions of the author’s society, which satisfies criterion 3.

**Paragraph 20.** This passage describes “dracena,” dragons. As noted previously, there is a Germanic tradition associated with Fafnir that shows dragons as nonhuman people; mortal, rational (if cruel and greedy), differing from humans in preternatural and physical ways, and with an expected behavior outside of human social conventions. However, this passage seems to be describing dragons from a classical tradition, where dragons lack rationality, as with the drakon that guards the Golden Fleece or the Well of Ares in Greek and Roman mythology. There is no indication that these dragons are capable of speech or planning; they are not shown as having any interiority by the author. Instead, these are likely to be serpent-like beasts, albeit 170 feet long and “as large as great stone columns.” As non-rational creatures, they do not satisfy Criterion 1, meaning these are not people, and need not be studied against Criteria 2 and 3.

**Paragraph 21.** This section contains a description of the second type of being called Homodubii, “doubtful people.” They are said to be “tpyllice” (“doubtful ones”).<sup>112</sup> In this particular case, unlike the Homodubii of Section 11, the two parts of the body are described in a centaur-like way. These second Homodubii are “on menniscum gescape” (literally, “in person-ish shape”) down to the navel, and from there down are like donkeys. They are soft-voiced, long-legged, and flee other people. *Mennisc* can be understood in the context of both physical humanity, as in this case, or in terms of humane behavior; that is, behavior that is appropriate according to the social standards of the author of a work. The two-fold meanings of *mennisc* as both physical and behavioral reinforces my hypothesis that nonhumanity, being *un-mennisc*\*, likewise depends on both social and behavioral factors. In the case of the Homodubii (2), the creatures are given human-appearing heads, enough to be able to presumably communicate. The idea that they are capable of communicating with others is also present in the description of their

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<sup>112</sup> However here it could mean that they are bi-partite, with both human and animal features.

*liðelice stefne* (“soft voices”). Both their capability for speech and the description of their land as a *rice* (kingdom) suggests they are rational enough to satisfy Criterion 1. As centaur-like beings, they have bodies that are physically different from the standard, meeting Criterion 2, and flee if other people go into their kingdom, which suggests they do have their own social structure, satisfying Criterion 3. These Homodubii (2) are nonhuman people.

**Paragraph 22.** This section describes the kingdom of a people that the author describes as the “*wyrstan*” and the “*ellreordingestan*” (the most foreign speaking, i.e. most barbarous — in the Greek that is, a particular designation for those people who did not speak Greek). It is unclear why, precisely, these people are the worst; there is no description of particular atrocities or outstanding physical differences that might make the people particularly awful. Instead, the author emphasizes their foreign nature by repetition of the descriptor *ellereord*, which literally refers to foreign speech. Given the vital importance of being able to trust the word of people demonstrated in Old English laws and society, the foreign speech of these people could explain why they are the worst. These people are somehow “the most foreign-speaking” of all people; translating the *barbaromus* (“the most barbaric”) of the Latin text<sup>113</sup>; these people meet Criterion 3. However, despite their barbaric or foreign nature, despite being *pessimus*, the worst or most wicked, they are still described as “*menn*,” satisfying Criterion 1. They lack any physical or preternatural descriptions in this text, failing to meet Criterion 2, so these are human people.

**Paragraph 24.** In this passage, the author provides a description of the mysterious Donestre.<sup>114</sup> These are a kind of people (*mon cynn*). They are not only capable of speech, but also have a mysterious ability to speak the language of any people of the world. In addition, they can know the name of any traveler and of their kin simply by looking at them. These abilities seem like

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<sup>113</sup> Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* 178.

<sup>114</sup> I am far from the first to look into the naming of the Donestre. Rosalyn Saunders, “Becoming Undone: Monstrosity, *leaslicum wordum*, and the Strange Case of the Donestre,” *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives on Medieval Art* 5009) 2 (2010): 1-36, instead interprets the word as Latin *don*, a masculine form of “doer,” combined with the Old English feminine ending “estre”; she locates the monstrosity of the Donestre partially in their combined masculine and feminine genders (27). I suggest that Donestre may be reimagined into *do ne stare*, which can translate as something like “I surrender, I do not stand firm,” “I surrender, assuredly I remain,” or “I give not, I stand firm.” It may also be “I utter, thus I remain.” In the first three cases, the speaker would be the traveller, as befits the language of the passage introducing “the people that we call donestre.” The first two translations give a warning, showing the irresistibility of the Donestre on the traveller. The third translation acts as a reminder to the traveller of what they must do if they encounter these prescient beings. If the speaker is instead one of the Donestere, as in translation four, it would be more of an indication that the Donestre is unable to resist their nature; as they remain the same, they must continue to “utter” the lies that betray travellers.



a reflection of the gifts of prophecy and of tongues that were given to the apostles in the Gospels.<sup>115</sup> However, as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13.3, without *caritas*, charitable love for people, these gifts mean nothing. The Donestre appear to lack *caritas*; they use *leaslicum* (“lying”) words to lure in travelers in order to eat them. Again, given the emphasis placed on spoken oaths and words in Anglo-Saxon legal codes, the Donestre are potentially more vile than a modern reader might appreciate. However, the Donestre do not eat the heads of their victims, but save them in order to weep over them. It seems that they are not only capable of speech, but also of remorse. The Donestre fulfill Criterion 1 as people; even if they were not described as *mon cynn*, they are clearly capable of both speech and planning. Criterion 2 is fulfilled through the preternatural gift of foresight; however, it is unclear if there is also a physical component to their difference. They are described as “*frihteres*” (“soothsayers”) down to the navel. The word *frihteres*, derived from the words for “forward looking,” is the translation of the Latin *divines*, which could mean foretellers, prophets, or even divine beings. It is unclear what exactly they are meant to look like; after all, how does a “soothsayer” differ from a standard human appearance? It is clear it must differ from the author’s standard, otherwise it would not be necessary to divide the description of that top half from the bottom. From the navel down, they are “*mannes lice gelic*” (like to a person’s body). The Cotton Nero varies slightly here, reading “*manisce onlic*” (humanlike in the body). In the case of the illuminations, both have something like an anthropomorphised lion as the upper body, though the source of this is not immediately clear. In any case, Criterion 2 is fulfilled through both an implied physical difference and an explicit preternatural difference. Criterion 3 is satisfied, as the Donestre have a different social frame of reference from the author as eaters of human flesh. However, the penitence of the Donestre that weep over the heads of the victims suggests that the Donestre themselves are aware of the Christian frame of reference that should turn their natural gifts to the service of people. Thus, while the Donestre are definitely nonhuman people, they appear to want to become human.

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<sup>115</sup> Ford notes that the use of the Latin “*diuini*” puts the Donestre in line with the “*diuinos*” forbidden in Deuteronomy 18.11, and separates them from the Biblically acceptable “*prophetae*.” Ford also argues that there is not meant to be a division of the body into different forms, but instead that “*quasi divinum*” refers to the fact that the Donestre “tells the names of a victim and their kin not by magic but by mastery of semiosis which, in this context is demonstrated by the power to name.” Ford, *Marvel and Artefact* 145.

**Paragraph 25.** The people of Liconia are called “*menn*” though they are significantly larger than standard people. This fulfills Criterion 1. In addition to their large size and milk-white bodies, they have huge ears as large as winnowing fans,<sup>116</sup> which they use to wrap themselves at night, and they can apparently use them to fly. These marked physical differences from the “standard” human person fulfills Criterion 2. The fact that these people flee when they hear an outsider coming suggests that they hold themselves outside of the “standard” social structure of the author, which would normally allow for interaction or trade with outsiders. Without further insight into the interior culture of Liconia, the placement outside of the social structure fulfills Criterion 3, making these nonhuman people.

**Paragraph 26.** This paragraph contains a brief mention of an island people who have eyes that glow “as brightly as if one had lit a large lantern on the dark night.”<sup>117</sup> Williams points out that glowing eyes are particularly linked with the Nephilim, the offspring of humans and fallen angels.<sup>118</sup> These people are called “*menn*” and therefore meet Criterion 1, even if they have mixed divine lineage. The glowing eyes, a preternatural mark of difference, meet Criterion 2. The text makes no remark on their culture at all, so it is nearly impossible to tell if these are human or nonhuman people. The assumptions will have to be made based on a lack of information; as they are not explicitly marked as outside of human social bounds, and no evidence is given that they are unable to participate in social exchange with humans, the people with glowing eyes do not meet Criterion 3 and must be counted as human based on the evidence within the text.

**Paragraph 27.** This passage is one where the Tiberius and Vitellius manuscripts disagree. In the Tiberius manuscript, there is a description of the temple of Job and a temple holy to the sun, where “to the care of that [temple] is provided an excellent and suitable priest and he attends to that and holds it dear”<sup>119</sup> The Vitellius manuscript, however, after describing a temple built by kings Bellus and Job, says “in that / same place is at / the sun’s rising / the place of Quietus, of the / most gentle bishop / who no other / food would taste but / sea oysters and by those / he

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<sup>116</sup> See footnote 108, above, for a discussion on winnowing fans.

<sup>117</sup> “*spa leohte spa ma micel/ blacern onæle on þystre nihte*” *The Wonders of the East*, MS Cotton Tiberius B/V 1, f. 84r.

<sup>118</sup> David Williams, *Deformed Discourse* 117.

<sup>119</sup> “*to þa is sute þungen & gedefe sacerð toge sea & he ða liofa gehealdeð & begymep.*” MS Cotton Tiberius B/V 1, f. 84r. I have changed the word order at the end of the passage to make the translation more idiomatic in modern English.

lived.”<sup>120</sup> It is clear that there has been divergence in the transmission of the manuscript. However, in this particular case, unlike some of the other instances, the overall analysis of the person in this paragraph is the same, whether they are the pagan priest of a sun temple or a shellfish-loving bishop. Both priests and the bishops are implicitly assumed to be rational, mortal beings, and therefore, persons meeting Criterion 1. Neither is described with any preternatural or physical difference by the author, suggesting that neither meets Criterion 2. The priest and the bishop both fill social roles in their respective societies, so neither meets Criterion 3. Even if, for sake of argument, they did meet Criterion 3 by virtue of unusual diet, in the case of the bivalve-eating bishop, or by virtue of non-Christian status, in the case of the sun-priest, both the priest and the bishop are human persons.

**Paragraph 29.** Of the inhabitants of this place, the text of Vitellius reads “they are fitting people who have to themselves a kingdom and rule the Red Sea.”<sup>121</sup> They are called “menn,” meeting Criterion 1. They do not have any physical or preternatural differences marked by the author, so they do not meet Criterion 2. In terms of societies and social roles, not only do these people have a kingdom, they are described as *gedefelice*, an adjective that can be translated as above as “fitting”, but also as “gentle” or “proper.” In any of these cases, these people do not meet Criterion 3 from the author’s perspective, making them human people.

**Paragraph 30.** This paragraph gives the first of two explicit references to groups of female persons. This group of *pif* (females) is described as having beards and long hair, wearing horse hides, and hunting using lions and leopards instead of hunting hounds. The use of *pif*, along with the occupational reference to them as “*hunticge*” (huntresses), implies that these people meet Criterion 1. In terms of Criterion 2, there might be a difference of opinion; after all, simply being hirsute does not constitute nonhuman status by modern standards. However, by the standards of the time and up through parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, extremely hirsute people,

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<sup>120</sup> Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts* 52. “on þære ilcan stope is æt sunnan upgange ...setl quietus þæs ...stillestan bisceopes ...se næ nine oþerne ...te ne þige buton ...[s]æ oftrum & be þam he lifede,” *The Wonders of the East*, transcribed from MS Cotton Vitellius AX, f. 104v.

<sup>121</sup> þær syndon gedefelice menn þa hab/bað him to kynedome & to anpealde þa/ readan sæ. MS Cotton Tiberius B/V 1, f. 85v. The Vitellius manuscript has another possible set of people mentioned, as the kingdom is named as the birthplace of “saroz[ins],” (Saracens). I complete the word in this manner due to both spacing evidence and the fact that Paragraph 28 of the Vitellius appears to read that the berries produce “sarazim mas” where the Tiberius MS has “spylce meregrota oððe gymmas.” This paragraph would be another place where “gymmas” from Tiberius yield sarazims in the Vitellius. However, Mittman and Kim have “Sarogi” in their translation, *Inconceivable Beasts* 53. The difference in readings is likely based on the extreme damage to the Vitellius manuscript, which most editors remedy by referencing the complete text of the Tiberius.

especially women, were held to be marvels; consider the “bearded lady” of circus sideshows as one recent example. In addition to the physical amount of hair, one could argue that these huntresses have preternatural gifts that allow them to utilize trained lions and leopards. In either case, I believe these people satisfy Criterion 2. As for Criterion 3, the horsehide clothing, the females hunting, and the use of normally wild beasts as trained hunting aids all suggest a culture fairly alien to the author. The author likewise indicates no expectation that these huntresses will be held accountable to the author’s social system. The huntresses therefore satisfy all three criteria and are nonhuman people.

**Paragraph 31.** The second paragraph referring exclusively to a community of females also refers to them as *pif* and they also have long hair; however, this is where similarities end. These females are thirteen feet tall, with animal features including boar teeth and tusks, an ox tail, and donkey hooves. These bodies are described as “*æpisce... & unpeorðe*” (“lewd... and unworthy”). It is a close approximation of the Latin, “*publicato corpore et inhonesto*” (“public property in body and shameful”).<sup>122</sup> However, the reason given for why Alexander the Great felt the need to kill them is given in Latin as for *obscenitate* (obscene nature), but is given in the Old English as *mycelnesse* (muchness, greatness, large size). The bodies of the women are both revealed (no mention is made of clothing, unlike the huntresses), and also sexually unavailable (apart from a size difference, there are also the tails and tusks and hooves). the huntresses in the previous paragraph were physically covered (horse hides and beards) and presumably, sexually compatible (size similar to males, no animal parts). Is this what makes the giant women threatening? The size of their bodies? Or is it that they were not protected by leopards and lions? In any case, these people are described as *pif*, suggesting they meet Criterion 1. Criterion 2 is met by the physical differences in size and animal-like parts. Finally, in terms of Criterion 3, we are not given any particular insight into the culture of the female giants, but their way of being appears to be incompatible with the (presumed) human culture of Alexander the Great and they appear to be killed without social or legal repercussions. These are nonhuman peoples.

**Paragraph 32.** Living with a kind of animals called “catinos”, there is a mention here of people who live on honey and raw flesh. The author uses “menn” for the people as opposed to “wildeor”

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<sup>122</sup> Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* 180.

and “deor” for the catini, showing that these are people meeting Criterion 1. There is no mention of physical or preternatural differences, so these people do not meet Criterion 2. The diet and culture of these people is different from the author, though not so much as the various cannibalistic peoples encountered elsewhere in the text. One could argue that the different society meets Criterion 3 or that it does not sufficiently diverge in terms of social responsibility, but in either case, these are human people.

**Paragraph 33 and Paragraph 34.** Paragraphs 33 and 34 both refer to the same community of people. These people are described as:

On þam pynstran dæle þær rices þe ða deor onbeoþ catinos & þær beoð gastliðende menn. Cyningas þa habbað under him mænig fealde leodhatan. Heora landgemære buað neah þam garsecge & þanan fram þam pynstran dæle syndan manege cyningas.

Ðis mann cynn lifað fela geara & si syndan/ fremfulfe menn. & gyf hpylc mann/ to him cymeð þonne gyfað hi him pif/ ær hi hine on peg lætan. Se macedonisca/ alexander þa ða he him to com þa pær/ he pundriende hyra menniscnysse/ ne polde he hi cpellan ne him napiht/ laðes don:

(In the left part of that kingdom where those catinos animals are there are gentle people. Kings they have, under them, manifold tyrants. Their frontier dwells near that sea and then from the left part are many kings.

This type of person lives for many years and they are useful people. And if any person to them comes, then they give them a woman before they let them on way. The Macedonian Alexander, then when he had come to them, he wondered at their humanity, nor would he kill them nor do them any injury.)<sup>123</sup>

There are several important points in these passages. First, there are three separate references to these people as *menn*, *mann cynn*, and *menn*, all demonstrating that they meet Criterion 1. In terms of Criterion 2, the only physical difference mentioned between the author’s human people and these people is their longevity; they live for many years (*fela geara*) but this does

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<sup>123</sup> Text from Cotton Tiberius MS, f 85v.

not meet Criterion 2 as it is written in this text. There is a great deal of information the author provides in reference to Criterion 3. First, these people are called *gæstlipende*, literally “guest-gentle” or hospitable. These people welcome others in a way that is quite different from the many peoples mentioned earlier in the texts that either fled other people or ate them. They are organized into a society that provides many kings, another indication that these people have a society that the author recognizes as similar to their own. These people are useful (*fremfulle*; literally “full of benefits”) and provide hospitality to strangers, even so far as providing women to them.<sup>124</sup> They gain the praise and protection of Alexander the Great, in direct opposition to his behavior regarding the nonhuman tusked women. In particular, he is impressed by their “*menniscness*,” the Latin shows *humanitatem*, defined as “human nature, culture, civilization.” These are the opposite of the “*ellereorde*”/ “barbarous” people; these people most definitely do not meet Criterion 3 as their society is completely acceptable to the author. These human people are what Shaun F. D. Hughes would call “human human beings,” with their humanity showing in both their personhood and as an adjective descriptive of their actions.

**Paragraph 36.** The *sigelwara* are dark-skinned people in Africa. Their name in the Latin text is the more familiar, if abbreviated, “&thiopians” (Ethiopians). The translation of the name in the Old English refers to what the author perceived as the reason for the difference in skin color, *sigel* for “sun” and *wara* from *hwierfan* meaning “changed.”<sup>125</sup> This fits with the view that the physical appearance of people differed according to the requirements of their environment demonstrated in part 10 of the *Liber Monstrorum*, where the Ethiopians are described as contrary to the Rhipaen people due to the differences in their respective living conditions, with the former living under a hot and burning sun, and the second, pale people living under constantly icy conditions. In *The Wonders of the East*, the author describes them as *mann kynn*, fulfilling Criterion 1. The difference in skin color is mentioned as a perceived physical

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<sup>124</sup> The assumption here is that the author is male or writing in the context of the male soldiers in Alexander’s army, which would suggest these women are being provided for the sexual benefit of the travellers. It is possibly meant to be more in the matter of domestic service, but the fact that Alexander’s behavior towards these people is in such direct opposition to his behavior regarding the sexually un-available tusked women, I am inclined to go with my first hypothesis.

<sup>125</sup> The other possible translation, *sigel hweorf*, “victorious troop” makes less sense in this context.

difference, fulfilling Criterion 2<sup>126</sup>. However, there is no indication that these people are outside of the standard social structure, as the author gives no comment on their behavior. As they do not fulfill Criterion 3, they are described as human people.

**Paragraph 40.** The final paragraph in *The Wonders of the East* describes “spwearte menn” that live in a burning land. Rather than being changed by the sun like the Sigelwara of Paragraph 36, this is a land that is either literally on fire or otherwise the ground is so hot that “nænig oðer mann to ðam mannu geferan mæg” (“not any other person is able to travel to those people”). This suggests that in addition to the physical coloration of the people, there may be another physical or preternatural difference between these people and the author’s concept of normal which allows these people to live on a land that is unendurable for anyone else. Since these are “menn,” they fulfill Criterion 1. The physical and potentially preternatural differences fulfill Criterion 2. However, this is another example where the case for or against Criterion 3 is not clear-cut. The author does not mention anything about the social structure of these people; in general, I have been treating a lack of comment as an implicit clue that the social structure of the people being described as unexceptional according to the author. However, in this case, the fact that these people are truly unapproachable by any others means that they cannot engage in the standard social structure. I would therefore argue that these people meet Criterion 3 and are nonhuman persons in this text.

Table 2.1, below, gives a summary of the way that the 3 criteria are applied to each of the possible persons in *The Wonders of the East*. Only one of the entries (the Lantern-Eyed people) yields a surprising result, as glowing eyes are not generally considered to be within the realm of “standard” human persons. However, if additional information were gleaned from any of the source texts, or if the author had communicated anything about the relations between their own society and that of the Lantern-Eyes people, the result might have been different.

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<sup>126</sup> Arguably, this is a difference that was understood as within normal human range; however, in the strictest interpretation of my three criteria, anything the author comments upon is treated as “difference,” whether it be in terms of coloration, disability, or anything else. This is, again, why I maintain that to be nonhuman requires all three criteria to be met.

Table 2.1 Peoples in *The Wonders of the East* evaluated by Proposed Nonhuman Criteria

Section #	Name	Criterion #1 (Rational& Mortal)	Criterion #2 (Physical/ Difference)      Preternatural	Criterion #3 (Different social frame)	Determination (Human or Nonhuman)
2	Merchants	Implied (ceapmen)	Not marked	Not marked	Human
9	Men	Implied (mon)	Not marked	Not marked	Human
10	Conopoenas	Implied no	Both	Implied	Not a person
11	Homodubii (1)	Implied (menn)	Implied (twylice)	Yes (dietary)	Nonhuman
13	Men	Implied	Not marked	Not marked	Human
15	Two-nosed Giants	Implied (men)	Yes (physical)	Yes (birthing journey to India)	Nonhuman
16	Three-hued Giants	Implied (men)	Yes (physical)	Yes (flee people)	Nonhuman
17	Hostes	Implied (men)	Yes (physical)	Yes (eat people)	Nonhuman
19	Blemmyes	Implied ( <i>menn</i> )	Yes (physical)	Implied	Nonhuman
20	Dragons	Implied no	Yes (physical)	Implied	Not a person
21	Homodubii (2)	Implied yes ( <i>rice, stefne</i> )	Yes (physical)	Implied	Nonhuman
22	Worst People	Implied ( <i>men</i> )	Not marked	Yes ( <i>ellreorde, pyrstan</i> )	Human
24	Donestre	Implied ( <i>mon cyn</i> )	Yes (preternatural, physical)	Yes (eat people)	Nonhuman
25	Liconian Giants	Implied ( <i>men</i> )	Yes (physical)	Implied (flee people)	Nonhuman
26	Lantern Eyes	Implied ( <i>man</i> )	Yes (physical? preternatural?)	Not marked	Human
27	Priest/Bishop	Implied	No	Yes (either heathen or dietary)	Human
29	Suitable People	Implied ( <i>menn</i> )	No	Not marked	Human
30	Bearded Huntresses	Implied ( <i>wif</i> )	Yes (physical)	Yes (clothing, habits)	Nonhuman
31	Tusked women	Implied ( <i>wif</i> )	Yes (physical)	Implied ( <i>æwisc</i> , Alexander's reaction)	Nonhuman
32	Catinos People	Implied ( <i>menn</i> )	Not marked	Yes (diet)	Human
33/34	Gentle People	Implied ( <i>menn, mann cynn</i> )	Not marked	Implied no ( <i>meniscness, lipende</i> )	Human
36	Ethiopians	Implied ( <i>mann kynn</i> )	Yes (color)	Not marked	Human
40	Dark people	Implied ( <i>menn</i> )	Yes (color, preternatural)	Implied (live in a burning land)	Nonhuman



## 2.4 Beowulf and the Nonhuman Peoples

I will be using this section to evaluate the nonhuman status of four characters discussed in *Beowulf*: Cain, Grendel, Grendel's Mother, and the Dragon. Grendel, Grendel's Mother, and the Dragon are the three "monsters" that form the central incidents of the poem, and have been discussed in great depth by many scholars on monstrosity from Tolkien forward. Cain, as the Biblical first criminal and the named ancestor of Grendel and all the other *untȳdras* is also worth examining. In each case, I will use textual evidence to determine if a character meets the three criteria to be a nonhuman person.

### 2.4.1 Grendel

It will not be a difficult task to demonstrate Grendel's status as a nonhuman person. In order to do so, first it is necessary to consider if Grendel is a rational, mortal creature. Grendel is certainly mortal; he is explicitly *dēaðfæge*, "fated to die" (line 850), and Beowulf does indeed kill him. The question of whether Grendel is rational cannot be based on his speech, as he does not speak during the events of the poem. However, he is described as *helrūnan* (hell-skilled, line 163), with the connotation that he has been taught these skills. Furthermore, the poet calls him:

se þe fela æror

mōdes myrðe    manna cynne/

fyrene gefremede    — hē [wæs] fāg wið God.<sup>127</sup>

(he who earlier, troubled of heart performed crimes against the family of mankind;

he [was] in a state of feud against God)

The main word of note in regards to Grendel's rationality is *fāg*, from *fæhð*, which the glossary of Klaeber's 4<sup>th</sup> edition parses as an adjective meaning "hostile," "in a state of feud with God," and "outlaw."<sup>128</sup> The word includes violence, but what animal fights against God? Instead, only a

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<sup>127</sup> *Beowulf*, lines 809-811.

<sup>128</sup> *Beowulf*, "Glossary" 373.

rational being could have the free will to rebel. The evidence against him as an animal includes the statement that he is *mordres scyldig*, “guilty of murders.”<sup>129</sup> In addition, the multiple references to Grendel as a person include instances of *guma*, *maga*, *rinc*, and *wer*, all commonly used synonyms for human men. He is also equated with human persons: first as a retainer of Hroþgar when he is called *heal-ðegn*, then with Beowulf when they are both called *rēpe ren-weardas*, and finally with Hroþgar himself when Grendel is called *fyrena hyrde*, a mockery of the “protector” title used by kings.<sup>130</sup> Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Grendel fulfills Augustine’s requirement for personhood: he is explicitly described to be a descendant of Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, the first people created by God. With all of this evidence, it can be determined that Grendel is, in fact, a person, and thus fulfills the first criterion in the nonhuman person evaluation.

The second criterion requires that the person in question should have notable physical and/or preternatural differences from what the author describes as “normal.” Grendel demonstrates multiple of these differences as described in the poem. First, he “on weres wæstmum wræclastas træd / næfne hē wæs mǣra þonne ænig man oðer.” (“trod the paths of exile in the appearances of a man ... except that he was larger than any other person.”)<sup>131</sup> His gigantic size is shared by few other characters in the text: his mother, Beowulf, and the dragon. Next, “an unfair light shone from his eyes.” As noted by Williams, this suggests that Grendel may be descended from the Nephilim, the mythical descendants of human women and angels, or at least have an association with fallen angels.<sup>132</sup> No Dane knows for sure who or what fathered Grendel, or even if any other of these *dyrne gastas* (obscure spirits) might have been born before him.<sup>133</sup> In terms of Grendel’s preternatural abilities, readers see that he has *foresworen* (forsworn) weapons. This does not mean that he has simply chosen to not wear them. According to Geoffrey Hughes, this demonstrates that Grendel has a charm or enchantment which prevents him from taking harm from human weapons.<sup>134</sup> His skin is physically hard to the touch, and his nails are long and sharp and tough as

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<sup>129</sup> I recognize that animals could be tried and put to death for crimes, and in fact the *nicera* are described multiple times as “foes” in the text. However, Grendel’s particular situation seems to demonstrate not simply a hunger for eating humans in ignorance of the laws, but a deeper motive that demonstrates sentience.

<sup>130</sup> “Hall-thane” (line 142), “cruel house-guardians” (line 770), and “protector of sins,” with the added connotation of kingship (line 750).

<sup>131</sup> *Beowulf*, lines 1352-53.

<sup>132</sup> David Williams, *Deformed Discourse* 117

<sup>133</sup> *Beowulf*, line 1357 (there genitive plural).

<sup>134</sup> Geoffrey Hughes, *An Encyclopedia of Swearing: The Social History of Oaths, Profanity, Foul Language, and Ethnic Slurs in the English-Speaking World* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe 2006), 8.

noted in the passage where Grendel's arm is displayed for Hrōþgār's court. In terms of physical size, strength, and preternatural abilities, Grendel meets Criterion 2.

Grendel is outside the human society both in physical place and in behavior. Grendel is described as inhabiting the moors and fens. The fens, as seen in Maxims II, are specifically the province of the *þyrs*. He is also a *sceadu-genga* (shadow-walker); the darkness is associated with thieves and outlaws. While Grendel does seem to have some claim on a place in the human world, it is an inverse of what should be the normal relationship. Instead of approaching Hrōþgār's *gífstól* (gift-seat) and offering service in return for treasure, a community-building action, Grendel approaches only to destroy the community. In addition, while he is called a hall thane while battling Beowulf, he is not protecting, but rather actively wrecking the hall in their fight. Even if Grendel is seeking revenge for some slight, he does not approach Hrōþgār directly in order to seek a solving. He does not pay wergild and from the way that it is stated, the counselors soon learn not to expect any, which suggests that Grendel is not just an outsider, but also not expected to abide by the human rules. All of this is outside his use of magic and his appetite for eating human people. Grendel fully meets all three criteria, and is therefore a nonhuman person.

#### **2.4.2 Grendel's Mother**

Grendel's mother is expected to be both rational and mortal based on her descent from Cain (lines 111-14). More specifically, while we never hear her speak, Grendel's mother demonstrates rational thought and a sense of interiority in the way she is presented by the author. First she is shown plotting how best to get revenge without waking anyone else. She nearly gets the better of Beowulf through a combination of both strength and strategy. Furthermore, it can be argued she shows a knowledge of human convention in her one-to-one revenge for her son's death. The author makes it clear that she mourns her son in a way that might not have been expected for animals. She also sends a message, either taunt or warning, through the act of leaving Æschere's head for Hrōþgār's men to find outside the mere. Grendel's mother demonstrates a sense of rational thought, and thereby meets criterion 1.

In terms of Grendel's mother's preternatural or physical differences, she is similar to Grendel in the description of her as in the likeness of a woman but far larger than any other. She is shown to have great physical strength, possibly as great as Beowulf's. She is also proof against human weapons just like her son Grendel. When Hrunting fails to kill her and Beowulf turns to

the giantish sword, while it is able to pierce her flesh, her blood is still able to destroy the blade, which is surely not a standard human trait. She is described in nonhuman terms as a sea wolf, and as a ruler within her strange space under the waters but we are not given a distinct explanation of her in terms of any other physical traits. However, based purely on her preternatural proof against weapons and her physical size, Grendel's mother meets criterion two.

Grendel's mother exists outside the social structure of human people. First of all, she dwells in the fens which is the province of the *þyrs* who must dwell alone in the land and of the thief who dwells in darkness. In both of these cases the person in or a creature in question dwells outside the social structure of the community where human law applies. Grendel's mother may appear to be following human convention when she takes revenge for the death of her son Grendel in a one-to-one killing. However she is not actually justified in seeking vengeance, even if Grendel had been human. Her son Grendel was in a feud against Hrōþgār and the Danes for a long period of time and never paid recompense to sue for peace. While this might mean that she's justified in continuing the feud, it also means that Grendel was in many ways an outlaw operating outside of human laws and therefore there would be no need to compensate for his killing.<sup>135</sup> In addition, Grendel's mother rules her hall by herself and does not seem to have a conventional human-type marriage—no one knows Grendel's father—suggesting that she is not expected to abide by human laws. Grendel's mother meets criterion 3 and is therefore a nonhuman person.

### 2.4.3 The Dragon

As noted by Joyce Tally Lionarons, the dragon is a figure with wide-ranging mythological background.<sup>136</sup> Dragons are usually shown as beasts with animal instincts in classical sources, with the shared characteristics of scaly bodies and venom, though they display variety in terms of wings, flight, and other abilities.<sup>137</sup> Concerning dragons in Germanic mythology, Arnold says:

According to the strictly mythological aspects of both the Poetic Edda and the Prose Edda, there are two dragons in particular that the gods, and therefore humanity,

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<sup>135</sup> See 2.1.2 above for the relevant legal information.

<sup>136</sup> Joyce Tally Lionarons, *The Medieval Dragon: The Nature of the Beast in Germanic Literature* (Enfield Lock: Hisarlik Press: 1998), 5.

<sup>137</sup> Lionarons, *The Medieval Dragon* 13. Also see Martin Arnold, "Chapter One: Dragons in Greek and Roman Mythology" in *The Dragon: Fear and Power* (London: Reaktion Books, 2018), 13-42.

should dread. These are the flying reptilian dragon Nidhogg, whose name means ‘the one striking full of hatred’, and the vast marine snake the Midgard or World Serpent, also known as Jormungand (Mighty Snake).<sup>138</sup>

In Germanic literary sources, the main examples are Fafnir and the dragon in Beowulf. The dragon Fafnir is unusual, as Lionarons points out, in his ability to speak;<sup>139</sup> this ability may be based on his origin as a dwarf who has shape-shifted into his current draconic form. Fafnir, who is able to speak, is both rational and mortal, fitting Augustine’s definition of personhood descended through Adam and Eve. Fafnir, of course, demonstrates both preternatural and physical differences from the human “standard” model; he is not only a giant, sharp-toothed serpent, but shape-shifted himself into that form. In addition, despite the judgement of Fafnir himself against his killer as committing a murder or actionable killing, Fafnir is not likewise judged according to human laws. In other words, there is no expectation that Fafnir would pay wergild should he kill someone, nor that a person like Sigemund will be held to blame for killing the dragon. He understands the human cultural framework, but is not subject to it. According to all three criteria, the dragon Fafnir is a nonhuman person.

Beowulf’s dragon is a less clear-cut case. The dragon is either naturally or preternaturally formed in giant serpent shape, able to breathe fire, and able to fly. The dragon is clearly not expected to adhere to human conventions, only divine law; that is, it is not expected to pay compensation for killing people, and when Beowulf kills it, it is not expected that he would have to pay compensation (partially because Beowulf is king, but mostly because the dragon is not a recognized part of the human cultural framework of the text.) The dragon is definitely mortal, in that he can be killed, though he is revealed to have protected the barrow for three hundred years (2278). The question becomes one of rationality when determining if the dragon is a person.

Rationality was not necessarily demonstrated through speech; rather the main difference between human persons and animals was the subjugation of animals under “rational” human

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<sup>138</sup> Arnold, *The Dragon* 78.

<sup>139</sup> Lionarons, *The Medieval Dragon* 64. Arnold also mentions the example of the cursed gold and possible transformation of Þórir in *Gull-Þóris saga*, *The Dragon* 108.

persons. .<sup>140</sup> Therefore, I must consider the evidence given in the text of the dragons' ability to reason.

The dragon is described in sympathetic terms by the author. The dragon is able to immediately notice that an item is missing from his hoard. The dragon is able to reason out the location of the thief, burning down the hall and town of the sheltering people. The argument for the dragon being a person is strengthened by its explicit ties within the text to the story of Fafnir. Just after the slaying of Grendel, the Danes are rejoicing by comparing Beowulf's slaying of Grendel to the slaying of Fafnir by Sigemund Just like Sigemund, the killings are called murder ("draca morðre swealt," line 892; "oð þæt hē morðre swealt," line 2782). By placing Fafnir's story in direct parallel to Beowulf's own story, there may be a suggestion of more similarities between the two cases. If Beowulf's dragon is like Fafnir, then perhaps he too is a person transformed by greed and killing into a dragon. As Raymond Tripp has suggested, the greedy and murderous king Heremōd seems like a possible fit for such a person-turned-dragon.<sup>141</sup> While there is no conclusive evidence, there are enough implied supports for the rationality, and therefore the personhood, of the dragon. Unlike in the *Wonders of the East*, where the dragons and *nædres* are described in the same way as the other extraordinary beasts, the dragon of Beowulf is described differently from the nickers; he is described using human terms like "borges weard" (guardian of the burial mound) (line 2580). Based on these arguments, I have included Beowulf's dragon in the summary tables for nonhuman person terminology.

The evidence for Criterion 1 is available through implication. The dragon does seem to have mortality, in that he can be killed. He does appear to be extremely long-lived; the author states he has ruled his hoard for 300 winters, making him approximately as old as Heremōd, the predecessor of Scyld Scefing, the mythical king of the Danes. However, the dragon can be killed even by mortal weapons as is shown in his death at the hands of Wiglaf and Beowulf. In terms of his rationality, the dragon does not speak. However there is reason to believe that he might have been capable of speech based on cultural traditions associated with Fafnir the dragon, as seen above. In addition, the evidence within Beowulf itself demonstrates that this dragon is capable of

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<sup>140</sup> In the Old English text, there is no mention of St. Christopher being dog-headed as the tradition would have it, but he does speak frequently. See: Stanley Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts in MS Cotton Vitellius A xv*, Early English Text Society os 161 (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 68-76.

<sup>141</sup> Raymond P. Tripp, *More About the Fight With the Dragon: Beowulf, 2208B-3182: Commentary, Edition, and Translation* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983).

rational thought and is given interiority by the author The dragon when he realizes that he has been stolen from, “waits eagerly to go and seek out vengeance against the thief”. This means that the dragon is capable of recognizing that something is missing from his hoard as well as capable of tracking down be particular thief and of waiting until it is his proper time to act, which of course is at night. The dragon is treated by the author as the victim of theft. The author seems to mourn that the dragon would no longer fly by nights.

In terms of Criterion 2, there is zero question the dragon is most demonstrably not the same as a human person in either physical or preternatural abilities. He is 100 feet long , has large wings that allow him to fly, and possesses both fiery breath and venomous teeth.

His personhood is questionable by Augustinian standards; it is unclear if he can be considered a descendant of Adam and Eve. Under one set of conventions, of course, he is a dragon, not a human at all. However if we instead examine whether he might have once been a person, as is the case when Fafnir becomes a dragon, it is in fact possible. Some have even suggested that Heremōd, the greedy and violent former king of the Danes may in fact have turned into a dragon and even be this very dragon who is now protecting the cursed hoard. Sigmund and Beowulf are explicitly tied in the text when the story of Sigmund is related to that of Beowulf as part of the celebration after Beowulf kills Grendel, suggesting that the stories may have additional parallels. This might extend to the inclusion of a person-turned-dragon. The case for personhood can be strengthened by noting that the killing of both Fafnir and Beowulf’s dragon are characterized as *morð*, a term used within the poem only for the killing of persons.<sup>142</sup> The implication is that both dragons can be considered persons under Criterion 1.

However, the dragons in Beowulf can only be considered as nonhuman persons. Heremōd’s antisocial behavior is the behavior that would turn one into a dragon: the hoarding of treasure rather than the redistribution of gifts for maintaining communal good, along with antisocial violence against one’s own companions and a certain tendency to fall into a dark mood of greed (see lines 1709b-1722a). This behavior sounds similar to the gold sickness that is associated with the cursed ring which causes Fafnir to kill his father and plot the death of his brother. Fafnir is not expected to abide by human rules; nor is Beowulf’s dragon. There is no suggestion that the killing of these dragons will require compensation, nor that the dragons would

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<sup>142</sup> For further analysis, see note 147 below.

pay compensation for killing people. They meet all three criteria for nonhuman persons simply by behaving according to their prescribed behavior in Maxims II: “A dragon must [be] in [a] barrow, old [and] proud in treasures” (*Draca sceal on hlæwe,/ Frod, frætwum wlanc*).<sup>143</sup>

#### 2.4.4 Cain and his kin

In terms of criterion 2, at first glance, it might seem that Cain does not meet this criterion of physical or preternatural difference. He is the first child of the two first people made by God, in God’s image. Presumably then he would appear in the same form as his parents. However, through his own actions Cain becomes marked by God in an unalterable way that is inheritable and passed to each of the children of Cain. This mark, which protects him against injury by human people through making it clear that God will take vengeance on anyone who kills Cain, could be seen as a form of preternatural and/or physical difference, which would meet criterion 2.

Cain only meets criterion 3 in the sense that most outlaws meet criterion 3: that is he is expected to abide by human law until he makes it clear that he will not abide by it and is therefore held to be outside the law in the same sense as any outlaw or non human person. In this sense Cain is a nonhuman person, however because criterion 2 is visited upon him as a consequence of his actions and a punishment for his actions under human law and under the social conventions put in place by the Christian deity, Cain is a human person however, his offspring are not. Cain’s offspring are of course the *un-týdras*, which means anti offspring or misborn. This shows that they are born in a way that falls outside of what is considered natural creation, something that might be termed a monstrous birth. Because they are descended from the first people through Cain, all of these peoples, *ylfa*, *orcnēas*, and *eotens*, are considered to be persons and fulfill criterion 1. In terms of criterion 2, while we are not given any explicit depiction of these creatures in the text, we are told that they are *untýdras* (misborn), suggesting that they are not in a natural form. It is also implied that these persons are not expected to obey human rules as they are born outside of the human social structure. There is a very short portion of the text, requiring much extrapolation by the reader; however if we look at the examples in old Norse of the *pyrs* and the *jötun*, the *draugr* and the elves, we will see that this convention would seem to hold true culturally speaking.

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<sup>143</sup> “Maxims II,” 26b-27a in *Wisdom Poetry in Old English*, edited by Shippey, 76.



In discussing the case of Cain as it was perceived in Old English literature, T. Jones has provided the following overview:

...while the actual sinful nature of man may have been traced to Adam, the flagrant, violent display of it was blamed on Cain. For instance, the Anglo-Saxon Maxims I in the Exeter Book read:

Wearð fæhþo fyra cynne, siþþan furþum swealg  
eorðe Abeles blode. Næs þæt andæge nið,  
of þam wrohtdropan wide gesprungon,  
micel mon ældum, monegum þeodum  
bealoblonden niþ. Slog his broðor swæsne  
Cain, þone cwealm nered; cup wæs wide siþan,  
þæt ece nið ældum scod, swa aþolwarum. (Ll. 192–8)

(Hostility for the human race began when the earth drank Abel's blood. That was not the crime of a single day, but from that bloodshed, great crimes spread widely among men, a pernicious evil among many peoples. Cain slew his own brother, whom death took away; later it was widely known that eternal malice injured men.)

Here Cain's act is presented as a sort of *primum mobile* in the history of niþ : spite, hatred, war, evil, oppression. Thus, as we might expect, Cain became a symbol of murder, fratricide, and vengeance (fæhþo). In the medieval imagination Cain, like Lucifer in the Gospel of Nicodemus, became the father of the outsider, the person who exists outside the physical, moral, religious, or cultural boundaries.<sup>144</sup>

Indeed, in *Beowulf*, Cain is blamed for his offspring, who are called both *geōsceaftgāst* (fated spirit) (line 1266) and *untýdras* (mis-born; anti-offspring). In both cases, the mark of the parent's sin is passed to the offspring for generations of nonhuman persons, including Grendel. However, it is not immediately clear if Cain himself is to be considered a nonhuman person.

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<sup>144</sup> Timothy Jones, *Outlawry in Medieval Literature*, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 29.

Cain is a rational mortal person descended from Adam and Eve. He is the son of the two first people. He demonstrates rationality through speech in the Bible, both by denying knowledge of his brother's whereabouts and again in protesting the punishment placed on him by God. The killing of Abel is described by a variety of terms in the text: Cain "slew" (*slōg*) Abel; Cain was "edge-killer" (*ecgbanan*) to Abel; he is "marked by murder" (*morþre ġemearcod*); and God avenges the "killing" (*cwealm*). First, while *slagan* and *cwealm* could be applied to many different kinds of violence resulting in death, only persons are assumed to wield edged weapons like the one Cain is said to have used to kill his brother. In addition, he must be rational to be able to plot and commit *morð*, which is dependent on the ability to either plan the killing in advance or to try to hide it once it has been committed. Cain therefore fulfills Criterion 1 as a rational mortal person.

Cain likewise fulfills Criterion 3. He transgressed human laws in a manner that is *botleas*, and is put into exile by God. The author of *Beowulf* makes it clear that Cain is not welcome in human spaces, saying "hē þā fāg ġewāt / morþre ġemearcod ... / wēsten warode."<sup>145</sup> Later, he says that "...þone cwealm ġewræc / ēce drihten þæs þe hē Ābel slōg; / ne ġefeah hē þære fāhðe ac hē hine feor forwræc / metod for þȳ māne mancynne fram"<sup>146</sup> Cain is dwelling in spaces that are traditionally associated with thieves, exiles, and nonhuman creatures; specifically they are "waste," suggesting a lack of development, and "far from humankind," demonstrably outside human social control.

In terms of Cain's fulfillment of Criterion 2, there are two possible interpretations. First, before the murder, there is no question: as the first child of the first two people made by God, Cain would look like them. However, after the killing of Abel and his concealment of the action, Cain is marked by God with a sign so that everyone will know not to kill him. The exact nature of the sign is not known; the *Beowulf* author settles for *morþre ġemearcod*, marked by murder. It may even be imagined as the kind of corporal punishment or disfigurement that accompanied certain crimes in the Anglo-Saxon period, such as the removal of the nose. One could argue that the mark is a symbol of Cain's punishment according to human (Christian divine) law, and is therefore within human boundaries. In that case, Cain would not meet Criterion 2 and would be human. If, however, one interprets the mark of Cain's punishment as a divine preternatural marker beyond

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<sup>145</sup> "he then departed [as an] outlaw... fled person-joys/ inhabited wastes." *Beowulf*, lines 1263-65.

<sup>146</sup> "he avenged that killing, the eternal Lord, because he slew Abel; nor was he able to enjoy that feud, but the ruler drove him far from humankind for that crime," *Beowulf*, lines 108-11.

human boundaries, Cain would meet Criterion 3 and be nonhuman. The mark is meant to show that Cain's punishment is up to God and protect him from violence done by human persons. It could even be that Grendel's preternatural resistance to weapons is from this source. Given the fact that the mark of Cain can be passed to subsequent generations and that those future generations are nonhuman, I suggest that Cain's mark is preternatural and meets Criterion 2.

## 2.5 Old English Language for Nonhuman Persons

In this section, I will show a table showing the number of times particular "root" terms are used in reference to nonhuman persons. As *The Wonders of the East* is a short text with few descriptions, both manuscripts have been condensed onto Table 2.2 (below). Due to the larger number of terms used in *Beowulf*, I have first broken the terminology into separate tables for each nonhuman person, and then provided summary tables. A brief discussion follows each table.

### 2.5.1 The Wonders of the East

As can be seen in Table 2.2, the terminology for nonhuman persons in *The Wonders of the East* consists of three proper names, one occupation ("huntress," *huncige*), and the words for "kin," "person," and "woman".

Table 2.2 Summary of Nonhuman Person Terminology in *The Wonders of the East*

Old English Root Term	<i>Wonders</i> Tiberius	<i>Wonders</i> Vitellius
cynn*	3	3
Donestre	1	1
Homodubii	2	2
Hostes	1	1
huncige	1	1
mann	12	8
wif	3	2

\* I have included counts for both *cynn* and *mann* where the text contains both words.

As noted in the detailed descriptions in the above section on *The Wonders of the East*, the text describes physical and preternatural differences of nonhuman persons, but rarely labels them as something other than a kind of person, even in the cases where proper names are provided. The

suggestion seems to be that, much as Augustine argued, no matter how strange the people may have seemed in appearance, abilities, or customs, both the human and nonhuman persons were descended from the shared lineage of Adam and Eve. This makes sense, given the Latin language inheritance of the text overall, which incorporates the works of Augustine and Isidore of Seville.

### 2.5.2 *Beowulf*

#### *Grendel*

As can be seen in Table 2.3, the terminology for Grendel is, of the three main antagonists in *Beowulf*, the most closely tied to the terminology associated with the devil. He is called a devil (*dēofol*, line 1680) and a *wiht unhælo*, literally an “unholy being” (line 120). He also is referred to with common Old English kennings for the devil, like *Godes andsacan* (adversary of God) and *fēond mancynnes* (enemy of humankind). The spiritual nature of his evil is further reflected in the labels of “demon” (*scucca* and *grama*), and his status as *helles hæfton* (a captive of hell) and *helle gast*. He is an “accursed one” (*heorowearh*) (line 1267), which can be translated to reflect either excommunication, a spiritual casting-out like the one experienced by Cain, or as a more literal outlawry. Although he is a giant (*eoten*), his body is treated as not-quite real until after his death; he is a death-shadow, *dēapscua* and one of the phantoms, *scinnan*, that afflict Heorot. His size and shining eyes are the only visual details described on Grendel’s body until after Beowulf has removed his arm and, later, his head.

Grendel’s status as an outsider to the society is further emphasized with compounds featuring him as an outcast: he is a *mearcstapa* (boundary walker) and an *ingenga* (invader). Grendel is consistently described in terms that emphasize the harm his actions cause to the Danes. Three of the most consistently used roots in his descriptions are “enemy,” “fierce opponent,” and “harmer” (*feond*, *āglæca*, and *sceaða*, respectively). His descriptors are usually straightforward, and emphasize his role as an enemy and trouble-maker (e.g. *bana* “killer” compounds; also “foe” compounds like *genīðla* and *gewinna*; “inciter” *getēon*). Occasionally, the descriptions are wry inversions of the reality of the situation, as when he is described as a “hall retainer” while battling Beowulf in Heorot. Grendel is *fyrena hyrde*, the protector of sins, as contrasted against Hrōþgār the *folces hyrde*, protector of the people.

Table 2.3: Summary of Nonhuman Person Terminology in *Beowulf*: Grendel

Old English Root Term	Modern English Translation	Count
āglǣca	fierce opponent	10
andsaca	adversary	2
atoll	terror	1
bana	killer	3
bearn	child	2
cuma	guest, stranger	1
dǣdhata	deed-hater	1
dēofol	devil	2
dēor (heaþodēor)	battle-worthy	1
eafora	son	1
earn/earmsceapen	wretched one	1
eoten	giant	1
fæge	fated (to die)	1
færgryre	harassing terror	1
fēond	enemy	13
fifel	huge sea-monster	1
fīrendǣd	evil deed (doer of)	1
frēond	friend	1
ganga	goer	3
gāst	spirit, guest, stranger, enemy	8
ġenīðla (feorhġenīðla)	deadly foe	1
ġeteon	inciter	1
ġewinna	life foe	1
gram	hostile ones, demons	1
grendel	proper name	2
guma	man	2
hæft	captive	1
hyrde	protector	1
ingenga	invader	1
lāð	hated (one)	4
mæg	kin	1
maga	man	1
ōþer	one of two	1
rinc	man	1
sāwol (hæþen)	soul (heathen)	1
sceaða	harmer	8
scinna	phantom	1

Table 2.3 Continued

Old English Root Term	Modern English Translation	Count
scua (dēaþscua)	shadow (death-shadow)	1
scucca	demon, devil	1
stapa (mearcstapa)	stepper (border-lands-stepper)	2
sunu	son	2
þegn	retainer	1
þēodprēa	threat to the nation	1
þyrs	monster?	1
weard	guardian	1
wearh (heorowearh)	accursed one, outcast, outlaw	1
wer	man	2
wiht (unhælo)	being (unholy)	1

The poem does still show Grendel as a person, albeit a deadly and nonhuman person. He is a *maga* (“man), and part of a kin-group *mæg*. Additional words emphasizing his personhood include *rinc*, *wer*, and *guma*, all common words used for human men. Moreover, he has a mother and he is her *angan eofora*, her only son. He may be hated and hateful, but he is someone’s child (*bearn*), and the poem does express some sympathy for the doomed Grendel, the *wonsæli wer* (ill-fortuned man).

*Gāst*, one of the most-used nouns in compounds concerning Grendel, emphasizes his liminal status through its semantic ambiguity. *Gāst*, sometimes also spelled *gæst*, can cover a range of meanings from “spirit”, the root of the modern “ghost,” to “stranger,” to “guest.” The range of spellings and meanings make it particularly difficult to determine if Grendel the *ellorgāst* is a foreign stranger, a foreign guest, or a foreign spirit. He is a murderous guest or stranger in at least one compound, *cwealmcuma*, but also described as a phantom or a shadow in other passages. If he is a guest, that suggests invitation and a degree of obligation on the part of Hrōþgār to provide for Grendel; however, Grendel’s destruction of the Danish people surely does not fit the model of hospitality demonstrated by Beowulf’s journey to Heorot.

What can be seen regarding nonhumans in *Beowulf* based on the vocabulary associated with Grendel is that nonhumans are transgressive enough to be seen as both people and as non-persons. Grendel has personhood; he shows joy, fear, and anger and has a relationship with his mother. However, Grendel is threatening on a physical, spiritual, and social level. He is not expected to behave like a human person, in terms of payment of wergild for slayings or other issues,

but when his nonhuman behavior threatens the lives of human persons and the social stability of a human society, violent actions are taken to remove the threat of the nonhuman person.

### ***Grendel's Mother***

As can be seen in Table 2.4, Grendel's mother is labelled not by any name, but instead by her relationship to Grendel, accounting for the seven times she appears as "mother." Likewise, her relationship to Grendel is emphasized by the uses of *māeg* (kinsperson). She is "one of two," the *ōþer* to Grendel, and they are both *earmsceapen* (wretched ones) together.

The next most frequently used term for her and any other kin is *gāst*, which, as noted above, is a complex term since there are multiple possible meanings. However, the preternatural and potentially spiritual threat is highlighted by the usage of this term, as with the description of the kin as being related to *dēofol*. The emotions inspired by this kin are in line with this preternatural presence: *atol* (terrible); *brōga* (a terror or prodigy); *gryre* (terror). However, Grendel's mother is not just a preternatural presence. She has a body (*flāschama*), and many of the terms associated with Grendel's mother emphasize the actions she takes: *inwitfeng* (malicious grasp), *sceaða* (harmer), *stapa* (stepper), *wrecend* (avenger), *wyrgend* (evil-doer).

Her identity as both a woman and a nonhuman person is emphasized by the collection of nouns used for her. On the one hand, she is described as a woman (*wīf*) multiple times, and once as an *ides*, which Jane Chance argues carries the connotation that the woman in question is nobility.<sup>147</sup> On the other hand, she also is described with words that are usually associated with men. She is called a *secg* (person) and *wylf* (wolf) both more gender-neutral terms, though as DeAngelo mentions, "wylf" was a term that had an early and ongoing association with criminals.<sup>148</sup> She is like Beowulf, Grendel, and the Dragon in carrying the labels of *āglāca* (fierce opponent), *fēond* (enemy), and *hierde* (protector, usually associated with kings). The combination of terms associated with multiple genders reflects her status as outside the "standard" society represented by the Danes. She is far more physically active than the Danish women seen in the text; she rules her own hall and seeks her own mate and her own vengeance, rather than using custom to send messages as in the cases of Wealpeow and Hildeburh.

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<sup>147</sup> Jane Chance, *Woman as Hero in Old English Literature* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 95.

<sup>148</sup> Jeremy DeAngelo, *Outlawry, Liminality, and Sanctity in the Literature of the Early Medieval North Atlantic*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 53.

Table 2.4: Summary of Nonhuman Terms in *Beowulf*: Grendel's Mother and Kin

Old English Root Term	Modern English Translation	Count
āglǣca	fierce opponent	1
atoll	terrible	1
brōga	terror/prodigy	1
cynn	kin	1
dēofol	devil	1
earming/earmsceapen	wretched ones	1
fēond	enemy	1
flāschama	flesh-home (body)	1
gāst	spirit, guest, stranger, enemy	5
hryre	terror	1
hierde	protector	2
ides	lady	1
inwitfeng	wily/malicious grasp	1
mǣġ	kin	3
mōdor	mother	7
ōper	one of two	2
sceaða	harmer	1
secg	person	1
stapa	stepper	1
wīf	woman	3
wrāð	hostile (one)	1
wrecend	avenger	1
wylf	wolf	2
wyrgend	evil-doer	1

The overall impression of the nouns related to Grendel's mother and kin is similar to that of Grendel himself, though there are significantly different sample sizes. These nonhuman persons are physical, social, and preternatural threats. They are regarded with some empathy as persons, but their nonhuman status is impossible to ignore, especially once it overlaps with human society.

### ***Dragons: Beowulf's Dragon and Fafnir***

The language used to discuss both of the dragons in *Beowulf* is summarized in Table 2.6, below. Many of the words place emphasis on the body of the dragons, either in terms of their existence (*draca*, *wyrm*) or on their movements (*flēogende*, *gebogen*). The Germanic *wyrm* is preferred to the Latin-derived *draca* almost two to one, twenty-three for the former and twelve for



the latter. The dragon’s role in regards to cursed treasures is brought up sixteen times with a mix of positive and neutral terms, as *weard* (guardian), *hierde* (protector), and *mundbora*. Slightly more terms emphasize instead the danger of the dragon to the human community, as eighteen terms relate to it as a fierce opponent (*āglāca*), killer (*bana*), enemy (*fēond*), deadly foe (*ġenīðla*), life-foe (*ġewinna*), and harmer (*sceaðā*). The more neutral terms—each to the other (*āġhwæðer / ððer*), warrior (*freca*), and being (*wiht*)—are rarely used.

There are a few times when Beowulf’s dragon is treated with empathy by the author. In Table 2.6, the term *searunīþ* is in reference to the “treachery” of the human servant who stole a cup from the treasure of the nonhuman dragon. In addition, the author’s passage mourns the dragon who will never again fly by night.<sup>149</sup> The killing of Fafnir by Sigmund is characterized as murder, reading *draca morðre swealt* (the dragon perished by murder), suggesting that the way Sigmund hid and lay in wait was not considered entirely without issue, even against a draconic foe.<sup>150</sup> Likewise, the terminology surrounding Beowulf’s killing of his dragon reads *he morðre swealt*, “he died by murder.”<sup>151</sup> As stated in section 2.4.3, the ability to be considered the victim of murder establishes the personhood of the dragon, and also insinuates that perhaps his killing was not entirely justifiable.

Table 2.5 Summary of Nonhuman Terms in *Beowulf*: Beowulf’s Dragon and Fafnir

Old English Root Term	Modern English Translation	Count
āġhwæðer / ððer	each to the other	1
āglāca	fierce opponent	4
bana	killer	1
ġebogen	curved one	1
draca	dragon	12
fēond	enemy	2
flēogende	flyer/winged	5
freca	warrior/man	1
ġāst	spirit, guest, stranger, enemy	4

<sup>149</sup> *Beowulf*, lines 3044.

<sup>150</sup> *Beowulf*, 892. It is possible that here *morðor* refers instead to the extreme violence of Sigmund, strong enough to embed a sword in a stone wall after piercing the dragon, but given that *morðor* compounds have an extremely limited distribution in the poem (10 occurrences including the two dragon incidents), and that the other contexts are actions by Cain (kinslaying), Grendel (eating Danes), within the Frisian feud (marriage-kin fighting one another), and the kinslaying when Hrothgar’s eldest brother was killed by another brother. Based on this limited distribution, the use of *morðor* in the two dragon incidents suggests that the killing of these dragons is not entirely justified.

<sup>151</sup> *Beowulf*, line 2782.

Table 2.5 Continued

Old English Root Term	Modern English Translation	Count
ġenīðla	deadly foe	1
ġewinna	life-foe	1
hierde	protector	3
mundbora	guardian	1
sceaða	harmer	6
searunīþ	treachery (dragon is victim)	1
weard	guardian	12
with	being	1
wyrm	serpent/dragon	23

### *Cain and Kin*

Cain and his descendants, minus Grendel's mother and Grendel, are considered together. This is due to the fact that the references to Cain are almost all tied specifically to *Caines cynne* and Cain as the progenitor of *untýdras* and *ġeōsceaftġāstas*. The full passage that most people quote regarding Cain's role in the generation of nonhumans is here:

...                    fīfelcynnes eard  
wonsæli wer    weardode hwīle  
siþðan him scyppend    forscifen hæfde  
in Cāines cynne —    þone cwealm ġewræc  
ēce drihten    þæs þe hē Ābel slōg;  
ne ġefeah hē þære fæhðe    ac hē hine feor forwræc  
metod for þȳ māne    mancynne fram  
þanon untýdras    ealle onwōcon  
eotenas ond ylfe    ond orcnēas  
swylce gigantas    þā wið gode wunnon  
lange þrāge    hē him ðæs lēan forġeald.

(the land of the savage kin the person lacking joy [Grendel] inhabited for a time after him the Creator had condemned among the kin of Cain — that killing avenged the eternal lord because he slew Abel. Nor did he that feud enjoy, but he, the measurer, drove him far away for the crime from person-kind. From thence all anti-

progeny awoke, giants and elves and walkers-after-death, and also giants who strove against God for a long time. He requited them for that.).<sup>152</sup>

Cain's descendants include *ylfe*, elves, nonhuman persons with preternatural abilities. *Eotenas* are cognate to the Old Norse *jötunn*, and are treated within *Beowulf* as giants similar to Grendel. *Gigantas*, the Latin-derived form of "giant" is restricted within the text to the apocryphal giants descended from fallen angels and from human women, sometimes known as the Nephilim. They are depicted as being drowned in Noah's flood on the sword hilt that Beowulf wields to kill Grendel's mother. The *orcnēas*, which only appear here, seem to be etymologically related to Orcus, a Latin god of death, and are usually described as "walkers-after-death" or parallel to the Old Norse *draugr*.<sup>153</sup>

As discussed in Section 2.4.4, the term *untȳdras* is derived from the Old English term *tudor*, which means "offspring" or "descendant." By adding the negating 'un' prefix, these are "anti-offspring," a more severe form of the modern term "misbegotten" that might be better translated as "abomination" as these are creatures that were not specifically part of God's initial creation, but by the descent from the fallen angels and the cursed Cain. The fallen angels are suggested in the term *ælwiht*, which recalls the association of angels with fiery imagery.<sup>154</sup> The other collective term *geōsceaftgāst*, which are said by Hrothgar to have been descended directly from Cain, can be translated as "doomed spirits." The use of *gāst* in this compound adds a spiritual facet that fits the term in association with both fallen angels and with more mortal descendants like Grendel. Hrothgar says of *gastbona* specifically that "*wæs þāra Grendel sum*" (Grendel was one of those).<sup>155</sup>

Regarding *fifel*, which appears in the phrase "*fifelcynnes eard*" that describes Grendel's dwelling place after his exile, Barreiro uses comparisons with similar terms in other northern European languages—which usually encompass meanings of idiocy, monstrosity, and oceanic enormity—to argue:

[...]el elemento físico no parece tan relevante para la *fifelcynn* de Beowulf, pese a que claramente Grendel (su representante principal) posee rasgos físicos bestiales

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<sup>152</sup> *Beowulf*, lines 104-14.

<sup>153</sup> John F. Vickery, *Beowulf and the Illusion of History* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2009), 191.

<sup>154</sup> Williams, *Deformed Discourse* 117.

<sup>155</sup> *Beowulf*, line 1266.

y deformes. Pero queda poco claro si estos son signos de una desmesura que reside en otros rasgos o si son concomitantes con ellos. No parece algo demasiado importante para definir el uso de *fifel* para alguien que pertenece a una *cynn*. Quizás la opción más sencilla sea no eliminar la ambigüedad: un monstruo, un idiota, un antisocial, un demente, todos comparten una desmesura (física o figurada) que les impide actuar como corresponde en sus relaciones con otros humanos, una anormalidad que los emparenta y enlaza y que, frecuentemente, se refleja en sus cuerpos.

([...]the physical element does not seem so relevant to Beowulf's *fīfelcynn*, despite the fact that Grendel (its main representative) clearly has bestial and deformed physical features. But it remains unclear whether these are signs of an excess that resides in other traits or whether they are concomitant with them. It doesn't seem too important to define the use of *fīfel* for someone who belongs to a *cynn*. Perhaps the simplest option is not to eliminate the ambiguity: a monster, an idiot, an antisocial, a madman, they all share an excess (physical or figurative) that prevents them from acting accordingly [with social norms] in their relationships with other humans, an abnormality that unites and links them and that, frequently, is reflected in their bodies.)<sup>156</sup>

Barreiro's definition of the beings lumped under the term *fīfel* fits my criteria 1 and 3 for nonhuman persons, and suggests that Criterion 2 is often an accompanying factor; a shared "excess (physical or figurative) that prevents them from acting accordingly in their relationships with *other humans* emphasis mine... frequently...reflected in their bodies." [emphasis added]. The kin of the *fīfel* are other people who have trouble relating to the shared social expectations and structures of human persons. Their personhood is suggested in the terms *wer* (man), *pēod* (nation) and *cyn* (kin), while the physical danger associated with them is shown in *bana* (killer), *fēondsceaða* (harmful enemy), and *āglāca* (fierce opponent). There are two specific references to Cain and his descendants that are parallel to terms used for the Devil: *gram* (enemy or demon), and *gāstbona* (soul-killer). Like Grendel, Cain and his other descendants are equated with both physical and spiritual danger.

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<sup>156</sup> Barreiro, "El país." 14. Translated by April Grotberg, personal communication, 12 May 2022.

Table 2.6: Summary of Nonhuman Terms in *Beowulf*: Cain and his kin

Old English Root Term	Modern English Translation	Count
ælf	elf	1
ǣlwiht	alien beings	1
āglæca	fierce opponent	1
bana	killer	1
cynn	kin	1
eoten	giant	3
fēondsceaða	harmful enemy	1
fifel	monster	1
gāst	spirit, guest, stranger, enemy	2
gāstbona	soul-killer	1
gigant	giant	1
gram	enemy, hostile one, demon	1
orcnēas	walker-after-death	1
þēod	nation	1
tūdor (untýdre)	(anti-)offspring, abomination	1

### *Summary of Nonhuman Terms in Old English*

Table 2.7, below, provides a summary table of all terms used for nonhuman persons in Old English that occur three or more times. A complete summary table of all chapter findings (Table 2.8) can be located in the Conclusion, Section 2.6.

Table 2.7 Details of Nonhuman Person Terms in Old English with Three or More Occurrences

Term	Wonders Tiberius	Wonders Vitellius	Beowulf	Total	Translation	Other referents
wyrm	0	0	23	23	serpent/dragon	Beasts
mann	12	8	0	20	person	Humans
gāst	0	0	18	18	spirit/enemy/guest	Humans, devils
āglæca	0	0	16	16	fierce opponent	Any
fēond	0	0	16	16	enemy	Humans, devils
sceaða	0	0	15	15	harmer	Humans, devils
draca <sup>i</sup>	0	0	13	13	dragon	N/A
weard	0	0	13	13	protector	Humans
cynn,*	3	3	3	9	kin/kind	Any
wīf	3	2	3	8	woman	Humans
mōdor	0	0	7	7	mother	Humans
hierde	0	0	6	6	guardian	Humans
bana	0	0	5	5	killer	Humans, devils
flēogende	0	0	5	5	flyer/winged	Beasts
ent	0	0	4	4	giant	N/A
eoten	0	0	4	4	giant	N/A
Homodubii	2	2	0	4	doubted human	N/A
lāð	0	0	4	4	hated/hateful	Any
mæg	0	0	4	4	kin	Humans
dēofol	0	0	3	3	devil	Devils
ganga	0	0	3	3	goer	Any
gigant	0	0	3	3	giant	N/A

As can be seen in Table 2.9, there are twenty-two root words referring to nonhuman persons that occur in the three Old English manuscripts being considered. Of these twenty two, only five are words that cannot be used to refer to another kind of being; these words are *draca*, *eoten*, *ent*, *Homodubii*, and *gigant*.<sup>157</sup> Of these five, *draca* and *gigant* are adopted from the Latin, *Homodubiit* is a Latin-based word meant to act as a proper name for two separate groups of nonhuman people, and the Germanic *ent* and *eoten* are references to giants. Of the remaining terms in the table, two

<sup>157</sup> One can make an argument that *draca* may be used to refer to serpents or to the Devil, but usually this is not used as interchangeably as *wyrm*, for example.

may refer to beasts (Germanic *wyrm* and *flēogende*); one may refer to devils (Latin *dēofol*); four may refer to humans or devils (Germanic *gāst*, *fēond*, *sceaða*, and *bana*); six may also be used to refer to human persons (*mann*, *weard*, *wīf*, *mōdor*, *hierde*, and *mæġ*), and four may be used in reference to any kind of being (Germanic *āglæca*, *cynn*, *lāð*, and *ganga*). The terms with Latin etymological origins are all Biblical: giants, dragons, and the devil are all present in several locations in the Bible. The Homodubii also come from a book with Latin origins, *The Wonders of the East*.

Table 2.7 reflects an emphasis on the personhood of the nonhuman persons represented in these texts, as well as on the potential threat they pose to human persons. *Mann* and *wīf* emphasize the ways these nonhuman persons are similar to their human counterparts. The additional kinship terms *cynn*, *mōdor*, and *mæġ*, as well as the ruler-linked *hierde* and *weard* show the ways that families and larger groups of nonhuman people are structured is imagined to be similar to the organization of human persons. The preternatural and physical differences of nonhuman persons is emphasized in word choices like *gāst*, *gigant*, *ent*, *eoten*, *Homodubii*, *wyrm*, and *draca*. Words of motion, like *flēogende* and *ganga* make it clear that these nonhuman persons have physicality. However, the threat of nonhuman persons is reflected in the predominance of words that carry overtones of danger and opposition: *bana*, *dēofol*, *āglæca*, *fēond*, *sceaða*, *bana*, and *lāð*. Partially, of course, this predominance of negatively-valanced words is due to the fact that *Beowulf* is a long text and is centered on the violent conflict between nonhuman persons and human persons. Most of these terms refer directly to Grendel and his mother, for example. . Partially, too, it may be traced to Augustine’s *Civitas Dei* where the implication is that if nonhuman people exist, they are descended from Cain and/or not Christian.

## 2.6 Old English: Conclusions

Table 2.8, below, provides a complete overview of all nonhuman terms that occur in the Old English texts considered in this chapter. One potential limitation to the conclusions reached is the number of texts under consideration, which is limited to three textual entries, two of them—both versions of *The Wonders of the East*—based on the same source text, and two of them occurring in the same manuscript—Cotton Vitellius A. XV. Additional limitations include the source material being specifically about nonhumans, either as opponents or marvels encountered

in travel; a more nuanced view could emerge from the examination of legal texts, homilies, medical texts, and charms.

However, based on the evidence gathered in this chapter, the three criteria proposed in the introduction work to identify nonhuman persons in Old English literature. Verner argued that monsters in Old English literature served as relatively stable symbols of theological or moral significance.<sup>158</sup> This appears to be partially true; there is certainly an element of theological significance, a spiritual danger, that is associated with some of the nonhuman people encountered in Old English literature. However, there is also a bodily, physical-world aspect to these nonhumans. When it comes to nonhuman persons in *The Wonders of the East* and *Beowulf*, the language choices suggest that while the nonhuman people like Grendel, his mother, the dragon, the Donestre and Hostes might be harmful when sought out and provoked, other nonhuman peoples are just... people. They may be *untýdras* coming from the accursed race of Cain, but they too have their place in the order of the world. They can also make choices based on free will as persons. In the next chapter, I will build on this baseline understanding of nonhuman persons in Old English literature as I examine the transitional period of Early Middle English.

Table 2.8: Nonhuman Person Terminology in Old English Totals

Term	Wonders Tiberius	Wonders Vitellius	Beowulf	Total
ǣghwæðer / ððer	0	0	1	1
ælf	0	0	1	1
ǣlwiht	0	0	1	1
āglǣca	0	0	16	16
andsaca	0	0	2	2
atoll	0	0	2	2
bana	0	0	5	5
bearn	0	0	2	2
bogen	0	0	1	1
brōga	0	0	1	1
cuma	0	0	1	1
cynn*	3	3	3	9
dǣdhata	0	0	1	1
dēofol	0	0	3	3

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<sup>158</sup> Verner, *Epistemology of the Monstrous*, 158.



Table 2.8 Continued

Term	Wonders Tiberius	Wonders Vitellius	Beowulf	Total
donestre	1	1	0	2
draca <sup>i</sup>	0	0	13	13
eafora	0	0	1	1
earming/earmsceapen	0	0	1	1
ent	0	0	4	4
eoten	0	0	7	7
fæge	0	0	1	1
færgryre	0	0	1	1
fēond	0	0	16	16
fēondsceaða	0	0	1	1
fifel	0	0	1	1
firendæd	0	0	1	1
flæschoma	0	0	1	1
flēogende	0	0	5	5
freca	0	0	1	1
frēond	0	0	1	1
ganga	0	0	3	3
gāst	0	0	18	18
gāstbona	0	0	1	1
ġeniðla	0	0	2	2
ġewinna	0	0	2	2
gigant	0	0	3	3
gram	0	0	2	2
grendel	0	0	2	2
gryre	0	0	1	1
guma	0	0	2	2
hæft	0	0	1	1
heapodēor (dēor)	0	0	1	1
hierde	0	0	6	6
homodubii	2	2	0	4
hostes	1	1	0	2
hunticge	1	1	0	2
ides	0	0	1	1
ingenga	0	0	1	1
inwitfeng	0	0	1	1
lāð	0	0	4	4
mæġ	0	0	4	4

Table 2.8 Continued

Term	Wonders Tiberius	Wonders Vitellius	Beowulf	Total
maga	0	0	1	1
mann	12	8	0	20
mōdor	0	0	7	7
mundbora	0	0	1	1
orcnēas	0	0	1	1
ōþer	0	0	2	2
rinc	0	0	1	1
sāwol	0	0	1	1
sceaða	0	0	15	15
scinn/scinna	0	0	1	1
scua	0	0	1	1
scucca	0	0	1	1
searunīþ	0	0	1	1
secg	0	0	1	1
smīþ	0	0	1	1
stapa	0	0	2	2
sunu	0	0	2	2
þegn	0	0	1	1
þēod	0	0	1	1
þēodþrēa	0	0	1	1
þyrs	0	0	1	1
tūdor	0	0	1	1
weard	0	0	13	13
wearh	0	0	1	1
wer	0	0	2	2
wīf	3	2	3	8
wiht	0	0	2	2
wrāð	0	0	1	1
wrecend	0	0	1	1
wylf	0	0	2	2
wyrgend	0	0	1	1
wyrm	0	0	23	23
<b>Totals</b>	23	18	243	284

### 3 *WITIE AND UNWITIS: PROPHETS, EPITHETS, AND NONHUMAN PERSONS IN SOME EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH TEXTS*

#### 3.1 Introduction

Early Middle English has been categorized as unapproachable and uninteresting. Thomas Hahn called it “one of the duller and least accessible intervals in standard literary history, an incoherent, intractable, impenetrable dark age scarcely redeemed by a handful of highlights.”<sup>159</sup> This characterization has been widespread, however unfair. The Early Middle English period, stretching roughly from the Norman Conquest in 1066 CE through the first quarter of the fourteenth century, is one that encompassed massive changes in politics, social structures, and language. As French and Latin were the languages of the vast majority of the clergy and the nobility just after the conquest, this accounted for only between two and ten percent of the population of England at the time. The vast majority of people knew English. However, much French entered the language during the years following the conquest:

as many as 10,000 words of French origin were adopted into English during the Middle English period, although about 90 per cent of them are not attested until the second half of the 13th century or later. Many are quite technical or literary, and although some embodied new concepts introduced by the Normans, others replaced already existing and perfectly adequate Old English vocabulary.<sup>160</sup>

Recent scholarship has questioned the initial assumptions that the English vernacular was only known by the lower classes, and has re-examined the overall role of multilingualism in this period, noting that even by the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, official declarations and documents were being issued in English as well as French and Latin<sup>161</sup> However, due to several factors, including which texts were being taught, commissioned, and copied for the wealthy and usually upper-class patrons, it is true that there are a limited number of extant materials on which to draw. In terms of non-religious

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<sup>159</sup> Thomas Hahn, “Early Middle English,” *Cambridge History of Medieval Literature*, edited by David Wallace (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 61-91 at 61.

<sup>160</sup> George Davidson and Christopher Upward, *The History of English Spelling*, (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2011), 67.

<sup>161</sup> Davidson and Upward, *History of English Spelling*, 72-73.

literature of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, there are two major examples that have been subject to many studies: the anonymously-authored debate poem *The Owl and The Nightingale*, and Lazamon's *Brut*.

The relatively small selection of texts, yielding an even shorter list of texts featuring wondrous creatures and nonhuman peoples, is perhaps the reason why the field of Monster Studies has largely ignored Early Middle English until quite recently. For example, both Lisa Verner and Dana Oswald examine Latin language bestiaries or the Latin writings of Giraldus Cambrensis. Even Cohen's *Of Giants* mentions the Early Middle English Lazamon only in passing, focusing his attention on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regnum Britanniae*, Wace's *Brut*, and the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*.<sup>162</sup> What few nonhumans there are have been studied largely in the context of the *Brut* tradition, with focus on specific interpretations of the Albion and Arthurian giants, or of the parentage or prophecies of Merlin in Lazamon's *Brut*.<sup>163</sup> *The Owl and the Nightingale* mainly draws the interest of monster studies scholars within the word "unwight."

In terms of overall subjects, I suppose my work is not new. I am also examining the insults of *The Owl and the Nightingale*; "unwight" was the inspiration for my title. I also examine Lazamon's *Brut* for the depictions of the giants of Albion, the giant of Mont Saint Michel, Merlin and his parents, and the elves. I also compare Lazamon to his sources, and consider sea monsters, mermaids, and prophets. My overall approach, however, is different from most monster scholarship in the focus on semantic fields or lexicon.<sup>164</sup> First, I will examine the insults in *The Owl and the Nightingale* with the aim of deciphering through pejorative and negative connotations how nonhuman people existed in the imagination of lay persons at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>162</sup> Cohen is tracing a distinct lineage of text backwards from the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* based on the cannibalistic behaviors of the Giant of Mont Saint Michel, which does naturally exclude Lazamon; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages*, Medieval Cultures 17, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) 152.

<sup>163</sup> For one relatively recent article on the Giant of Mont Saint Michel, see Hwanhee Park, "Arthur and the Giant of Mont St. Michel in Lazamon's *Brut*: Exposing the Fragility of Kingship." *Arthuriana* 26, no. 1 (2016): 5–21; Stephen Knight examines Merlin in Layamon largely as a prophetic figure and in comparison to the source texts, *Merlin: Knowledge and Power through the Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.)

<sup>164</sup> There are at least two scholars with similar approaches, but different focus. The first, Sean Paul Thompson Morris wrote a dissertation focused on the lexicon of *The Owl and the Nightingale*, determining that the Owl and Nightingale are essentially indistinguishable in terms of vocabulary and that the text is typical of its time and place of origin. Sean Paul Thompson Morris, *A Lexical Study of The Owl and the Nightingale with Concordance*, Dissertation, (Stony Brook, NY: UMI, 2000.). The second study is an examination of the semantic field of warrior as the distribution of lexical items differs between the Otho and the Caligula manuscripts of Layamon's *Brut*, Christine Elswiler, "The Lexical Field "Warrior" in Layamon's *Brut*: A Comparative Analysis of the Two Versions" in *Reading Layamon's Brut: Approaches and Explorations*, eds. Rosamund Allen, Jane Roberts, and Carole Weinberg, (New York: Brill, 2013), 343–66.

I will also use the evidence from that text to determine if a prophet or a witch would have counted as a nonhuman person. Moving to the *Brut*, I will look at the textual evidence from both extant manuscripts to determine if each preternatural creature of the *Brut* is a nonhuman person. In the second half of the chapter, I will examine the specific lexical items that are applied to nonhuman persons in each text, including the different manuscript versions of the texts, to examine how the field of the nonhuman person shifted both with the beginning of the Early Middle English period, and within that period.

### 3.1.1 The Manuscripts

*The Owl and the Nightingale* has a long history of study as one of the most complete and least religious poems of the Early Middle English period. A kind of debate poem, though more closely related to the insult battles known as *flyting*, the text provides a description of the insults and accusations exchanged between a Nightingale and an Owl. The text is extant in two manuscripts. The first, London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.ix, is dated 1284. The second, Jesus College, Oxford, MS 29 (II) and is also dated to the last quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE. The two texts are nearly identical in content, though there are a few changed words or omitted lines. The two manuscripts contain otherwise complete versions of the poem. In this particular case, for the examination of the language, I have chosen to use the 2003 Cartlidge edition, which gives the text of the Cotton Caligula A.ix manuscript. I have chosen to do this based on the same general principle which caused Cartlidge to select Caligula over Jesus College MS 29 (II): there appear to be two distinct orthographies in the unknown source manuscript, and Caligula A.ix preserves these distinctions in a way that the Jesus MS 29 (II), which was copied in a Herefordshire dialect, does not. Concordance data located in Appendix D includes word counts for both texts.

The *Brut*, composed by the self-identified priest named Lazamon, or Lawman, is an Early Middle English version of the Matter of Britain. Comprised of over 16000 lines of verse, Lazamon's version is composed through a combination of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regnum Britanniae*, the Anglo-Norman *Brut* written by Wace, and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastia*, along with authorial intervention by Lazamon himself. The text is extant in two manuscripts: Cotton Caligula A. IX and Cotton Otho C. XIII. Cotton Caligula dates to ca. 1275 CE, and is either composed in a deliberately archaic style, a copy of an earlier manuscript, or otherwise written down in a way that uses Early Middle English vocabulary that is much closer to Old

English . This is the longer version of the poem, with 16,096 lines. The Cotton Otho manuscript dates to ca. 1325 CE. The language choices in Otho are consistently closer to later Middle English lexical items, and the poem has also been slightly condensed to only 14,560 lines, though traditionally, the line numbers are matched up for the parallel events. The Otho manuscript occasionally re-distributes the lines to place more emphasis on different scenes within the life of King Arthur and the long and involved genealogical histories that surround it. In addition, the Cotton Otho manuscript sustained some damage, leaving lacunae in many parts of the manuscript pages. Both manuscripts have been studied in parallel multiple times, first in the three-volume 1847 Sir Frederic Madden edition, and again in the two-volume Brooks and Leslie 1963 and 1978 EETS edition.

### 3.2 Nonhumans in *The Owl and the Nightingale*

*The Owl and the Nightingale* requires a difference in approach from the many of the other texts. While the birds are flinging insults at each other, this is not merely name-calling. Since many of the insults are accusations involving particular unsavory behaviors, I have included more examples that are not nouns, but other parts of speech.

In this text, the Owl and the Nightingale are either obvious nonhuman persons, or obvious nonhuman beasts. There is a lot of confusion over whether the poem is to be read as having each bird stand in for a particular kind of woman, a religious viewpoint, Jewish versus Christian, soul versus body, or just two birds. It is a debate poem, but one that lacks both a clear purpose and a clear winner.<sup>165</sup>

The main issue in identifying the birds as nonhuman persons lies with Criterion 1, the requirement that a person must be rational and mortal. Obviously the birds are personified, and can therefore be evaluated as persons. Both birds are rational; they demonstrate some familiarity with various proverbs said by human persons, are shown to consider carefully how to answer particular points within the debate structure, and discuss the reasons that their proposed judge would be fair. Personification neatly explains the curious fact that they are both capable of speech understandable to a human (i.e.: Nicholas of Guildford, as well as the author who “overheard”

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<sup>165</sup> Neil Cartlidge provides an extensive overview of some ways the poem is related to other medieval debate poems, as well as the general character of the debate in his “Introduction” in *The Owl and the Nightingale: Text and Translation*, ed. Niel Cartlidge, (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2003), XIII-LIV.

the debate), as well as the usual singing that most human persons perceive from the birds. They are physically birds, of course. They have never had the shape of humanoids, and are clearly not meant to be traceable to Adam and Eve, though again, personification allows for a reader to evaluate these birds as persons. It is also unclear if they are mortal or not, as each bird stands in as the *exemplum* of her species. The Owl is killed and made into a scarecrow, but is also alive to complain about being attacked by an army (*ferde*) of little birds. The Nightingale was caught, drawn, and quartered by a jealous husband, but is still around to brag about the good it brought to her chicks and seems anxious about the effect the Owl's talons would have on her body. The Owl and the Nightingale may or may not meet Criterion 1; with each both mortal and immortal, it is impossible to judge. The other characters in the poem are either human persons or other birds. So why is this poem worth examining in terms of nonhuman persons?

There are a few reasons why this poem is still included in the study. First, the poem deploys several nonspecific nouns that encompass a variety of beings and objects in a variety of contexts, such as *þing*, *wizt*, *wrecche*, and *unwizt*, with many of these carrying an implication of nonhuman status. In examining how words implying nonhuman status are used, it is possible to form an impression of the place nonhumans occupied in the imagination of at least one human person of the 13th century. Finally, the debate contains a juxtaposition between the officially supported powers of a prophet and the forbidden power of the witch.

When it comes to the term *unwizt*, as noted in Section 1.3.1, the term is a negation of the term *wight* (being), and signifies an “un-being,” or, as Hume defines it, “a monster outside the natural order of the universe.”<sup>166</sup> The Nightingale gives several reasons why the Owl is one of these unnatural beings: she only flies at night, evil things like darkness, and therefore, the Owl must be evil. This is not particularly forceful as an argument; as Hume points out, the Nightingale is also a night-flying bird. However, it does demonstrate some of the character of an *unwizt*:

“Hule,” ho sede, “Seie me soþ:  
 Wi dostu þat unwiztis doþ?  
 Þu singist a nizt & noȝt a dai: [...]  
 Þu flizst a nizt & noȝt a dai:

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<sup>166</sup> Kathryn Hume, *Owl and Nightingale: The Poem and its Critics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 90.

Barof ich wundri & wel mai—  
Vor euerich þing þat schuniet riht,  
Hit luueþ þuster & hatiet liht;  
& euerich þing þat is lof misdede,  
Hit luueþ þuster to his dede.[”]

(“Owl,” she said, “Tell me the truth: why do you do what perverse creatures do, singing by night rather than by day? ... You fly by night instead of day and that makes me wonder—as indeed I should—for every creature that shrinks from righteousness favors darkness and hates the light; and every creature fond of doing wrong likes to do so in the darkness.”)<sup>167</sup>

In terms of the definition of an *unwizt*, some defining factors are that it: a) refuses to do what is right, b) hates light, c) loves darkness, d) praises misdeeds, e) and is a “thing.” The Owl will later use *þing* as an insult against the Nightingale. There are two possible connotations here. The first is that a “thing” is not a being or person at all, but an object, denying agency. The second, and more likely connotation, is that there is no word to associate with the being or person that can be more specific, as the being or person is too far outside of natural creation. This explains the equivalence between *þing* and *unwizt* in this text.

In addition, it is worth noting the parallel between an unwight “sceomiande man” and the thief/þyrs passages from Maxims I and II quoted above in Section 2.1.2. These are extant examples of the kind of proverbial wisdom that the Owl and the Nightingale both use to support their arguments. However, as the Nightingale also flies by night, shuns light, and dwells outside of human habitation, her argument here applies as much to herself as to the Owl.

I have provided a condensed version of the debate surrounding this point to aid in the discussion of the language choices in this section. The Nightingale has proclaimed a curse on all messengers like the Owl who always gives a cry when something bad is going to happen.

The Owl replies:

“Wat!” quap ho, “Hartu ihoded

Oþer þu kursest al unihoded?

For prestes wike ich wat þu dest:

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<sup>167</sup> *The Owl and the Nightingale*, lines 217-19, 227-32. Translation by Cartlidge, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, 7.



Ich not 3ef þu canst masse singe—

Inoh þu canst of mansinge!

Ah hit is for þine alde niþe

Þat þu me akursedest oðer siðe

...

Wi attwitestu me mine insihte

An min iwit & mine miȝte?

For ich am witi, ful iwis,

An wod al þat to kumen is

...

An ȝet ich con muchel more.

Ich con inoh in bokes lore;

An eke ich can of þe goddspelle—

More þan ich wule þe telle.

For ich at chirche come ilome

An much leorni of wisdom.

Ich wat al of the tacninge

An of oþer feole þinge.

...

Ofte for mine muchele iwitte

Wel sori mod & wroþ ich sitte:

Wan ich iseo þat sum wrechede

Is manne neh innoh ich grede.

Ich bidde þat men beon iuarte

An habbe gode reades ȝearte.

...

Ah þah ich grede lude an stille

Al hit itid þurþ Godes wille.”<sup>168</sup>

(“What!” she said, “are you consecrated, or are you cursing without consecration?  
For a priest’s office I am sure you are doing. I do not know if you are able to sing

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<sup>168</sup> *The Owl and the Nightingale*, lines 1177-1256.

mass—but you know enough about cursing! But it is for your old hostility that you are cursing me again.... Why are you twitting me for my insight, my wit, and my power? For I am witty/prophetic, I know full well, and know all that is to come...[lists off things she foretells]... and yet I know much more. I know enough of book lore and I know enough of the gospel—more than I will tell you. For I come to church often, and learn much of wisdom. I know all of the prophetic tokens and of many other things. ... Often for my great intelligence/foreknowledge I sit very sad hearted and angry. When I see that some wretched thing is close to a person then I cry out enough. I pray/command that people be wary and have good counsel ready... But though I cry loudly or quietly, it all happens through God’s will.”)

The Owl’s argument here has a few different aspects. First, she is accusing the Nightingale of impersonating a priest by cursing the Owl, specifically with *mansing*, or excommunication. Second, the Owl is claiming that her insight and wit or prophecy are inherent to her being. The term *witie* can be traced to either *witig* or *witega*, where the first means intelligent and the second means prophet; in either case, the Owl is attempting to claim that her abilities belong to her through circumstances beyond her control. Third, she is claiming that she has learned a great deal from church and from books about the *tacninge* or signs related to prophecy. By linking her own insight to the church, the Owl is attempting to distinguish it from the forbidden seeking of oracles and auguries. In particular, Deuteronomy 18:10-11 forbids divination. The claim to knowing the Bible is meant to link the Owl to legitimate, divinely-given foreknowledge. However, this is still dangerous ground, as the Nightingale argues.

The Nightingale responds:

“Wat!” heo seide, “Hule, artu wod?  
 þu Ʒeolpest of seolliche wisdom:  
 þu nutest wanene he þe come—  
 Bute hit of wicchecrefte were.  
 þarof, þu wrecche, moste þe skere,  
 Ʒif þu wult among manne beo,  
 Oþer þu most of londe fleo.  
 For all þeo þat þerof cuþe,  
 Heo uere ifurn of prestes muþe  
 Amanset—swuch þu art Ʒette:  
 þu wicchecrafte neauer ne lete.

...

Ich habbe iherd—& soþ hit is—  
þe mon mot beo wel storre wis,  
þat wite innop of wucche þinge kume,  
So þu seist þe is iwune.  
Hwat canstu wrecche þing of storre—  
But þat þu bihauest hi feorre?

...

þah þu iseo þe steorre alswa,  
Nartu þe wisure neauer þe mo.<sup>169</sup>

(“What!” she said, “Owl, are you mad? You’ve been boasting of marvellous wisdom and yet you do not tell from where it comes to you—unless it is from witchcraft. Of that, wretch, you must clear yourself if you wish to be among people, otherwise you must flee from the land. For all of those that knew of that, they were before excommunicated by the mouths of priests—you are still one of those: you never stopped doing witchcraft.... I have heard—and true it is—that a person must be very wise in stars to know enough of what things will happen, as you say is customary for you. But what do you, wretched thing, know of stars—except that you can see them far away?...Though you see the stars also, you are never more wise for it.)

So what are the differences between the *insiht* and *tacning* that the Owl claims to use, and the *wiccheecraft* of which the Nightingale accuses her? I will use the three nonhuman criteria and textual evidence to determine the differences.

For the sake of this comparison, I will treat the Owl and the Nightingale as though they pass Criterion 1 to be persons purely through personification. There is no other way past, and at this moment within the text, neither is referring to their strange immortality or to specifically bird-like behaviors. The two are arguing over how people dislike the owl because they believe she hoots only when something awful is about to occur. The Owl says that she does know what is going to happen through her own natural *insiht* and the *tacning* that she has learned about in the churches. The Owl is claiming preternatural ability to know in advance about many things, including the winners of a battle, the death of a spouse, and other misfortunes. She claims to be warning people

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<sup>169</sup> ll. 1298-1330.

so they might avoid the problems all together. However, the Nightingale claims that such knowledge can only come from the Devil if the Owl is unwilling to share her source.

A witch is *amanset* (excommunicated, cursed) due to two main factors. First, in order to meet Criterion 2, a witch was imagined as borrowing or using powers given by non-divine sources, in particular fallen angels, demons, and devils. This kind of magic, which Kieckhefer labels “demonic magic,” is not inborn or gifted from an acceptable source, and it is not given freely, but often imagined as part of a bargain.<sup>170</sup> This means the witch is the one who makes themselves fit Criterion 2. The other way to gain power is through the study—usually portrayed as academic—of astronomy and astrology, known as “natural magic.” This is the practice the Nightingale is offering as the only legitimate access to foreknowledge. The Owl has opened herself up to this accusation by aligning herself with book-learning. The Nightingale is reminded that not only do some clerks study magic, but also that the Owl is unlikely to have been fully trained in anything as complex as astronomy. Indeed, in this period, the differences between demonic magic, and natural magic could be difficult to determine, even if the Nightingale or Owl were truly learned.

However, the true crux of the matter is in Criterion 3. Prophets, as I will show below in Section 3.4.4, are placed outside the expectation to follow human laws and social structures. They are expected to serve the community in terms of providing divine insight, and despite their place outside of conventional social structures, prophets are often greeted and treated as friends and heroes. Prophets speak truth, and that is vitally important. The witch, however, usually begins as a human person who chooses to transgress the human social, legal, or religious boundaries of their community. In terms of Biblical authority there are multiple prohibitions against divination; of these, the strongest is in Exodus 22:18, which reads “do not permit a sorcerer/witch to live.”<sup>171</sup> A witch, then, usually knows they are crossing boundaries in gaining powers of divination or sorcery. But the main issue is that the witch has not only crossed the boundaries, but also will hide the violation and pretend to be beholden to the social boundaries. The secretive nature of the witch’s craft is what makes it impossible to trust witches in a society built on verbal agreements and oaths.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, (United Kingdom: Cambridge UP, 2000), 9.

<sup>171</sup> Latin Vulgate: Exodus 22:18 “maleficos non patieris vivere.”

<sup>172</sup> This may also explain why practitioners of magic are not treated as transgressors or outsiders in some sagas; the witches are trained professionals acting openly. Instead, it is the ones who hire witches or sorcerers to do harm that are held to account, presumably as an extension of the laws surrounding murder. Kieckhefer, 50.

### 3.3 Elves and Giants and Mermaids, Oh My!: Nonhuman Persons in Lazamon's *Brut*

In the *Brut* of Lazamon, I will focus my analysis on five characters or character types to test my criteria for nonhuman persons. These include giants, mermaids, elves, magicians, prophets (including Merlin), and sea monsters.

#### 3.3.1 Giants

Giants are probably the most common of the nonhuman persons in medieval literature. They are often mute, though obviously rational in terms of ability to plan. Giants also sometimes have a religion, though usually not the religion of the protagonist. They are larger than human persons; their physical bodies are different in ways that are impossible to hide. They are expected to act in ways that are brutish and violent and excessive in ways that are equated with both sexual and hunger types of appetite. The few exceptions come when particular giants have chosen to integrate with the human society. Even when they do this, often they are read as outsiders and always to be remarked upon as something unusual.<sup>173</sup>

In Lazamon's *Brut*, as in the *HRB* of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace's *Brut*, there are two main encounters with giants. The first occurs when Brutus and his Trojan followers arrive in the land of Albion. The Trojans are fore-armed with knowledge; Diana told Brutus where to find the land of Albion and informed him that there were twenty giants living in the land. The giants attack the Trojans while they are having a feast, killing hundreds, but the Trojans rally, and begin shooting the giants with arrows. The arrows make the giants want to flee, but instead they are all killed except for their lord, Gogmagog. He is kept alive so that he can have a wrestling contest with Corineus, Brutus' right-hand man, for the entertainment of Brutus and the rest of the Trojans. While Gogmagog nearly gets the best of Corineus, the wounded Corineus rallies and throws Gogmagog off a cliff, breaking the giant's body on the rocks below.

In terms of Criterion 1, there is proof that the giants are both mortal and rational creatures. The giants, *eatantes*, are certainly mortal; even normal (i.e.: non-hero) human persons are able to shoot them to death with arrows. The Trojans do not need to resort to preternatural weapons as was required in *Beowulf* to kill the *eoten* Grendel. Indeed, the mortality of Gogmagog is such that

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<sup>173</sup> See Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's foundational *Of Giants*, xi-iv, or recent examinations by Geraldine Heng of giant characters in *Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*.

merely throwing him off a high cliff onto rocks is sufficient. In terms of rationality, there are a few signs that the giants are not unthinking beasts. First, the giants wait until the Trojans are having a big feast, and then ambush them, rather than simply attacking the Trojans head-on when they are coming to shore or on an open battlefield. Second, Gogmagog has a name, suggesting the power of speech. Third, Gogmagog is a wily and well-trained wrestler. He is able to nearly defeat Corineus through his careful tactics, and does not break the rules of a wrestling match.<sup>174</sup> While there is no explanation of how these *eotendes* arrived in Albion, and therefore no way to specifically trace their genealogy to the first created people in Christian traditions, there is sufficient evidence of mortality and rationality to suggest these giants meet Criterion 1.

In terms of Criterion 2, the *eotentes* are described as “stif, stark, strong, long, and large.” Corineus, Brutus’ war leader, is also described with these terms, and is “as large as he were an eatant”. His massive size and fearsome violence on the battlefield are well-accorded with the Albion giants; where twenty giants slew five hundred Trojans just with their tree-clubs, Corineus is able to kill many fighters by himself. The physical differences between humans and the giants in both size and strength fulfill Criterion 2.

Criterion 3 is the most interesting of the criteria when it comes to the Albion giants. First, it is implied that the giants could not possibly meet Criterion 3 when they are first introduced to the text by Diana in Brutus’ prophetic dream. In both manuscripts, Diana marks the giants as nonhuman through her description of the island. In *Caligula*, she says that, “wuniað in þon londe eotantes swiðe stronge./ Albion hatte þat lond ah leode [ne] beoð þar nane.” (“exceedingly strong giants live in that land. That land is called Albion, but there are no peoples/nations there.”)<sup>175</sup> By declaring that there are no people there, right after saying that there are giants living there, Diana implies that either an inherent nonhuman trait or some lack of cultural unity precludes the *eotantes* from developing into a *leode*. The *Otho* manuscript is even more explicit; after revealing the presence of giants in Albion, Diana adds, “ac men ne beoþ þar none.” (“but of (human) people there are none”)<sup>176</sup> Diana’s denial of the personhood or nationhood of giants makes it morally easier for the Trojans, and the readers, to engage in the project of colonizing the island. The giants,

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<sup>174</sup> Though this is more of a conjecture on my part based on Lazamon’s lack of censure about the giant’s behavior during the match than any personal knowledge of 13<sup>th</sup> century wrestling conventions.

<sup>175</sup> Lazamon, *Brut*, ms. Cotton Caligula A. IX, ll. 623-24. *Leod* depends on a notion of nation as shared culture, customs, and background among the people.

<sup>176</sup> Lazamon, *Brut*, ms. Cotton Otho XIII, l. 552.

who lack the martial technology of the Trojans, are not armed with metal weapons or with arrows; they instead pull up small trees to use as clubs. The giants are also mostly unnamed, without indication of language, which serves to emphasize their difference from the human Trojan people. However, there are hints that the giants possess a society similar to that of the Trojans. First, Gogmagog is the “*lauerde*” of the giants; they are united under a leader. He has a name, though it is a reference to the combined Biblical characters of Gog and Magog from the Bible. He is, as noted above, a skilled wrestler. Moreover, he appears to be conversant enough with the Trojan language or the Trojan rules of wrestling to be able to engage in a fair contest with Corineus. The implication is that the giants do have a language and a society; however, their lack of Trojan lineage is enough to make them outsiders who cannot be expected to follow the human social structure of the soon-to-be Brutes, and so the *eatantes* of Albion ultimately meet Criterion 3, marking them as a nonhuman people.

The very thing that precludes the giants of Albion from the expectation or the possibility of integration with the Trojan British social structure is the major thing that makes Corineus so firmly a part of the same structures. That thing is lineage; not purely biological, but based on shared cultural norms and language coming from the same, now diasporic, people of Troy. Corineus possesses the same bodily difference as Gogmagog; this is what makes them so equal to one another in wrestling. However, Corineus is explicitly kin to the former leader of the Trojans of Spain. This kinship, as well as his willingness to subordinate his strength to the judgment of Brutus and his society-building colonial project. Since Corineus does not meet criterion 3, he is a human person.

The Giant of Mont Saint Michel is the other major giant episode in the text. This giant, said to have come from Spain to Brittany has been laying waste to the countryside, seizing livestock, and has abducted Arthur’s kinswoman, Elene, the daughter of Duke Hoel of Brittany, along with her nurse. He has killed all of the warriors who have attempted to fight them, either by pure strength at arms or by crushing them with rocks as they try to approach the mountain. Arthur takes Bedivere and Kay secretly on a nighttime mission to find and kill this giant. Bedivere is sent to scout, where he discovers the nurse weeping in front of a fresh grave. Elene died as the giant attempted rape, and the nurse has had all of her bones broken in his subsequent rapes of herself. The nurse is convinced that no one, even Arthur, could possibly defeat the giant. Bedivere returns to Arthur and they make a plan. The giant returns, eats his dinner (twelve roasted swine), rapes the nurse

again, and falls asleep. At this point, Arthur arrives. He wakes the giant out of his sleep, the two fight, and Arthur has the giant on his knees. At this point, the giant wants to know the identity of his opponent:

Ne wende ich þat na man    a þissere weorlde-richen.  
me mihte þus lehtliche    a-leggen mid fehte.  
bute hit Arður weore    aðelest alre Brutte  
and neoðeles næs ich nauere    of Ar[ð]ure a-færed sære.

(I never believed that any person in this world-kingdom/ could so easily lay me out with fighting/ unless it were Arthur, noblest of all Britons,/ and nonetheless I was never sorely afraid of Arthur.)<sup>177</sup>

Arthur reveals his identity, and demands to know the same of the giant: who is he, who were his kin, where does he come from, and why did he kill Elene? The giant tries to bargain by promising the information in return for Arthur's word that he will not be killed. The price is deemed too high, and Arthur instead commands Bedivere to behead the giant, and the party returns, head in tow, to Hoel and the rest of the army.

This giant, again, is both rational and mortal. He has gotten the best of trained knights multiple times. He has been using the fortified position on the notoriously difficult-to-access Mont Saint Michel as a home-base for his pillaging. This position protects him from land assaults during high tides, when the causeway to the Mont is submerged, the currents and tides protect him somewhat from assaults by water, and he sinks the boats that do come close. He is able to speak, and does so in a way that demonstrates he understands the power of words to Arthur: "Al þis ich wulle don    and þine treoðe under-fon./ wið þat þu me lete liuien    and mine leomen hælen."<sup>178</sup> He is a rational, mortal being, fulfilling Criterion 1.

The giant demonstrates the bodily differences of most literary *eoten*. He is large and strong enough to carry twelve swine at once, and to eat six as a meal. He is also large enough that his body, when forced upon the nurse, breaks her bones. He is described as able to tear apart a knight "þeh [he] weore stel al."<sup>179</sup> As noted previously, he has defeated many knights, and only suspected

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<sup>177</sup> Lazamon, *Brut*, ms Cotton Caligula A. IX ms. ll. 13016-13019.

<sup>178</sup> "“I will do all of this and accept your bond/terms if you will let me live and my limbs heal,” Lazamon, *Brut*, ll. 13026-27 (MS Caligula A. IX) (2: 682).

<sup>179</sup> "though [he] were completely covered in steel." Lazamon, *Brut*, Caligula A. IX ms. ll. 12917.



that Arthur, renowned as the best warrior of his people, might be able to defeat him. Even Arthur admits that this was not an easy fight.<sup>180</sup> The *eoten* of Mont Saint Michel meets Criterion 2.

The giant of Mont Saint Michel amply demonstrates his lack of regard for human social structures and norms. He carries off whatever he wants whenever he would like, both women and livestock, which he treats equally as consumable, though in different ways. He commits *morðe* by killing Eleine and burying her without public announcement, effectively treating her death as a concealed offense. It is interesting to note a sign that this is a giant familiar with human conventions, however. As mentioned above, he attempts to get Arthur to swear on his *treoðe* not to kill or harm him. He is familiar with the system of spoken oaths that allow Arthur's society to function. It is also an interesting detail that, although the giant is sharpening his axe before he falls asleep, he wakes and grabs a "mickel clubbe" in order to fight Arthur. This allows readers the detail of the horrible sound of the whetstone upon the blade, as well as having the giant fight with what most tales present as the proper weapon, the technologically-simple club. The giant makes no other attempts to integrate into human social structures and seems to enjoy ripping them apart as thoroughly as he destroyed the doors of Eleine's bower and the limbs of the pigs he ate for dinner. In meeting all three criteria, the giant of Mont Saint Michel is a nonhuman person.

### 3.3.2 Elves

As Cyril Edwards notes, Lazamon is the first to construct a "deliberate elfin framework" into the Arthurian narrative.<sup>181</sup> Richard Firth Green sees in Lazamon's introduction of Avalon as a fairyland stand-in for the more orthodox Christian Heaven a celebration of the English 'little tradition' of fairies, Old English *aluen*.<sup>182</sup> J. Church argues that Lazamon's elves serve to make Arthur a liminal figure situated between a natural world, where he is a violent temporal king, and the supernatural world, where he is a mythical king that nourished poets, in a political commentary

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180 "No uæht ich nauere [u]eh[t] non: uppen þissere uolden / buten þa ich sloh þene king Riun: uppen þan munte of Rauinite" (Never have I fought any such fight in this world except when I slew King Riun on Mount Ravenite). Lazamon, *Brut*, ll. 13036-37 (MS Caligula A. IX) (2: 682).

<sup>181</sup> Cyril Edwards, "Lazamon's Elves" in *Lazamon: Contexts, Language, and Interpretation*, ed. Rosamund Allen, Lucy Perry, and Jane Roberts, King's College London Medieval Studies 19 (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 2002), 79-95 at 80.

<sup>182</sup> Richard Firth Green, *Elf Queens and Holy Friars: Fairy Beliefs and the Medieval Church*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016) 150-51.

about the unreliability of temporal kings and bloodlines.<sup>183</sup> I agree mostly, however, with Cooper, who says of elves that “[t]hey are socially “unassimilable,... [they] occupy that dangerous borderland that cannot be controlled by human will and is not susceptible to the normal operations of prayer.”<sup>184</sup> However, these are not the elves of Sir Launfal, who act human other than providing their partner with marvelous magical gifts. Instead, these are elves as shapers of human fates and of crafts and drafts.

In terms of Criterion 1, we are never told explicitly that the *aluen* are not mortal, but nor are we told that they are not. They seem to be aware of the needs of the human body in order to heal it (i.e.: Argante and her *heilawei drenches*), but they do not demonstrate otherwise any concern about mortality. Since they are not specifically called immortal, however, I will assume mortality. They are rational; they are presumably able to speak, though they do not within the text. They specifically show the ability to craft, whether healing drafts like Argante, armor, like the “wittye Wroht” who made Arthur’s byrnie, or spells. As rational and not specifically immortal beings, I will argue the elves meet Criterion 1.

In terms of Criterion 2, the elves are possessed of inherent preternatural abilities that seem magical. These powers may be utilized for or against human persons, or have nothing to do with humans. The lake near Loch Lomond said to be dug by elves which has four corners seems to have nothing to do with human persons except as a marvel.<sup>185</sup> When Corineus worries that Estrilde is an “aluish” woman, he is suggesting a power of enchantment that can entrance a king in disastrous ways. There are elves who play in Loch Lomond among the islands and the various “uniuele” things in the lake, demonstrating that the elves are powerful and do not need to fear such things, or perhaps that the elves should be grouped with those same things. When Arthur is born, “aluen hine iuengen/ heo bigolen þat child mid galdere swiðe stronge,”<sup>186</sup> and while their enchantments are all positive gifts that will help him as a king and as a warrior, they could just as easily have been negative. Argante and her people in Avalon are represented as able to prepare

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<sup>183</sup> Jordan Church. “‘The Play of Elves’: Supernatural Peripheries and Disrupted Kingship in Lazamon’s *Brut*,” *Philament* 24 (2018): 15–32. <http://www.philamentjournal.com> (accessed 15 June, 2022).

<sup>184</sup> Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 175.

<sup>185</sup> Though one can understand the four fishes that do not mix as a kind of commentary on miscegenation or on community building between the peoples of the British Isles.

<sup>186</sup> “the elves took him, they enchanted that child with exceedingly strong spells.” Lazamon, *Brut*, Caligula A. IX; 9609-10.

healing drafts even for the mortally wounded. This is a preternatural capability for certain, and fulfills Criterion 2.

In terms of Criterion 3, the elves never come to stay in the court. In fact, in *Caligula*, the elves literally take the infant Arthur away to place their enchantments. They could just as easily have harmed as helped him. While the elven smiths made Arthur's byrnie and sword, they could just as easily have made arms for themselves or for Arthur's enemies. They are not expected to abide by human conventions. This kind of risk is part of Corineus' accusation against Estrilde after all; if the country is unaware of the background of the woman, they are unclear on where her loyalties lie. The elves of the *Brut* are nonhuman persons.

### 3.3.3 Mermaids: “*þat beoð deor of muchele ginnen*”<sup>187</sup>

Lazamon, in keeping with the Trojan origins of his hero Brutus, has the Trojans sail past the Pillars of Hercules and encounter one of the classical threats to seafarers: the sirens. However, rather than using the Latin *sirena* of Geoffrey of Monmouth or the French *siren* from Wace, Lazamon uses the Old English *mere-men* (literal translation: sea-person). The fact that these creatures are said to possess *ginnen*, cunning, shows that they are rational creatures. In addition, the human-appearing heads and the ability to sing suggest they are a kind of person. There is no definitive proof of mortality, but there is also no mention of immortality. However, the use of *mann* in the compounds suggests that these creatures were imagined to be a kind of person, which would probably fulfill Criterion 1.

Criterion 2, the requirement that the person differs from the author's idea of standard human in terms of bodily form and/or preternatural abilities, is easily met by the *mere-men*. First, they are described as having bodies that are “half woman, half fish”. The top half, the part that sings, is imagined as singing a preternatural song that enchants the hearer through its beauty. The heads may even appear attractive, but are described as “*uele*” since they lead human persons to destruction. The fish tails and the preternaturally powerful voices fulfill Criterion 2.

The *mere-men* also fulfill Criterion 3. This version of the mermaid, which actively works to kill human persons and which plots to delay, trap, or destroy ships is not expected to abide by human social conventions. By fulfilling all three criteria, the *mere-men* are nonhuman persons.

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<sup>187</sup> Lazamon, *Brut*, *Caligula* A. IX 1633. .

### 3.3.4 *Wittie or Wise? Prophets and Magicians*

When Vortigern calls for his counselors to explain why the walls of his castle keep falling down, he calls upon his “Ioram, the one that lies about needing Merlin’s blood, is called “in the Caligula manuscript. While the Otho manuscript transmits this as an adjective, “wittie,” I see evidence throughout the Caligula manuscript that wittie is actually the noun for “prophet.” This is the same title that Merlin himself will assume later in the poem. While a *wittie* is usually also described by the epithet *wise*, a *wise* person need not necessarily be a *wittie*. See section 3.5.2: Merlin and 3.5.2: Magicians and Prophets for a closer examination of these terms.

As explained in section 3.3 on *The Owl and the Nightingale*, the main differences between witches and prophets has to do with the origins of their power and the expectation for the person to be a part of standard human social structures. The same can be said to be true regarding magicians and prophets, though there are some slight differences that will be explored through the examples of Taliesin and Maegan, with extension to Sibyl and Ioram.

First, the prophet is a rational, mortal being. They are able to make plans, form words, and advise rulers; Taliesin is said to counsel the king and the people about what will come, and all his words are truth. Prophets also do not live perpetually. Sybil and Taliesin were both prophets, and both are out of the text long before Merlin appears. Mortality also applies to the magicians. Vortigern actually executes Ioram and his companions, demonstrating violently that they meet Criterion 1.

Second, the prophet and the magician both have preternatural differences that set them apart from the standard human person. However, the sources of those differences and the ways that they function are quite disparate. In the case of a magician, like Magan, he is called a clerk who “kon well bokes/learning”. The source of his power lies in his education; his literacy and research skills provide him with abilities to perceive more of the world and in the ability to alter how others access that world. In the case of Taliesin, however, he is apparently born with that power or has it otherwise divinely gifted to him. In both cases, a magician and a prophet might be said to meet Criterion 2, though a magician can—presumably—give up their power by laying down their books.

Criterion 3 is the other major difference between the prophet and the magician, just as in the case of prophets and witches. A prophet, like Taliesin, is given power and that power places them outside of the standard social structure. While two wise knights are dispatched to bring him

to the king, a prophet, by nature of their power, would be able to avoid the summons if they wished (see 3.5.2 subsection *Magicians and Prophets* for more detail). While Taliesin's gift is deployed in service of the society, he is not actually expected to abide by the social mores of standard human persons in that society; he is received by the king as a friend, just as Merlin will be received by Ambrosius. No matter the parentage, a prophet meets all three criteria and is a nonhuman person.

However, in the case of magicians, just as in the case with witches discussed above, the person usually began their lives under the expectation that they would be held to the human standards, laws, and social structures. While they have sought out preternatural power, they have done so by transgressing human social boundaries: in the case of magicians, this is by accessing occult knowledge to alter the world around them. Like the outlaw in Chapter 2, the individual involved is aware of human social boundaries, and chooses to take the consequences of violating those boundaries. For these reasons, magicians like Ioram and his companions ("iuere"), are human persons, while prophets like Taliesin and Sybil are nonhuman persons.

### 3.3.5 Merlin

Merlin's case is an interesting one, as he is in fact half human and half nonhuman. In *Lazamon*, it is explained that Merlin was engendered by one of the incubus demons, spirits of the air that appear as attractive young men or women and can in fact beget children upon young women as they dream of these incubi.<sup>188</sup> Merlin's mother is a nun who is a former princess of a small kingdom in Wales. She claims that in her sleep, the figure of a young man who often asked to kiss and hold her, seduced her. She describes it as "the fairest thing that ever was born," a knight of gold. In both manuscripts, she refers to this dream-figure as a "þing" and uses the pronoun "hit," never suggesting that it is actually a kind of person. Merlin's mother assumed this was simply a dream until she discovered she was pregnant. Merlin's origins as the son of a "spirit of the air" are sufficient to mark him as someone extraordinary, though it also permits him to be abused by the

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<sup>188</sup> Magan's supposition, given in 7871-82; quoted partially here from Caligula: "Ðar wonieþ in þan lufte feole cunne wihte./ þa þer scullen bilæfuen þat Domes-dæi cume liðen. Summe heo beoð aþele & summe heo uuel wurcheð./ Ðer-on is swiðe muchel cun þa cumeð imong monnen/ heo beoð ihated ful iwis incubii demones.." [There dwell in the air many kinds of beings/ those there shall remain until Doomsday comes to loose them. Some of them are noble and some of them work evil./ Of them is one very mighty/large kindred that come among people/ they are called, I fully believe, incubus demons...]. These beings of the air beget children, but do not appear capable of death, since they are already beings that remain until the final judgement, so they are not people for my purposes, just like the other demons.

other local children who mock him and his mother for his unknown forebears. Similar to Grendel, the father of Merlin is an unknown spirit, in this case an incubus demon. However, instead of causing Merlin to become a larger-than-life cannibal like Grendel, Merlin is given the power of prophecy.<sup>189</sup>

Merlin is presumably mortal, since he's being threatened with death in order to build Vortigern's tower. His mother is human, a princess-turned-nun. Merlin is not just rational, but *monnene wisest*, and the person most able to advise Aurelius about the monument he wants to build. He easily meets Criterion 1.

In terms of Criterion 2, Merlin possesses extraordinary preternatural abilities. He is a person who fits the vision painted by Paul in I Corinthians: Merlin's gifts include prophecy, speech, and moving large rocks through an action likened to saying the rosary. Merlin constantly refuses rewards, all while being certain that Uther rewards everyone else that comes with him.<sup>190</sup> In addition, in a passage paralleled in Wace, he responds to Aurelius' request for more prophecy:

O Aurilie þe king; þu fræinest me a sellic þing.  
loke þat þu na mare; swulc þing ne iscire;  
For mi gæst is bæl iwis; þa a mire breoste is.  
and ʒef ich a-mong monnen; ʒelp wolde makien.

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<sup>189</sup> Some of the possible reason for the differences include the identity of the mother as human rather than nonhuman, noble rather than low-born, Christian rather than heathen, the fact that incubus demons were believed to obtain their semen from human men rather than producing their own, or any number of factors. Some of these are outlined in Richard Firth Green *Elf Queens and Holy Friars*, 86..

<sup>190</sup> Paul, *I Corinthians 13:1-10*. P1783 The Latin Vulgate reads: "1. Si linguis hominum loquar et angelorum caritatem autem non habeam factus sum velut aes sonans aut cymbalum tinniens. 2. Et si habuero prophetiam et noverim mysteria omnia et omnem scientiam et habuero omnem fidem ita ut montes transferam caritatem autem non habuero nihil sum. 3. Et si distribuero in cibos pauperum omnes facultates meas et si tradidero corpus meum ut ardeam caritatem autem non habuero nihil mihi prodest. 4. Caritas patiens est benigna est caritas non aemulatur non agit perperam non inflatur 5. Non est ambitiosa non quaerit quae sua sunt non inritatur non cogitat malum 6. Non gaudet super iniquitatem congaudet autem veritati 7. Omnia suffert, omnia credit omnia sperat omnia sustinet. 8. Caritas nunquam excidit sive prophetiae evacuabuntur sive linguae cessabunt sive scientia destruetur 9. Ex parte enim cognoscimus et ex parte prophetamus 10. Cum autem venerit quod perfectum est evacuabitur quod ex parte est." [1. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. 2. And if I should have prophecy, and now have all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing. 3. And if I distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profits me nothing. 4. Charity is patient, it is kind, it is not jealous, it does not brag, it is not puffed up. 5. It is not ambitious, does not seek its own things, is not provoked, does not think evil. 6. It does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. 7. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8. Charity never fails; though prophecy will come to an end, or language will cease, or knowledge will be destroyed. 9. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10. But when that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away with.]

mid glad-scipe mid gomene; mid god-fulle worden.  
 mi gast hine iwardēð; & wirð stille.  
 & binimeð me min wit; & mine wise word for-dut.  
 þenne weore ich dumbe; of æuer-ælche dome.  
 Ah bilef swulche þinges; quæd Mærlin to þan kingen.  
 for whan-swa cumeð neode; to auer-æi þeode.  
 & mon me mid milde-scipe; wulle me bisechen.  
 & ich mid mine iwille; mote wunien stille.  
 þenne mæi ich suggen; hu hit seoððen scal iwurðen.<sup>191</sup>

(“O Aurelius the king, you desire of me a wondrous thing, look that you do not ask any more for such things; for I believe my spirit is angered that is in my chest, and if I among people boast would make with happiness and play, with excellent words, my spirit it would be offended and become silent and take from me my intelligence and my wise words prevent. Then I would be silent of every judgement. But believe such things,” said Merlin to the king, “for whenever there comes need to whatever people, and people mildly wish to ask me and I may at my own choice remain silent, then I may say to you how it shall truly be.”)

Prophecy knows nothing without charity, and charity does not boast or brag, and is patient, the lesson implied in Merlin’s answer to Aurelius. In addition, Lazamon’s Merlin is summoned before Uther through the offices of a hermit who acts as a messenger, introducing a scene where Merlin, after enumerating the virtues of Arthur, the yet-unconceived son of Uther and Ygerne, adds “Ah Lauerd quað Merlin    nu hit is iwille þin./þat forð I scal fusen    to uerde þas kinges,” demonstrating his obedience to God’s will. By adding this scene, Lazamon explicitly turns the conception of Arthur from an iniquity involving magic, deception, and dubious consent into a divinely-ordained action facilitated by a prophet. This allies Merlin even more closely with clergy and with divine prophecy. His gifts, which are emphatically tied to Christian divinity again and again, fulfill Criterion 2.

Merlin is not expected to fit within human social boundaries, despite being born to a human mother. While he is depicted as playing among a variety of other children, he is clearly not a favorite. Dinabuz, the son of a local under-king, tells Merlin that his very presence is “scome” to the rest of the town, as his father could be anyone, making it easy to call Merlin’s mother a “uuore”.

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<sup>191</sup> 8549-61, p 444-447.

After his encounter with Vortigern, Merlin disappears to live discreetly somewhere near a spring in Wales. He takes great pains to keep himself outside of society, repeatedly disappearing only to be found later by searching for him in the wilderness. While his gifts can be sought, he makes it very clear that he is going to Aurelius by choice, not because the king demands it or because of rewards. Merlin's abilities to turn himself, Uther, and Ulfin into the likenesses of Britael, Gorlois, and Jordan, or his abilities to make the stones of Stonehenge light enough to lift and move onto a ship, should be denigrated if he were being held to the standards of human persons. Since he is a nonhuman person, and not expected to abide by the strictures against magic, Merlin is celebrated for his abilities within the text. Merlin meets Criterion 3 and is a nonhuman person.

### 3.4 Early Middle English Language for Nonhuman Persons

#### 3.4.1 *The Owl and the Nightingale*

In the text, I have taken a selection of terms from the many, many insulting phrases hurled between the two birds. The selected terms, in Table 3.1 below, are all related to concepts in one of six categories: being; treachery and lies; religion and cursing; shame and hate; negative personal attributes; or prophecy and witch craft. Table 3.1 demonstrates a term-by-term breakdown of insults as applied to the Owl, to the Nightingale, and to other persons within the poem, while Figure 1 demonstrates the distribution of combined categories of terms as a percentage of the total terms directed at the Owl (calculated out of 120 total), the Nightingale (calculated out of 46 total), and the other category (calculated out of 7).

Table 3.1: Nonhuman Terms in *The Owl and the Nightingale* as Ascribed to Each Character

Glossary term	Other	Nightingale	Owl	Total
acursi	0	2	0	2
adel-eye	0	0	1	1
amanset	0	0	1	1
ateliche	0	0	1	1
bilegge	0	2	0	2
biswike	0	0	1	1
bodest	0	0	5	5
cunde	0	0	4	4
dahet	0	0	2	2
dim	0	0	1	1



Table 3.1 continued

Glossary term	Other	Nightingale	Owl	Total
dweole	0	1	0	1
eremig	0	0	1	1
foliot	0	1	0	1
fordeme	0	1	0	1
forlere	0	1	0	1
ful	0	1	19	20
fuzel	2	1	0	3
gidie	1	0	0	1
golnesse	0	2	0	2
gost	0	0	1	1
grame	0	1	1	2
hete	0	0	1	1
insizt	0	0	1	1
kun (kunrede)	0	1	4	5
kursest	0	1	0	1
li3e	0	3	2	5
lodliche	0	0	3	3
loþ (lope)	0	1	8	9
luþer	0	0	1	1
mansing	0	1	1	2
misdede	0	0	1	1
misrede	0	1	1	2
nipe	0	1	1	2
no3t	0	0	2	2
on Irish prost	0	1	0	1
onde	0	0	1	1
qued	0	0	2	2
schame	0	5	4	9
schamie	0	0	1	1
schende	1	1	2	4
screwen	1	0	0	1
seolliche	0	0	1	1
svikeldom	0	0	2	2
svikelhede	0	1	1	2
tacninge	0	0	1	1
unclene	0	0	1	1
ungod	0	0	2	2

Table 3.1 continued

Glossary term	Other	Nightingale	Owl	Total
unhwate	0	0	1	1
unihoded	0	1	0	1
unlede	0	0	1	1
unmilde	0	0	1	1
unred	0	1	1	2
unrihtfulnesse	0	1	0	1
unriȝt	0	1	1	2
unsiȝe	0	0	1	1
unwrenche	0	0	1	1
unwreste	0	0	1	1
uo	0	1	0	1
uuel	0	1	3	4
vnwiȝt	0	0	3	3
wicche crefte	0	0	2	2
wiȝt	2	1	1	4
worst	0	0	1	1
woȝe	0	0	1	1
wrecche	0	6	8	14
ydel	0	2	0	2
ȝing	0	1	8	9
ȝrete	0	0	1	1
ȝretest	0	0	2	2
TOTAL	7	46	120	173

Again, the distribution of all terms may be seen in Figure 1, below. The terms associated with being are: *ȝing*, *wiȝt*, *vnwiȝt*, *cunde*, *adel-eye*, *ereming*, *fuzel*, *kun*, *noȝt*, and *wrecche* (thing, being, un-being, kind, rotten-egg, wretch, fowl, kin, nothing, and wretch, respectively). *Vnwiȝt*, of course, is the accusation or insult that starts off the whole debate, and is discussed above in Section 3.3. This concept is associated solely with the Owl, which had a significantly worse reputation in medieval bestiaries.<sup>192</sup> The accusation of being a “thing” is raised by both birds, and, again, as discussed in Section 3.3, is an insult based on an inability to apply other nouns that would indicate a particular agent or being. The Owl is likewise dismissed as “nothing” by the Nightingale.

<sup>192</sup> Jill Mann, “The Owl and the Nightingale,” in her *From Aesop to Reynard: Beast Literature in Medieval Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 149-91 at 156-60.

*Ereming*, and its synonym “wretch” both indicate an abased being. This insult is one of the few where the Nightingale even comes close to the Owl in the number of times the term is applied to it, with six instances to the Owl’s nine. The references to kin and kind (*kun* and *cunde*) make it clear that the birds are part of larger groups; however, the Owl is again the one with most of these claims. This is likely due to her attempts to indicate that she is like noble raptor birds (hawks, etc.) and claiming kinship with them in order to gain some legitimacy for herself.

The terms associated with treachery and lying are: *biswike*, *bilegge*, *foliot*, *forlere*, *lize*, *misrede*, *svikeldom*, *svikelhede*, and *unred* (deceive, lie, beguile, mislead, lie, mis-advise, treachery, deceitfulness, and mislead). Both birds are equal in accusations of *svikelhede*, *misrede*, and *unred*, unsurprising as the two birds try to lead one another to make a misstep, either in a physical fight or in their debate. The other terms are distributed more unevenly; the Owl is accused of *svikeldom*, a serious charge that may be based partly on her consumption of small birds and on her prescience regarding bad things to come. She is also said to *biswike*, deceive. *Forlere* and *foliot* are applied exclusively to the Nightingale, as is *bilegge*; this seems to be part of the Owl’s claims that the Nightingale is not arguing using clear language, and that she leads women to adultery. The final claim, that the opponent is lying, is applied slightly more to the Nightingale than to the Owl at three to two. That leaves the Owl with six total accusations of deception, and the Nightingale with ten. This is one of the few cases where the Nightingale is the target of more accusations than the Owl and fits with her repeated uncertainty that she is correct in her arguments.

The terms associated with cursing and priesthood are: *acursi*, *amanset*, *dahet*, *fordeme*, *kurset*, *mansinge*, *on Irish prost*, and *unihoded* (accursed, excommunicated, damned, convict, curse, excommunicate, an Irish priest, and unconsecrated). Most of these terms are applied to the Nightingale or by the nightingale; that is, the Owl does not damn the Nightingale, but the Nightingale does attempt to curse the Owl though she lacks ecclesiastical authority. Most of these curses are literally the ecclesiastical excommunication where the soul is cut off from the Church’s communion with God. The Owl makes a play on words when she asks the Nightingale if she is a priest by asking if she knows how to sing mass, since she knows so much about *mansinge* (cursing, excommunication). The Owl also compares the chattering of the Nightingale to an Irish priest, which in most periods of English history indicates a priest who does not necessarily have a serious understanding of Scripture.

The terms associated with shame and hate are *grame, hete, lodliche, loþ, niþe, onde, shame, schamie, schende, uo, þrete, þretest* (shame, hate, loathly, hated, hatred/emnity, malice, shame, ashamed, indignity/harm, foe, threat, threaten).

The list of terms associated with negative personal attributes (*ateliche, dim, dweole, ful, gidie, golnesse, luper, misdede, qued, screwen, unclene, ungod, unlede, unmild, unrihtfulnesse unriht, unwrenche, unreste, uuel, worste, woze, ydel*) almost all target the Owl, with a few notable exceptions that associate the Nightingale with idleness and lust.

The discussion of and prophecy and witchcraft that occurs throughout this chapter also references the following terms, all of which refer to the Owl: *bodest, insiþt, seolliche, tacning, unhwate, unsiþe, wicchecrefte*. As the Nightingale mentions, the Owl only foretells misfortunes (*unhwate, unsiþe*) as opposed to the often-positive foretellings of Biblical prophets, like the foretelling of the birth of Jesus.

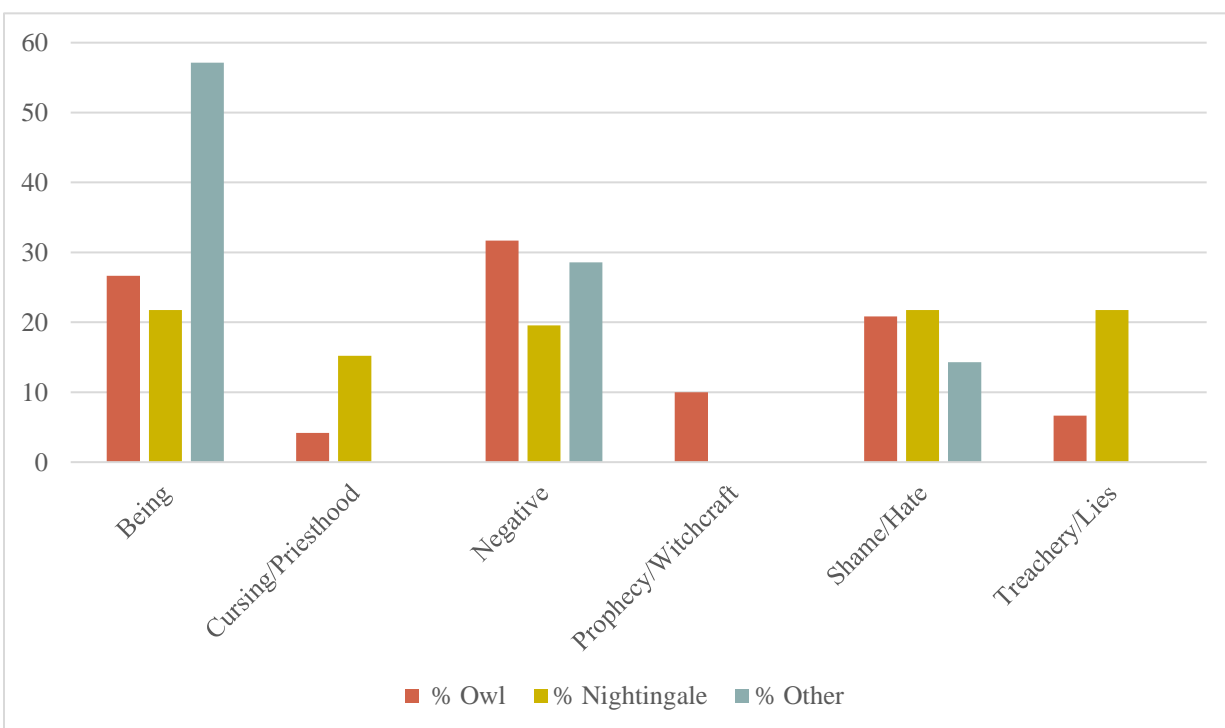


Figure 1 Distribution of Term Categories as Percent of Total Terms Applied to Character

### 3.4.2 Laȝamon's *Brut*

To make a more thorough examination of the terms used for nonhumans in the *Brut*, I have broken the information down by character or character type. I will examine the terms for giants, elves, mermaids, Merlin, other magicians and prophets, and water beasts.

#### *Giants*

As can be seen in table 3.2, the word *eoten* (with various spellings in the source manuscripts) is used for all of giants, with no instances of the Latin-derived *giant*. There is a shift in the language used to characterize the giants between the two manuscripts, however.

There are three specific instances of giant language in the *Brut*. The first is in relation to Corineus: he is both called as large and strong as a giant (eatant) and reminds Albinus of his slaying of giants (eotantes) in the service of Albinus' father Brutus. In addition, during the wrestling match with Gogmagog, he and the giant are referred to as a pair: the word in the Caligula manuscript is *scalke* where Otho reads *kempes*. Despite the suggestion of the etymologies—*scalke* is derived from ON *skálkr* for “servant, rogue”; but *kempe* is derived from OE *ceempa* for “warrior, champion”—this was a distinction without a difference, even as early as the composition of *Beowulf*, where both were common alliterative choices for any soldier or man.<sup>193</sup>

The second set of words belong to the giants of Albion and their lord, Gogmagog. For the most part, these words remain the same between the two manuscripts. There are two fewer references to these giants as *feond* (“enemies”) and one fewer reference to their lord Gogmagog as a *scade* (“destroyer”). This is most likely due to the Otho manuscripts tendency to cut redundant passages. In both versions of the text, the nineteen giants of Gogmagog's people are quickly destroyed by the Trojans who are settling in Albion. Gogmagog and Corineus still have their wrestling match and Gogmagog still loses.

The final set of words belong to the giant of Mont Saint Michel. Here, there is the largest shift in choice of nouns for the giant. While the Otho manuscript has a tendency to condense most episodes from the Caligula manuscript, the incident with the Giant of Mont Saint Michel is not one of those instances. It is also worth noting the change from the *wald-scape* (“harmer/destroyer of walden”, a common epithet for God) to the *wode-scape* (“mad/wild destroyer”). This is a sign

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<sup>193</sup> “kempe” and “scalke” entries from the *OED*. Accessed 16 June 2022.

of the amelioration of *scape* on its way to the mild usage of Chaucer. One of the biggest shifts in language here is that the use of *scucke*, a term associated in particular with demons and the Devil in Old English, is halved in the Otho manuscript. In addition, the general use of *scaðe* is not as prevalent in the Otho manuscript; instead, the Giant of Mont Saint Michel is described as a *wrecche* and a *þing*, both of which ameliorate the giant from a subject (destroyer) to an object to be destroyed.

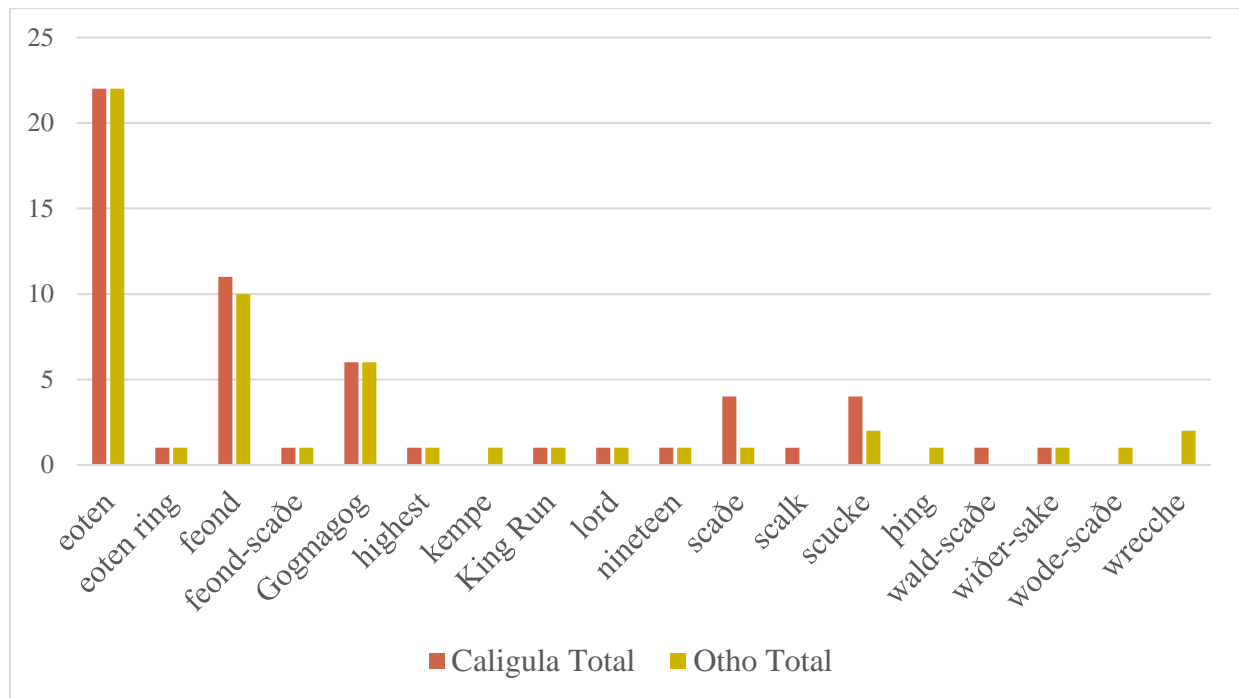
*Scaðe* is going from meaning 'destroyer' to meaning 'shame'. By the time we get to Chaucer, this seems to be the predominant usage, as when the partial deafness of the Wife of Bath is called *scape*, in the sense that her hearing loss was "a shame." While it might be interpreted as shameful of her spouse to have partially deafened her, it could also be interpreted as the modern "what a pity." In either case, the word *scaðe* is de-intensifying/ameliorating. The repeated emphasis is on the power of these giants, more than on their position as outsider "gasts" or on the identification of them as the equivalent of devils or demons, suggests that the semantic frame of giants/eotens is slowly moving from spiritual threat to purely physical threat as giant descriptions move away from the model of Grendel, "God's adversary," or the giganta that warred with God before the flood. The entna, mysterious building giants in *Beowulf*, leave barely a trace here; the Eoten Ring of Ireland that Merlin takes to become Stonehenge is the only suggestion that the giant can be anything other than destructive.

Table 3.2: Nonhuman Terms in *Lazamon's Brut*: Giants

Nonhuman Term	Translation	Referent	Caligula	Otho	Caligula Total	Otho Total
eoten	giant	Corineus	1	1	22	22
		Albion Giants	7	7		
		Giant MSM	14	14		
eoten ring	Giant's Ring	Giant's Ring/Dance	1	1	1	1
feond	enemy	Albion Giants	3	1	11	10
		Giant MSM	8	9		
feond-scaðe	enemy-destroyer	Giant MSM	1	1	1	1
Gogmagog	proper name	Gogmagog (Albion)	6	6	6	6
highest	highest (rank)	Gogmagog (Albion)	1	1	1	1
kempe	champion/warrior	Corineus/Gogmagog	0	1	0	1
King Run	King Run	King Riun	1	1	1	1
lord	lord (of giants)	Gogmagog (Albion)	1	1	1	1

Table 3.2 Continued

nineteen	nineteen (giants)	Giants	1	1	1	1
scaðe	destroyer	Gogmagog (Albion)	1	0	4	1
		Giant MSM	3	1		
scalk	warrior	Corineus/Gogmagog	1	0	1	0
scucke	demon, Devil	Giant MSM	4	2	4	2
þing	thing	Giant MSM	0	1	0	1
wald-scaðe	lord-destroyer	Giant MSM	1	0	1	0
wiðer-sake	violent conflict	Gogmagog (Albion)	1	1	1	1
wode-scaðe	mad destroyer	Giant MSM	0	1	0	1
wrecche	wretched one	Giant MSM	0	2	0	2

Figure 2 Comparative Counts of Terms for Giants in both Manuscripts of Laȝamon's *Brut*

### Elves

The Caligula MS presents Estrilde as an *all-peodish* maid, literally a woman of all nations. Even if she presents herself as a king's daughter from Germany, the Brutes have no way of knowing. Instead, the Otho text calls her an elvish maid, suggesting that her beauty has a

preternatural quality and that she is potentially a nonhuman threat to the line of succession. This issue is never fully solved, but she and her daughter Abren are both drowned, which removes a threat to the line of succession, whether human or nonhuman.

As noted in the previous section on elves (Section 3.XXX), the elves are powerful presences that do not necessarily have to serve the interests of human persons. The elves are associated more highly with females than males; Wigar the smith, whose name is an addition to the Otho manuscript, is the only specifically male elf that appears in either text. The vaguely threatening elves of the Loch Lomond passage in the Caligula MS disappear from the Otho MS. In addition, the elves no longer *bigolen* Arthur with *galder*; instead, they simply give him gifts of might and long life in a reflection of later fairy godparent stories. Argante's role as an elf queen is reinforced in Otho, and the beautiful Estrilde becomes associated with elves. All of this is a move away from the slightly threatening otherworldly elves of the *untydre* in *Beowulf* and towards the fairy queen archetype of later romances and Early Modern English.

Table 3.3 Nonhuman Terms in Lazamon's *Brut*: Elves

Nonhuman Term	Translation	Referent	Caligula	Otho
all- <i>peodish</i>	of all peoples/nations	Astrild	1	0
Argante	proper name	Argante	2	2
Avalon	proper place name	elf land	3	4
bigolen	enchanted	enchanted	1	0
elf	elf	elves bless Arthur	5	2
elven	elven	Loch Lomond,	1	0
elvish	elvish	smith	1	1
elvish	elvish	Estrilde	0	1
galder	magic	magic	1	0
halewei	healing drink	healing drink	2	2
maid	maiden	Estrilde	1	1
maiden	maiden	Argante	1	0
queen	queen	Argante	1	2
Wigar	proper name	smith	0	1
wittye	intelligent	smith	0	1
woman	woman	elf women	1	1
wrohte	wright/smith	smith	0	1



## Mermaids

Table 3.4 Nonhuman Terms in Layamon's *Brut*: Mermaids

Noun	Referrent	Caligula	Otho
beste	mermaid	0	1
deor	mermaid	1	0
fish	mermaid	2	2
mereminne	mermaid	3	3
token	mermaid	1	1
women	mermaid	2	2

The mermaids (EME *meremen*), half-fish and half-person, are unsurprisingly described equally as fish and women, with each term used twice per manuscript. The mermaids are also described as animals: *deor* in Caligula, and *beste* in Otho, reflecting the respective linguistic conservatism of the manuscripts as *deor* gradually narrowed in meaning. In both manuscripts, there is an allegorical description of them as *tacne* (token) of something: in Caligula, it's a stand-in for the devil, while in Otho, it's a metaphor for the world. In both cases, the metaphor compares the mermaid to something that is tempting and attractive on the surface, but which leads to ugliness and doom. Significantly, Brutus and his Trojans are able to fight past these beings, signifying that they are eschewing sinfulness in search of their new home.

## Merlin

The most frequent word used regarding Merlin is just his name. This is not too different from the way that Taliesin and Sybil are presented; their name stands alone in fame, and distinguishes them from most human persons. The other terms for Merlin shift throughout the course of the *Brut*. Merlin's terminology changes very quickly at the beginning from words indicating his age and status as a son, child, and boy. As soon as he has proven himself to Vortigern, there is a shift towards words, first to him as a man, and also to words that indicate his value to the kings: friend, man, dear, etc. His role as *wittie*, or prophet, is mentioned half as often in the Otho manuscript as in the Caligula, with only four uses instead of eight. This is suggestive, as *witie* was slowly merging with *witti* in this period. The fewer mentions of the word for prophet suggests that instead, Merlin was being imagined as simply a person full of wit (intelligence/wisdom). The Otho manuscript generally condenses versions of anything that the scribe considered redundant, and if

the scribe misunderstood the use of *witie*, then this may explain the drastic cut in the number of times Merlin is referenced as such.

While not so much a helpful piece of information for nonhuman terms, the uses of certain terminology for Merlin demonstrates a shift in lexicon for people. The Otho manuscript no longer calls the young Merlin either *bearn* or *knight*, though he is still called a *knave* and a *child*. This demonstrates not only that *bearn* is slowly exiting the lexicon on its way to retention only in particular dialects, but that *knight* is slowly contracting in meaning from any male to only warrior males. In addition, kinship terms for Merlin (*son*, *kin*, and *ifere*, a word for companions) are fewer in the Otho manuscript when compared to the Caligula text.

Table 3.5: Nonhuman Terms in Laȝamon's *Brut*: Merlin

Nonhuman Term	Caligula	Otho
bane	1	1
bearn	2	0
brutael	2	2
burh-knave	1	1
child	1	3
children	1	1
dear	1	1
freond	4	4
ifere	1	0
kin	1	0
knave	3	4
knight	1	0
man	9	4
Merlin	96	86
son	6	2
steward	1	1
wise	2	2
witie	8	4

### ***Magicians and Prophets***

Much like in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, where the Owl and Nightingale are debating the overlap between a witch and a prophet, there is some conflict in the *Brut* between divination and prophecy. The confusion is not helped by the terminology; there is a significant difference in

meaning between Middle English *wīttē* (MED: prophet, seer) and the almost indistinguishable *wittī*. (MED: possessed of practical wisdom). The first is derived from Old English *wīt(e)ga* (wise man, one who has knowledge from a superhuman source) and the second from Old English *wit(t)ig* (having knowledge, wisdom, sense).<sup>194</sup> As noted by the *OED* and the *MED*, by the end of this period, *wīttē* becomes conflated with *wittī*; in fact, the final quotations demonstrating attestations of *wīttē* are from the Caligula A. IX manuscript of the *Brut*. Therefore, it is unsurprising that in the Otho manuscript, which reflects a later date of composition, thoroughly merges the two terms, using them interchangeably. However, in the Caligula text, there is a distinction between the wit of Ioram and the divine knowledge of Merlin.

Þe king wes ful særi;    & sende after witien.  
 æfter world-wise monne;    þa wisdom cuðen.  
 & bad heom leoten weorpen;    & fondien leod-runen.  
 fondien þat soðe;    mid heore size-craften.  
 whær-on hit weore ilong;    þat þe wal þe wes swa strong.  
 ne moste niht-longes;    nauere istonden.  
 Pas weorlde-wise men;    þer a twa wenden.  
 summe heo wenden to þan wude;    summe to weien-læten.  
 heo gunnen loten weorpen;    mid heore leod-runen.  
 fulle þreo nihten;    heore craftes heo dihten.  
 Ne mihten heo nauere finden;    þurh nauere nane þinge.  
 whær-on hit weore ilong;    þat þe wal þat wes swa strong.  
 æuere-ælche nihte to-ras;    & þe king his swinc læs.  
 Buten witie þer wes an;    he wes ihaten Ioram.  
 he seide þat he hit afunde;    ah hit þuhte læsinge.  
 (lines 7733-7747, vol. 1: p. 400)

(the king was very sorrowful, and sent for seers, and for world-wise people who knew wisdom, and commanded them to cast lots and to make trial with their advice/incantations and discover that truth, with their powerful skills/sorcery whereon it was the fault that the wall which was so strong might not ever stand the length of the night. These world-wise men went from there in two/multiple ways.

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<sup>194</sup> Bosworth-Toller, Dictionary of Old English.

Some, they went to the wood, some to the crossroads. They began to cast lots with their incantations for a full three nights, their crafts/skills they performed. Nor might they never find, through never any thing whereon it was the fault that the wall that was so strong every night fell and the king lost his labor. Except (witie) there was one, he was called Ioram, he said that he found it, but it seemed to be lies.)

The *world-wise monne þa wisdom cuðen* (worldly-wise people that knew wisdom) and the *witien* (“prophets/soothsayers”) that are being summoned by Vortigern are those who use *leoten* (lots) and *leod-runen* (incantations) to find information. They do this by going to two traditional liminal spaces, the woods and the crossroads, and by taking a traditional three days to consult auguries. This is the kind of divination that proscribed in Deuteronomy 18:10: “And do not find among you a person who would order his son or daughter should be expiated by means of fire, or who consults diviners and observes dreams as well as auguries nor be harmers. Nor enchanters nor soothsayers consult, nor prophets who ask from the dead the truth.”<sup>195</sup> The Latin for “harmer,” *maleficus*, also carries the connotation of one who practices black magic, according to *William Whittaker’s Words*.<sup>196</sup>

The magicians are educated people who utilize learned skills to cast lots or interpret dreams or auguries. This is in opposition to Merlin, who, like Taliesin or Sybil, casts no lots and needs no enchantments to speak truly.

The repeated references to Ioram in conjunction with treacherous terms like *læsinge* (lies)*swikel* (deception), and most damning, *leod-swike* (people-deceiver) demonstrates that these are not prophets, as prophets are repeatedly associated through the text with speaking the truth.

Table 3.6: Nonhuman Terms in Lazamon’s *Brut*: Magicians and Advisors

Noun	Referrent	Caligula	Otho	Total Caligula	Total Otho
clærke	Magan	4	1	4	1
foe	Iorem	1	1	1	1
ifere	Iorem et al.	3	3	3	3
Iorem	Iorem	10	11	10	11

<sup>195</sup> Deut. 18:10-11:”nec inveniatur in te qui lustret filium suum aut filiam ducens per ignem aut qui ariolos sciscitetur et observet somnia atque auguria ne sit maleficus. ne incantator ne pythones consulat ne divinos et quaerat a mortuis veritatem.” *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam*, 260.

<sup>196</sup> <https://archives.nd.edu/words.html>

Table 3.6 continued

Noun	Referrent	Caligula	Otho	Total Caligula	Total Otho
læsinge	Iorem	2	2	2	2
lað	Iorem	1	1	1	1
leod-swike	Iorem et al.	1	0	1	0
Magan	Magan	5	3	5	3
man	Iorem et al.	2	1	3	2
man	Magan	1	1		
swikel	Iorem et al.	1	1	1	1
wise	Iorem et al.	1	1	1	1
witie	Iorem et al.	4	5	4	5

Table 3.6 demonstrates two different kinds of advisors to Vortigern. The first, a highly-educated polyglot cleric named Magan, is able to answer the king's question about Merlin's conception through the agent of an incubus. He is a *selcuð* person, meaning that he is famous or prodigious, which the text makes clear are based on his ability to advise. However, when Vortigern calls for his "witie," he is calling for soothsayers, the people I am calling magicians.

The prophet Sybil is called "wise". Taliesin is called *witie*, the same *witegan*-derived term that is used of Merlin. In all three of these cases, there is a heavy emphasis on the truth of the words written or spoken by the prophet. This places them in contrast with the *swikel* ("false, lying, deceitful") Ioram and his companions, who resemble the magicians of Pharoah in the incidents of Exodus. While Ioram and company are called *witie* by Vortigern, there is never an indication of friendship or gladness on the part of the king when they arrive. Taliesin, however, is beloved by many for telling the truth, and the King Cymbeline calls him his *wynn* ("friend"). This is parallel to the way that Merlin is treated by Vortigern, Aurelius, and Uther; each king is extremely pleased to see him. See Table 3.7; for additional exploration of Merlin,<sup>3.8</sup>

Table 3.7: Terms for Prophets in Lazamon's *Brut*

Noun	Referrent	Caligula	Otho
Sybyl	Sybil	2	2
wise	Sybyl	1	1
man	Taliesin	1	1
Taliesin	Taliesin	7	5
wynn	Taliesin	1	0
witeȝe (wittie)	Taliesin	1	1

### **Water Beasts**

The incident of the Sea Monster is worth examining briefly, though it does not count as a nonhuman person. Wace uses the word *monstre* for the gigantic sea serpent. Interesting enough, Lazamon does not choose to use “monster” as it might not have been familiar to his audience. Instead, he uses *deore* in the Caligula, suggesting that this is simply an animal. The Otho manuscript also includes a mention of the sea serpent as a *best*. Neither version includes the description of the sea monster as a *niker*, despite the word appearing in both manuscripts in the Arthur at Loch Lomond passage. At least in Old English, the naming of *nicera* was not an issue of whether the water was salt or fresh; Beowulf fights *nicera* both in the sea race with Breca and in the mere. Instead, the sea creature comes from the West and literally swallows up the king due to his pride insisting he can handle the sea creature by himself. Wace's use of “monster” indicates either a spiritual dimension to the creature, or at least a certain amount of non-specific wonder. There is one hint of that same metaphorical dimension of spiritual threat in the Caligula's labelling of the sea beast as a *wald-scape*, “destroyer of Walden”, or God. However, even when the sea serpent is described as in Layamon is a very physical threat as *deor* and *beste*. The ‘uniuele thingen’ of Loch Lomond, the wicked or unnatural things that live in the lake in the Caligula manuscript are no longer presenting the Otho version, making the lake less threatening.

Table 3.8: Nonhuman Terms in Lazamon's *Brut*: Sea Monsters

Nonhuman Term	Referrent	Caligula	Otho
Deor	sea beast	8	9
wald-scathe	sea beast	1	0
Feond	sea beast	2	0
Beast	sea beast	0	1
Niker	niker	1	1
uniuele thingen	Loch Lomond creatures	1	0

### 3.5 Nonhuman Summary Table and Conclusions

As can be seen by the summary table for Early Middle English, Table 3.9, the overall progression of vocabulary related to nonhuman persons moved from more specific in the Old English period (*eoten*, *giganta*, *thyrs*; etc.) to more general (*eotend*). This trend is not just within the distinct divisions of nonhumans, but in general. Note the increase in more broadly applicable terms like *thing*, *wight*, and *unwight* in this period. There is still at least a partial focus on kinship and kin terms, but a smaller focus on nonhuman persons as kinds of *mann*. There is an expansion of stories relating to elves. While there is still a heavy focus on nonhumans as *feonde*, and a bit on *scucke* (equating them with the devil), there is no usage of *deofol*, which suggests two things. First, there may be an increased taboo on speaking of the Devil. Second, there may be a much lower emphasis on the spiritual threat of nonhuman persons; the fact that the only mention of a soul is the *gost* that inspires Merlin's prophecies would seem to support that conclusion.

So far, most of the vocabulary remains Germanic in origin, with only a very few outlying examples.

Table 3.9: Nonhuman Terms in Early Middle English: Summary

Nonhuman Term	Total	Nonhuman Term	Total
acursi	2	grame	2
adel-eye	1	halewei	4
all-theodish	1	hete	1
amanset	1	highest	2
Argante	4	ifere	7
ateliche	1	insigt	1
Avalon	7	Iorem	21
bane	2	kempe	1
bearn	1	kin (kun, kunrede)	6
beast	2	King Run	2
bigolen	1	knave	7
bilegge	2	knight bearn	1
biswike	1	kursest	1
bodest	5	leod-swike	1
Brutael	4	liȝe	5
burh-knave	2	lord	2
child (children)	6	loȝ (lað, lodliche)	14
cunde	4	luper	1
dahet	2	maid (maiden)	3
dear	2	man	18
deor	18	mansing	2
dim	1	mereminne	6
dweole	1	Merlin	182
elf (elvish, elven)	11	misdede	1
eoten	44	misrede	2
eoten ring	2	niker	2
eremig	1	nineteen	2
feond	23	nipe	2
feond-scaðe	2	noȝt	2
fish	4	on Irish prost	1
foe (uo)	3	onde	1
foliot	1	qued	2
fordeme	1	queen	3
forlere	1	scaðe	5
freond	8	scalk	1
fuzel	3	schame	9
ful	20	schamie	1
galder	1	schende	4
gidie	1	screwen	1
Gogmagog	12	scucke	6
golnesse	2	seolliche	1
gost	1	son	8



Table 3.9 continued

Nonhuman Term	Total	Nonhuman Term	Total
steward	2	unwreste	1
swikel (-dom, -hed)	6	uuel	4
Sybyl	4	vnwizt	3
tacninge (token)	3	wald-scaðe	2
Taliesin	12	wicche crefte	2
þing	11	wiðer-sake	2
þrete (þretest)	3	wizt	4
unclene	1	Wigar	1
ungod	2	wise	8
unhwate	1	witie	24
unihoded	1	wode-scaðe	1
uniuele	1	wowe	1
unlede	1	woman (women)	6
unmilde	1	worst	1
unred	2	wrecche	16
unriȝt (-fulness)	3	wroht	1
unsiȝe	1	wynn	1
unwrenched	1	ydel	2

Overall, the examination of these texts suggest that while the nonhuman person is still within the public imagination of the Early Middle English period, it is becoming less specific and less threatening.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> The limitation on this conclusion is, again, the limited number of texts that were examined. Additional samples can add more detail.

## 4 MAGIC, MARVELLIS, AND MONSTERS: LATER MIDDLE ENGLISH

### 4.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the first attestation of the word “monster” appearing in English is in Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*, where it appears three separate times. That text, composed in the last quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, is the endpoint of this study. I will also examine *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the anonymously authored alliterative poem also attributed to the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. The critical studies of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and of Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales* are so numerous that I am forced to give only the briefest nod in passing as needed in the analysis.

#### 4.1.1 Overview of the Chapter

As in former chapters, I will be examining potential nonhuman characters in each text according to the three criteria of the nonhuman person. Then I will study the word distributions between texts. Finally, I will attempt to reach some conclusions regarding nonhuman persons in this period.

#### 4.1.2 An Introduction to the Texts

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is extant in just one manuscript, M.S. Cotton Nero A.x. This manuscript, written in a distinctive hand with multiple scribal errors and several illuminations, is the only surviving anthology of alliterative verse from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>198</sup> The dialect has been localized to South East Cheshire or North East Staffordshire in the West Midlands, and may reflect the dialect of either the scribe or of the author; Andrew and Waldron suggest, with Duggan, that the poet’s dialect may be closer to that of Staffordshire. The dating of the manuscript is post 1348, as the Order of the Garter, whose motto appears in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, was established in that year, and usually given as simply “late 14<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>199</sup> Christine Chism

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<sup>198</sup> Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron, “Introduction” in *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007), 1-26 at 1.

<sup>199</sup> Andrew and Waldron, “Introduction” *Poems of the Pearl MS*, 2-3.

suggests 1380-1390, as she sees a representation of the early reign of Richard II in the boyish figure of Arthur portrayed in the text, and a concern with the division between the West Midlands and the court.<sup>200</sup> The language, however, is quite distinct from that of Chaucer.

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, though incomplete, is one of the most famous of extant Middle English works. It is preserved at least partially in 88 extant 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts. The best-known are the Ellesmere and the Hengwrt manuscripts, or more properly San Marino, Huntington Library, El. 26 C 9:Ellesmere and Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales Peniarth 392 D: Hengwrt. Both of these manuscripts date from the first decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>201</sup> though the *Tales* themselves are believed to have been imagined in a collection with a frame narrative sometime in the late 1380s.<sup>202</sup> For the purposes of this study, where only terms associated with nonhuman persons and monsters are under consideration, all materials have been collected from only a few tales: "The Wife of Bath's Tale," "The Miller's Tale," "The Squire's Tale", "The Tale of Sir Thopas," "The Merchant's Tale," "The Man of Law's Tale," "The Franklin's Tale," and "The Monk's Tale." <sup>203</sup>

## 4.2 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

### 4.2.1 Green Knight or Bertilak? The Case of the "Gome in Grene"

Bertilak de Hautdesert, when in the form of the Green Knight, remains rational, though he may not be mortal. His head, when cut off, does not cause him to die, a trick which Gawain points out as not reproducible by Gawain during the encounter at the Green Chapel. However, he seems quite eager to avoid a battle with Gawain after the beheading game has ended, perhaps

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<sup>200</sup> Christine Chism, *Alliterative Revivals* The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 68-69.

<sup>201</sup> Mathew Spencer et al. "Analyzing the Order of Items in Manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*," *Computers and the Humanities* 37 (2003): 97-103 at 100; the number of extant manuscripts analyzed in this study was 56, though the "Home Page" of *The Canterbury Tales Project* shows 88 manuscripts as extant. <https://www.canterburytalesproject.org/>, 2020.

<sup>202</sup> Larry D. Benson, "The *Canterbury Tales*" in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, general editor Larry D. Benson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3.

<sup>203</sup> Terms for the full human and nonhuman concordance in Appendix D were pulled from Akio Oizumi (editor) and Miki Kunihiro (programmer), *A KWIC Concordance to the Canterbury Tales* and *A General Word Index to The Canterbury Tales*, vol. 1-4 of *A Complete Concordance to the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 16 vols. in 24 (Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 1991-2017).

demonstrating that he is, in fact, mortal when not specifically spelled by Morgan. The Green Knight speaks well, if a little dismissively, and meets Criterion 1.

In terms of Criterion 2, the knight is very large, bright green, on a green horse, talks through his cut-off head, and disappears into nothingness. These are preternatural attributes, as well as physical differences. However, they are only achieved by the magic of Morgan la Faye. On his own, Bertilak is just a large and intelligent knight. When under enchantment, Criterion 2 fits; when not under enchantment, he does not. The case of Bertilak allows a test case for a person under the influence of a spell or curse cast by a human practitioner. Bertilak himself has no powers; he depends on Morgan to cast the spell to change his “wyse”. He is rational and mortal, but has a preternatural and physical differences under her spell that exclude him from human social expectations. However, once the spell ends, he returns to a more standard human form along with the expectation he will abide by human conventions. Looking to romances, in the case of the cursed lady in *Lybaeus Desconus* or the *Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell*, the condition to remove the spell or curse is met and the lady returns to her standard human appearance and her conventional social role in human society. This demonstrates that creatures under enchantment are nonhumans while the enchantment or curse survives, but human after. Likewise, if the person has control over their own changes due to magic, they are a human person under the same logic as witchcraft, above.

Criterion 3 is the hardest to judge. Bertilak follows all the forms of courtesy, all while keeping the truth hidden from Gawain. As the Green Knight, despite knowing and using the forms, no one *expects* him to do so. As Bertilak, he is *expected* to know and uphold the human conventions. Bertilak is bound to human laws and conventions, though he uses his words carefully to both speak the truth and to keep Gawain and Arthur’s court in the dark about his identity. He also has chosen to align himself with Morgan la Faye, who is a magic-user and who is explicitly testing Arthur’s court with the intent of harming the queen. As I have said above, magicians and witches are humans who have transgressed human social boundaries in order to achieve power. Prophets and naturally magical beings, like elves or fairies, are not expected to abide by human rules and therefore do not transgress those boundaries. Aligning himself with Morgan makes Bertilak transgressive as well. However, a transgressive human, lacking preternatural difference, is still just a human. Therefore, while the Green Knight is a nonhuman person, Bertilak de Hautdesert is a human person.

#### 4.2.2 Morgan le Faye

Morgan is an enchantress. While she is called “la faye,” there is no proof that she is, in fact, part fairy. She is short, fat, and old. Her elderly nature suggests that she is, in fact, mortal. Her plan to test the bravery of Arthur’s court and/or kill Guenevere with fear, while slightly nonsensical, is a plan, and the ability to do it comes from books, and learning from other magicians. Within the text, she has no dialogue, but her use of language is implied in several passages where the “burdes” of the castle Hautdesert keep Gawain company, along with a description of her learning academic magic. She is rational and mortal, and meets Criterion 1.

Morgan’s ability to meet Criterion 2 is through her preternatural difference from standard human persons. In Chapter 3, I demonstrated that the source of a person’s magic is essential in determining if a person does or does not meet the criteria as a nonhuman person, with divinely-gifted and/or inborn ability placing an individual in the nonhuman person category and other sources of magic, diabolical or scholastic, indicating a person should be classified as human. So what kind of magic does Morgan possess?

There is some evidence for each conclusion. Morgan is said to have learned her magic from books and from Merlin, the *conable klerke*, with whom she had some form of well-known romance (*drwry*) (Ll. 2449-50). In these ways, Morgan’s magic would definitely align with the scholarly “magician” kind of magic. Meanwhile, Morgan’s ability to meet Criterion 2 is through her preternatural difference from standard human persons. In Chapter 3, I demonstrated that the source of a person’s magic is essential in determining if a person does or does not meet the criteria as a nonhuman person, with divinely-gifted and/or inborn ability placing an individual in the nonhuman person category and other sources of magic, diabolical or scholastic, indicating a person should be classified as human. So what kind of magic does Morgan possess? When asked for his name, the Green Knight also reveals the reason he is green:

‘Bertilak de Hautdesert I hat in þis londe.  
þurȝ myȝt of Morgne la Faye, þat in my hous lenges,  
And koyntyse of clergie, bi craftes wel lerned—  
þe maystrés of Merlyn mony ho hatz taken,  
For ho hatz dalt drwry ful dere sumtyme  
With þat conable klerk; þat knowes all your knyȝtez  
At hame.

Morgne þe goddes  
 Þerfore hit is hir name;  
 Weldez non so hyȝe hawtesse  
 þat ho ne con make ful tame—  
 Ho wayned me vpon þis wyse to your wyne halle[...]  
 Ho wayned me þis wonder[...]<sup>204</sup>

(Bertilak de Hautdesert I am called in this land. Through power of Morgan la Faye, who dwells in my house, and secrets of clergy, through well-learned skills—she has taken many of the powers/mysteries(?) of Merlin, for she shared her love very dearly at one time with that knowledgable clerk; all your knights at home know that. Morgan the Goddess therefore is her name; no one wields such a high power that she does not know how to tame him. She sent me in this way to your happy hall... she sent me, this wonder...)

From this revelation, Gawain and the reader learn the identity of the older woman, and gain a lot of insight into both her training and her motivations for initiating the beheading game. In terms of the source of Morgan's power, there are two possible interpretations. First, her cognomen "la Faye" indicates a certain amount of preternatural background and inborn ability, like those of elves or fairies. In this text, she is Faye, and the knight, when green, is described as *aluish*. In addition, her other epithet, Morgan "the Goddess" suggests a certain amount of divinely-given power.

However the kinds of works Morgan performs are described as *koyntyse* and *maystrés*, secrets and mysteries. These are synonyms for the modern "occult," which is suggestive of traditions of learned magic like the Golden Dawn, or the witchcraft of the early Modern Period. Reinforcing this impression is the fact that it is the secrets and mysteries of clergy; even Merlin is described as the *conable klerke*, rather than as a prophet or a preternatural being. In these ways, Morgan's magic would definitely align with the scholarly kind of magic. Morgan's magic is described by Bertilak as a matter of learning and training. Morgan is therefore aligned with the tradition of academic magic, and is probably a human person. If she were to give up her magic she could still re-integrate into human society, assuming she stops trying to kill Guenevere. She is Arthur's half-sister and Gawain's own aunt, after all. Her epithet "Goddess" is based on her ability

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<sup>204</sup> "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," lines 2445-59, Andrew and Waldron, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript* 296-97.

to put each person in their place using her magic, rather than any inherent prophetic ability or personal immortality.

### 4.2.3 Others

The other potential nonhuman persons on Gawain's quest are mentioned only as single words or, sometimes, as single lines within the text focused only on his encounter with the Green Knight. The relevant passage reads:

At vche warpe oþer water þer þe wyȝe passed  
He fonde a foo hym byfore, bot ferly hit were,  
And þat so foule and so felle þat feȝt hym byhode.  
So mony meruayl bi mount þer þe mon fyndez  
Hit were to tore for to telle of þe tenþe dole.  
Sumwhyle wyth wormez he werrez and with wolues als,  
Sumwhyle wyth wodwos þat woned in þe knarrez,  
Boþe wyth bullez and berez, and borez oþerquyle,  
And etaynez þat hym aneledede of þe heȝe felle.<sup>205</sup>

In each case, we have only minor clues from this particular text, leaving the reader dependent upon pre-existing knowledge or impressions in order to classify each kind of being. The "wurmez," which have no clues to interiority or speech, can likely be dismissed as the nonhuman beast-type dragons, since they would not meet Criterion 1.

The wodwose are the trickiest case of the three here, and based almost entirely on outside knowledge. Within *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the only information written is that they dwell in the *knarrez*; the Middle English Dictionary defines this as "crag[s], twisted rock [s]."<sup>206</sup> There is no indication within the text as to their rationality. On the one hand, they are described in parallel with *etaynz*, which, as I discuss below, are nonhuman persons. On the other hand, the *wodwos* are also contained within a frame of two lines that describe non-persons: bears, boars, bulls, wyrms, and wolves. The good news is that it is possible to use only this scant information in order to make a nonhuman determination. The *wodwos* are described by Andrew and Waldron

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<sup>205</sup> "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," lines 715-23, Andrew and Waldron, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript* 235.

<sup>206</sup> "knarre" *MED*.

as “hairy woodland monsters of medieval imagination,” and they trace the etymology to *wudu wasa*, which they define as “wood man”<sup>207</sup> Bosworth-Toller instead defines *wudu-wása* as “satyr, faun”. A part human, part animal in the classical tradition, a satyr or faun would probably qualify as a type of person. According to Dorothy Yamamoto, the woodwose are a kind of wild man who blurs the lines between human and animal:

In the wild man the dividing line between the centre and the periphery seems to have vanished altogether... The region he inhabits has always been one of absorbed speculation, and also of profound anxiety, since his presence within culture suggests that the membrane between humanness and otherness is frighteningly permeable—that there might, in fact, be circumstances in which men might *lose* their humanity, and revert, or sink, to the level of beasts.

If Gawain’s *wodwos* are interpreted through this lens, then the rational and mortal part of Criterion 1 are met as a kind of “wild man”. Criterion 3 is met in the separation from social norms. By dwelling in crags in the Wirral, even textually speaking they are surrounded by animals, rather than people. Criterion 2 is the only one that is difficult to ascertain; one would assume a physical difference between *wodwos* and the human persons of Arthur’s court, but it is not described. If *wodwos* fits the Andrew and Waldron description, the physical difference might be in an exceptionally hairy body; if it fits the Bosworth-Toller definition, the physical difference may be as extreme as goat hooves. In either case, Criterion 2 would also be met, and woodwose are therefore nonhuman persons. The etaynz of Gawain’s journey are in opposition to “men” earlier in the text, when the Green Knight is called “Half etayn in erde ... / Bot mon most I algate mynn hym to bene.”<sup>208</sup>

The implication here is that while Green Knight may be a half-giant, he is definitely the largest of “man”. Similarly, the various knights and wodwose are presented as distinct from the etaynz Gawain encounters in the wilderness, marking them as their own particular category of foes. They must be mortal, as Gawain defeats them. They are likely rational, if the possible half-eoten status of the Green Knight is to be believed. They are physically marked as larger than human

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<sup>207</sup> Andrew and Waldron, *Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, 235 n.721.

<sup>208</sup> “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,” lines 140-41, Andrew and Waldron, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript* 216.



persons; in both his forms, Bertilak/the Green Knight is described as larger than other persons, and he is only supposed to be half eoten, suggesting the full eoten are even larger. The existence of the eoten in the wilderness is apparently void of ties to human society. There is no indication of conversation, social niceties, or social rank, which suggests that they exist outside of human social expectation. The *etaynz* of *Sir Gawain* are therefore nonhuman persons.

### 4.3 *The Canterbury Tales*

#### 4.3.1 Elfe-Queenes of Fayerye

There are three examples of elf queens in the Canterbury tales. The first is the dreamt-of “lemman” in *The Tale of Sir Thopas*, who is never actually encountered, though still described in glowing hyperbole. The second leads the barely-glimpsed dancing company of The Wife of Bath’s tale. The third is Proserpina, presented as a dancing Fayerye queen, the goddess of the spring and the underworld in classical Latin mythology.

Other descriptions of elves and fairies are just as fleeting; Pluto and Proserpina remain the only examples of speaking elves in the text, unless one counts the Loathly Lady figure, who in some versions of the story is known as Dame Ragnell. Which of the elves and fairies are nonhuman persons?

The elf-queene of Sir Thopas is not explicitly shown to be mortal or to be rational; in fact, there are only the dreams of Thopas and the words of Sire Oliphaunt to confirm that she exists at all. With this little information, it is difficult or impossible to evaluate her nonhuman personhood. If she exists, she must be rational and mortal enough to marry Thopas, which would arguably satisfy Criterion 1. If she exists, she is *oone that shone ful bright* (one that shines brightly, idiom for beautiful), and the only female Thopas will consider to become his *make* (mate, wife). She is able to appear to Thopas in a dream so he will seek her in the land of Fairye, suggesting a certain amount of preternatural ability, as well as possibly preternatural beauty, which would satisfy Criterion 2. An elf-queen is not expected to abide by the same rules as human women, though there are certain romance conventions she would likely fulfill, such as a prohibition on revealing her presence, an endless supply of money for her lover, and no indication of marriage being a precondition for her physical love. This would satisfy Criterion 3, though again, this is based on extremely scant evidence and much supposition.

In “The Merchant’s Tale,” Proserpina and Pluto are presented as king and queen of Fairy, and are accompanied by “many a lady” on to Januarie’s walled garden where they often “daunced” invisible to human persons.<sup>209</sup> While they are consistently presented as fairies, they are also the same Pluto and Proserpina from Roman mythology. This is in line with both the romance *Sir Orfeo* and with Richard Firth Green’s assertions that the “little tradition” of fairies suggested fairyland or Avalon as an alternative afterlife.<sup>210</sup> This is also supported by the Squire’s comment in his tale that Gawain could come back from “Fairy” to marvel at the orderliness of the court.<sup>211</sup> The complication with fairies and elves, naturally, is that there is no indication of their mortality or lack thereof. If one assumes that they are rational beings who are sufficiently mortal to count as persons, then Criteria 2 and 3 can be considered. So, assuming that Proserpina and Pluto do meet Criterion 1, there is sufficient proof for Criterion 2. They have preternatural abilities to walk around invisibly and to give magical gifts; in the case of Pluto, he returns Januarie’s sight, and in the case of Proserpina, she grants Maye and all women the ability to lie convincingly if caught in adultery. Criterion 3 is met based on the lack of expectation that fairies will abide by human rules; in fact, Proserpina and Pluto are trespassing in a garden that Januarie keeps locked, but there is no expectation that they are bound by such human devices or moral concerns about the ownership of the garden. If one can find sufficient proof of the mortality of the King and Queen of Fayerye, then they are nonhuman persons.<sup>212</sup>

The last reference to fairies as potential people in *The Canterbury Tales* occurs in “The Wife of Bath’s Tale.” The Wife explains that Britain once had many fairies, but they were all driven out by the churches.

The last reference to fairies as potential people in *The Canterbury Tales* occurs in “The Wife of Bath’s Tale.” The Wife explains that Britain once had many fairies, but they were all driven out by the clergy. Within her text, however, the fairies are still present. There are a few pieces of evidence to suggest that the loathly lady figure is indeed a fairy. First, when some dancing

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<sup>209</sup> ll.2038-41, and 2235-26; “The Merchant’s Tale” from *The Canterbury Tales*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, IV (E) 1964-2047, p. 163; and IV (E) 2221-2304, p. 166.

<sup>210</sup> Green, *Elf Queens and Holy Friars* 157.

<sup>211</sup> “The Squire’s Tale”, ll 95-96. In *The Canterbury Tales*, from *The Riverside Chaucer*; V (F) 58-147, p. 170.

<sup>212</sup> In the case that they are immortal, they then become the same sort of nonhuman beings as demons and angels, who are also arguably immortal, at least compared to human persons. In the case that only God is eternal, of course, fairies, angels, and demons are all mortal, but this philosophy reaches further than the scope of the dissertation project.

“ladyes” appear in the woods before the knight, they disappear as soon as he goes to follow them, and the only being he finds is the loathly lady. The sudden appearance and disappearance of beings is highly associated with fairies. Second, , the loathly lady is the only figure that might put off a knight who is known to have raped a maiden wandering the woods; after all “filthe and eelde, also moot I thee, Been grete wardeynes upon chastitee,”<sup>213</sup> and he refuses to touch her even after being married to her and placed into bed beside her! The fair “ladyes foure and twenty, and yet mo” is a convention of ballads that usually specifies that the one character singled out—often the queen or the heroine—is the lovelies of them all,<sup>214</sup> just as the loathly lady turns out to be “as fair to seene/ as any ladye, emperice, or queene/” in the end. Like most classic fairy as lover stories (such as *Sir Launfal*), the Loathly Lady saves the life of the fallen knight figure by accompanying him to court. The most telling proof, however, is that she reveals that her appearance lies under her own power to change, a preternatural ability for certain. Her demand of a favor for her service also places the Loathly Lady firmly in the fairy lover position.

So, if the Loathly Lady is an elf or fairy, is she a nonhuman person? She is rational; indeed, she sermonizes to her new knight husband about the value in age, poverty, and the meaning of true nobility as virtuous living. She appears to be potentially mortal, as she demonstrates age; however, it is not possible to be certain on this point. She appears to be enough of a person to engage in a marriage with a human person, and so I consider her to meet Criterion 1.

In terms of Criterion 2, the Loathly Lady first appears in a seemingly preternatural way out of the vanished throng of dancing women. Second, she reveals that she is able to shift her own appearance, as she can “amende ...if that [her] liste” her apparent age, her “filthe” and her general loathliness. She is not like the Lady of Synadon in *Lybeaus Desconus*, cursed to remain in a half-serpent form until she is kissed by the kin of the noble Gawain. Her power is her own, and there is no indication that she has borrowed the power or learned it as magicians or witches would do. It appears to be an inherent preternatural ability, meeting Criterion 2.

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<sup>213</sup> Chaucer, “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” lines 1215-16. *The Canterbury Tales*. In *The Riverside Chaucer*, III(D) 1179-1259, p.121.

<sup>214</sup> For example, in *The Ballad of Tam Lin*, “Four and twenty ladies fair / Were playing at the ba, / And out then cam the fair Janet, / Ance the flower among them a’.” Number 39 in Francis James Child, ed., *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882-1898; Rpt. New York: Dover. 1965), 1: 335-58 at 341. In addition, this is reminiscent of the procession of ladies that appear in *Sir Launfal*, where each maiden is more lovely than the last.

In terms of Criterion 3, however, there is some argument to be made both ways. The Loathly Lady is certainly able to alter her appearance at will, and chooses to appear in a form that is opposite the expectation of a human person encountering a fairy. Her physical appearance, which suggests a non-noble background in terms of ugliness, uncleanness, and poverty, is calculated to make her demand to be wedded to the young noble knight appear to be out of a disregard for human social conventions. In addition, her declaration that she can be true and ugly, or beautiful but possibly adulterous, suggests that she does not abide entirely by human social conventions of chastity within marriage. However, she appears human enough that she does seem to be expected to follow the rules. When she breaks the human social convention, however, by getting the mastery over her spouse, she is able to become conventionally what a fairy wife ought to be. It is unclear to what extent she can be described as meeting Criterion 3; in her loathly form, she is not expected to conform. But once she becomes beautiful, she in effect masks her otherness and holds herself to convention. However, once her preternatural abilities are known, she would not be expected to abide by human convention. Perhaps more than a lesson learned, the knight has decided to give his wife choices because he knows that she is not a human woman, but a nonhuman person.

#### **4.3.2 Giants**

There are only three depictions of giants as such in *The Canterbury Tales*. The first two are in “The Monk’s Tale,” while describing the feats of Hercules. Hercules is said to have “...slow cacus in a cave of stoon; / [and] He slow the geant antheus the stronge;.” Cacus is not explicitly called a giant; it is dependent on the reader to know the story of the fight between the fire-breathing Caucas, son of Hephaestus, and Hercules. What is known of this giant is that he died in a stone cave. Antheus is called a “geant” and “stronge”. There is not much information available within the text to make a determination for the nonhuman person status of these characters. However, Cacus is able to be killed, meaning giants are mortal. A giant is preternaturally large and strong, and the strength of Antheus is depicted in the text. Finally, either by dwelling in stone caves, or simply by virtue of being a giant, Cacus and Antheus are not expected to obey the rules of human society. They meet all three criteria, and are nonhuman persons.

The final giant in *The Canterbury Tales* is Sire Oliphaunt, the three-headed giant from “The Tale of Sir Thopas.” As the tale is an obvious lampoon of metrical romances of the period, it is unsurprising to find a giant who is both knighted and still wields a slingshot as the guardian

between the protagonist and his dreamed-of elf-queen lover. The use of non-sword weapons, a hallmark of giants is turned into a kind of inverted David-and-Goliath situation as Oliphaunt fires a boulder at the tiny “Childe Thopas.” However, the two agree to a battle the next day, and seem to be following knightly forms, as Thopas calls for his arms. This giant is able to speak and responds to Thopas’ threat to kill him, fulfilling Criterion 1. The giant is both as large as an elephant as well as three-headed, and easily meets Criterion 2. Finally, by dint of being a giant, as well as by living in the elf/fairy country, Sire Oliphaunt is not expected to abide by human social customs. Sire Oliphaunt is therefore a non-human person.

#### 4.3.3 Monsters

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the first attestation of “monster” in the English language is from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, specifically “The Monk’s Tale,” which they date to ca. 1375. This reference to the many feats of Hercules is quoted in full here:

“Of hercules, the sovereyn conquerour,  
Syngen his werkes laude and heigh renoun;  
For in his tyme of strengthe he was the flour.  
He slow, and frate the skyn of the leoun;  
He of centauros leyde the boost adoun;  
He arpies slow, the crueel bryddes felle;  
He golden apples rafte of the dragoun;  
He drow out cerberus, the hound of helle;  
He slow the crueel tyrant busirus,  
And made his hors to frete hem, flessch and boon;  
He slow the firy serpent venymus;

Of acheloy's two hornes he brak oon;  
And he slow cacus in a cave of stoon;  
He slow the geant antheus the stronge;  
He slow the grisly boor, and that anon;  
And bar the hevene on his nekke longe.  
Was nevere wight, sith that this world bigan,  
That slow so manye monstres as dide he.  
Thurghout this wyde world his name ran,  
What for his strengthe and for his heigh bountee,  
And every reawme wente he for to see.  
He was so stoong that no man myghte hym lette.<sup>215</sup>

(Of Hercules, the sovereign conqueror, sing praise and high renown for his works. For in his time, of strength, he was the flower. He slew and sloughed away the skin of the lion. He of centaurs laid the beasts down (dead); he slew harpies, the cruel birds fell (alternatively: he slew harpies, many of the cruel birds, or he slew harpies, the exceedingly cruel birds). He took golden apples from the dragon, and drew out Cerberus, the hound of hell. He slew the cruel tyrant Bursiris,<sup>216</sup> and made his horse eat his flesh and bones. He slew the fiery serpent venomous and of Acheloy's two horns, he broke one, and he slew Cacus in a stone cave. He slew the giant Antheus the Strong. He slew the grisly boar, and that quickly, and bore heaven on his long neck. There was never a being since this world began that slew so many monsters as he did. Throughout the wide

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<sup>215</sup> 2095-2116;

<sup>216</sup> Here Chaucer confuses the story of the cruel Busiris, King of Egypt, with that of the tyrant, Diomedes of Thrace killed by Hercules in his eighth labor.

world his name ran because of his strength and his high generosity, and (he went to see every realm/every realm went to see him). He was so strong that no man could stop him.)

The list of “monsters” slain by Hercules therefore includes a human tyrant, harpies, centaurs, two giants, fiery serpents, a mythically powerful boar, and a mythically powerful lion. This is in addition to many other exploits. The list includes one human person, three powerful preternatural animals, and three examples of nonhuman persons (assuming the Harpies to be human-bird hybrids, not clear from this text). It is unclear if the slain Busiris counts towards the monsters, but if he does, the human persons still only make up 1/7 of the monster examples.

The second use of “monster” in *The Canterbury Tales* is part of “The Franklin’s Tale.” In this brief passage, Dorigen has just been informed that all the rocks have disappeared from the coast of Brittany. Dorigen responds:

Allas, quod she, that evere this sholde happe!

For wende I nevere by possibilitee

That swich a monstre or merveille myghte be!

It is agayns the proces of nature. 217

(Allas, she said, that ever this should happen! For I never believed by any possibility that such a monster or marvel could be! It is against the process of nature.)

This usage equates “monster” with three concepts: the marvelous, the impossible, and the unnatural. All of these concepts fit well with both the original concept of “monster” as a sign or portent that demonstrates something of God. They also fit well with the often-quoted definition of monster in Sir John de Mandeville/ *Mandeville’s Travels*: “a thing deformed against [natural] kind.”<sup>218</sup>

The third reference to monster in *The Canterbury Tales* is applied to Fortune in “The Merchant’s Tale.” This personification of a force is encapsulated in a wide series of contradictions:

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<sup>217</sup> 1341-45. “The Franklin’s Tale” *The Canterbury Tales*.

<sup>218</sup> *Mandeville’s Travels, Translated from the French of Jean d’Outremeuse, Edited from MS. Cotton Titus c.XVI in the British Museum*, ed. P. Hamelius, 2 vols., Early English Text Society, o.s. 153-154 (London: Oxford University Press, 1919-1923), 30.

joy and poison, sweetness and stings, steadfastness and instability. A full examination of the monsters and their connotations is in section 4.4.2: *Monsters*.

#### 4.4 Nonhuman Words in Later Middle English by Text and Character

##### 4.4.1 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

###### *Green Knight/ Sir Bertilak*

The number of words marking the Green Knight as a knight and a man far outweigh those marking him as a nonhuman. In many ways, the Green Knight is more similar to the description of romance beings who are under spells (ladies with snake tails, etc.) than the traditional “giant” figures. He bears only two weapons in the entire time he is green, and never enacts excessive violence. There is his ironic use of “Bigog” instead of “Bigod,” where as the “half-etayn” he is appealing to the authority of a Biblical giant adversary rather than the Christian God. Even when he is described in a possibly nonhuman way, it is made secondary to the personhood of the Green Knight by words that show doubt about his nature. The language surrounding him only describes him once by any given nonhuman term (*aluish*, *auenture*, *fo*, *half-etayn*, *ghost*, *maruayle*, *mayster*, *oper*, *selly*, *wonder*). The additional terms used for him are more closely associated with human persons, and are used far more frequently. While *wyze* might appear an alternative spelling of “wight,” it is actually a term for “person” derived from Old English *wiga*.

Table 4.1: Terms in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: Green Knight/Bertilak

Nonhuman Term	Translation	Count
alder	elder	1
aluisch	elvish	1
auenture	adventure	1
Bertilak de Hautdesert	proper name	1
burne	man	9
foo	foe	1
freke	warrior	11
ghost	ghost	1
godmon	goodman	6
gome	man	12
half-etayn	half-eoten	1
hapel	noble man	7



Table 4.1 continued

Nonhuman Term	Translation	Count
knape	man, fellow	1
knyȝt	knight	18
leude (lude)	lewd, leader	3
lorde	lord	38
maruayl	marvel	1
mayster	master	1
mere	more/larger	1
mon	man	12
oȝer	other	1
renk	man	1
runisch	strange, mysterious	2
runyschly	strangely, mysteriously	1
schalk (shelk)	man, warrior	4
segge	man, warrior	4
selly	wonder	1
Sir (syre)	sir	2
stalworth	stalwart	1
tulk	man, warrior	3
wonder	wonder	1
worst	worst	1
wyse	way, guise	1
wyttez	wits	1
wyȝe	man, being	9

### *Morgan le Fay*

Again with Morgan, the number of words marking her as a human woman, rather than a prophet or even a spell caster, is fairly overwhelming. While this is almost certainly dependent on the decision for her influence to remain hidden until the end of the poem, it is still indicative of her as a human person with a magical reputation. As noted above, her magic is ascribed to learning from clerics/clerks, leaving her reputation as La Faye and Goddess merely as nicknames.

Table 4.2: Terms in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: Morgan La Faye

Term		Count
alder		2
auncian		1
aunt		2
burde		2
klerk		1
clergye		1
craft		1
dame		1
doȝter		1
goddes		1
half-suster		1
koyntyse		1
lady		13
maystrés		1
la Faye		1
Morgne		2
wyf		1
wymmen		1
wytteȝ		1
ȝode		1

### *Others*

In most cases, the other nonhumans are depicted through only one word, just enough to demonstrate a presence in Gawain's journey, with definitions based on reader assumptions. Three of the four exceptions are *ferly*, *maruayl*, and *wonder*, all of which describe the various stories and unusual creatures that surround the general stories of King Arthur and his court more than any described beings in the text of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The final exception, Devil, is a reflection of Gawain's impression of the Green Chapel, where he is thinking he will likely be killed. It is wild, rough, overgrown, and contains nothing that the Court-raised Gawain might consider holy.

Table 4.3: Nonhuman Terms in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: Other

Headword	Count
aventure	1
berez	1
bigog	1
borez	1
bullez	1
craft	1
dele (deuelez)	2
eoten	1
fele	1
fende	1
ferly	2
foo	1
freke	1
leder	1
maruayl (meruayl)	3
renk	1
warloker	1
wodwos	1
wolues	1
wonder	2
wormez	1
wowrues	1
Zeferus	1

#### 4.4.2 *The Canterbury Tales*

##### *Elves and Fayreryes*

The French-derived *fairy* is more prevalent in *The Canterbury Tales* than the Germanic *elf*. With both, there is an association with magic through beauty, through possible fascination and charms leading to seduction, and through vanishing, along with the actual gifts given by Proserpina and Pluto in “The Merchant’s Tale.” Through Proserpina and Pluto, there is an association between fairies and the underworld or afterlife. There is a strong association with fairies, elves, and dancing. As with the elves of the Early Middle English period, there is a stronger association between females and elves, with only the limiter, Gawain, and Pluto shown as males associated with the concept of Fairye. However, when Nicholas in “The Miller’s Tale” is having a fit, and the carpenter calls out the “night-charm”, it says it will protect Nicholas from “elves and wikked

wighthes”, showing an association between elves and evil beings. There is an association with otherness, as when Custance in “The Man of Law’s Tale”, just like Estrilde in Layamon’s *Brut*, is accused of being an elf rather than simply a foreign woman. And when the limiter is replacing elves and fairies, it is as an “incubus” which suggests that elves and fairies are not non-threatening, but rather associated with demons.

Table 4.4 Nonhuman Terms in the *Canterbury Tales*: Elves and Fairies

Nonhuman Term	Count
child	2
compaignye	2
contree	2
creature	1
dame	1
dance	4
disporten	1
elf (elves, elvish)	4
elf-queen	5
fair	1
fairye (of fairye)	11
feendly	1
foul	1
four and twenty	1
Gawain	1
grisly	1
haunt	1
horrible	1
incubus	1
joly	1
king	3
lady (ladies)	2
lemman	1
lymytour	1
magestee	1
make	1
mo	1
mooder	1
no (no..more; noon)	3
place	1
Pluto	4

Table 4.4 continued

Nonhuman Term	Count
Proserpyna	3
queen	6
sire	1
vanished	1
wight	2
wikkid	1
wrooth	1
wyf	4

Table 4.5 Nonhuman Terms in the *Canterbury Tales* The Loathly Lady

Nonhuman Term	Count
chastitee	1
creature	1
dampnacioun	1
deere	1
empirice	1
fair	4
filthe	1
folk	1
foul (fouler...no)	5
good	2
governance	1
humble	1
lady	2
leve	1
loathly	1
love	2
mooder	1
old (elde)	9
poore	1
poverte	2
queen	1
smiling	1
trewe	2
wight	1
wyf	13
yong	2

The Loathly Lady, as a special case, appears separately in Table 4.5. The words associated with her two or more times, in order of frequency, are: *wyf*, *old*, *foul*, *fair*, *good*, *lady*, *love*, *povert*, *trewe*, *yong*. Some of these are oppositions: foul and fair, old and young,. The remaining words, apart from *povert* carry either neutral or positive connotations, suggesting that while the Loathly Lady is loathsome to start, she is rather a neutral or positive force, and is in control of the oppositions in her character.

### ***Giants***

There are only three examples of giants explicitly in the texts of *The Canterbury Tales*. The first in the Monk’s Tale is just a name and label, the second describes a three-headed “geant” knight using a sling to shoot stones at child Sir Thopas in an inversion of the David and Goliath myth.

Table 4.6 Nonhuman Terms in the *Canterbury Tales*: Giants

Nonhuman Term	Total
Antheus	1
Cacus	1
deed	1
geaunt	5
greete	1
heaudes three	1
man	1
mawe	1
perilous	1
Sire Oliphant	1
stronge	1

The only commonality between these nonhumans is that they are giants. There is no other vocabulary overlap. There is also no trace left of the *eoten* from the Old English, just the *giant* from Latin and French.

## Monsters

There are three examples of the word “monster” in Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. The first is in “The Monk’s Tale,” and it is in reference to the creatures slain by Hercules. The second example is in “The Franklin’s Tale” and is Dorigen’s response to the hiding of the rocks of Brittany, something that is “against nature”. The last example is when the Merchant calls Fortune a monster. In order to consider what it means to be a monster in Chaucer, all of these examples will be combined into a single table. The analysis is partially challenging due to the lack of overlap between terms in the various “monster” sections. Therefore, Table 4.7 breaks down the terms used to the level of not only referent beings as persons or animals, but also connotations including Deception, Instability, Positive, Neutral, and Negative (respective abbreviations: Pers, Anim, Decep, Instab, Pos, Neut, and Neg). This is not quite sentiment analysis, but has some similarities. In this case, Person (Pers) refers to any term that is the proper name of or a noun describing a particular person or nonhuman person (centaur, giant, harpy, etc.). The term Animal (Anim) covers any term that refers to a creature that is an animal, or that describes a feature belonging generally to animals (birds, horns, etc.). The Deception category (Decep) also includes any references to poisoning based on the overall linking of the two concepts throughout my reading for this study. Terms in this category would also include anything that is purposefully hidden. Instability (Instab) includes any references to things that are likely to change, as well as the conceptual figure of personified Fortune. After coding terms to these categories, the remaining terms did not contain enough overlap to allow for categories beyond general connotations being positive (Pos): gift, joy, sweet, steadfast, marvel; negative (Neg): against nature, death, fiery, and hell; and neutral (Neut): head, monster, possibility.

Table 4.7 Monsters in *The Canterbury Tales*: Connotations and Beings

Monster Term	Referrent	#	Pers	Anim	Decep	Instab	Pos	Neut	Neg
Acheloyes	Achelous	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
agayns nature	rocks	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Antheus	Antheus	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
arpies	Harpies	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
bone	Busiris	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
boore	animal	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
booste	centaur	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4.7 continued

Monster Term	Referrent	#	Pers	Anim	Decep	Instab	Pos	Neut	Neg
brotil	Fortune	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
bryddes	Harpies	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Busiris	Busiris	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cacus	Cacus	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Centauros	centaur	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cerberus	Cerberus	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
crueel	Busiris	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
cruelle	Harpies	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
deceyvable	Fortune	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
deethe	Fortune	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
dragoun	Hesperide	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
envenymyng	Fortune	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
firy	serpent	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
flaterest	Fortune	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
flesshe	Busiris	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fortune	Fortune	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
geaunt	Antheus	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
grisly	boar	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
hap	Fortune	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
heed	Fortune	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
helle	Cerberus	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
horns	Achelous	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
hound	Cerberus	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
joye	Fortune	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
merveille	rocks	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
monster	rocks	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
monstre	Fortune	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
monster	H. foes	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
possibilitee	rocks	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
queynte	Fortune	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
scorpioun	Fortune	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
sodeyn	Fortune	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
stidefastnesse	Fortune	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
stronge	Antheus	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
styng	Fortune	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
subtilly	Fortune	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
sweete	Fortune	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0



Table 4.7 continued

Monster Term	Referrent	#	Pers	Anim	Decep	Instab	Pos	Neut	Neg
tayl	Fortune	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
tyrant	Busiris	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
unstable	Fortune	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
venym	Fortune	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
yiftes	Fortune	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
		5							
	Totals:	1	11	13	8	5	5	5	5

Based on these categorizations, Animals are most often associated with the “monster” sections (13), though Persons is nearly equal (11). Deception is the next highest association (8). Instability, Positive, Negative, and Neutral terminology is equally distributed at 5 each. This suggests that while monsters may be viewed as persons, there is a slight favoring of the association with animals. In addition, despite the equal associations of Positive, Negative, and Neutral on the chart, if one were to re-distribute Animal, Person, Deception, and Instability purely on positive, negative, or neutral connotation, the connotation of monster is overall neutral or negative. (see Table 4.8 below; note that proper names of individual beings are removed). There are 19 terms that are neutral, 19 negative, and only 5, a mere 11.6% of the terms, are positive. Monsters in Chaucer, are either neutral or negative overall.

Table 4.8 Monsters in *The Canterbury Tales*: Connotations in Three Categories

Monster Term	Positive	Negative	Neutral
agayns nature	0	1	0
arpies	0	1	0
bone	0	0	1
boore	0	0	1
booste	0	0	1
brotil	0	1	0
bryddes	0	0	1
centauros	0	0	1
crueel	0	1	0
cruelle	0	1	0
deceivable	0	1	0
deethe	0	1	0
dragoun	0	1	0
envenymyng	0	1	0
firy	0	1	0
flaterest	0	1	0

Table 4.8 continued

Monster Term	Positive	Negative	Neutral
flesshe	0	0	1
fortune	0	0	1
geaunt	0	1	0
grisly	0	1	0
hap	0	0	1
heed	0	0	1
helle	0	1	0
horns	0	0	1
hound	0	0	1
joye	1	0	0
merveille	1	0	0
monster	0	0	1
monstre	0	0	1
monster	0	0	1
possibilitee	0	0	1
queynte	0	0	1
scorpioun	0	1	0
sodeyn	0	0	1
stidefastnesse	1	0	0
stronge	1	0	0
stynge	0	1	0
subtilly	0	0	1
sweete	1	0	0
tayl	0	0	1
tyrant	0	1	0
unstable	0	1	0
venym	0	1	0
yiftes	1	0	0
Totals:	6	19	19

#### 4.4.3 Nonhuman Person Totals, Later Middle English

Table 4.9 provides a summary of all the terms examined in Chapter 4. These terms are provided in alphabetical order. In this table, there are two minor points of interest. The first is the vast preference for terms suggesting human personhood (man, lord, etc.) in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* over the same word usage in the nonhuman passages of Chaucer. The second is the minor association of old age with magic working females (the Loathly Lady and Morgan la Fay).

Table 4.9. Summary of Nonhuman Terms in Later Middle English: Totals

Headword	Sir Gawain	Chaucer	Total
Acheloyls	1	0	1
alder	3	0	3
Antheus	0	1	1
Arpies	0	1	1
aventure	2	0	2
auncian	1	0	1
aunt	2	0	2
berez	1	0	1
Bertilak de Hautdesert	1	0	1
bigog	1	0	1
bone	0	2	2
boore	0	1	1
booste	1	1	2
borez	1	0	1
bryddes	0	1	1
bullez	1	0	1
burde	2	0	2
burne	9	0	9
Busiris	0	1	1
Cacus	0	1	1
centauros	0	1	1
Cerberus	0	1	1
champioun	0	1	1
chastitee	0	1	1
child	0	2	2
compaignye	0	2	2
conqueror	0	1	1
contree	0	2	2
craft	2	0	2
creature	0	2	2
crueel	0	2	2
dame	1	1	2
dampnacioun	0	1	1
dance	0	4	4
deere	0	1	1
Dele (Deulez)	2	0	2
disporten	0	1	1

Table 4.9 continued

Headword	Sir Gawain	Chaucer	Total
doȝter	1	0	1
dragoun	0	1	1
elf (elves, aluish)	0	5	5
elf-queen	0	5	5
empirice	0	1	1
etaynez	1	0	1
ȝode	1	0	1
fair	0	5	5
fairye (of fairye)	0	11	11
feendly	0	1	1
fele	1	0	1
fende	1	0	1
ferly	2	0	2
filthe	0	1	1
firy	0	1	1
flasse	0	3	3
fole	1	0	1
folk	0	1	1
foo	2	0	2
foul (fouler...none)	0	6	6
four and twenty	0	1	1
freke	12	0	12
Gawain	0	1	1
geaunt	0	5	5
ghost	1	0	1
goddes(s)	1	0	1
godmon	6	0	6
gome	12	0	12
good	0	2	2
governance	0	1	1
greete	0	1	1
grisly	0	2	2
half-etayn	1	0	1
half-suster	1	0	1
hapel	7	0	7
haunt	0	1	1
heaudes three	0	1	1

Table 4.9 continued

Headword	Sir Gawain	Chaucer	Total
helle	0	1	1
Hercules	0	2	2
high bontee	0	1	1
horns	0	1	1
horrible	0	1	1
hound	0	1	1
humble	0	1	1
incubus	0	1	1
joly	0	1	1
king	0	3	3
klerk	1	0	1
knape	1	0	1
knyȝt	18	0	18
la Faye	1	0	1
ladies	13	4	17
leder	1	0	1
lemman	0	1	1
leude (lude)	3	0	3
leve	0	1	1
loathly	0	1	1
lorde	38	0	38
love	0	2	2
lymytour	0	1	1
magestee	0	1	1
make	0	1	1
man	11	1	12
maruayl (meruayl)	4	0	4
mawe	0	1	1
mayster	1	0	1
maystrés	1	0	1
mere	1	0	1
mo	0	1	1
monstres	0	3	3
mooder	0	2	2
mooder	0		0
Morgne	2	0	2
mighty	0	1	1

Table 4.9 continued

Headword	Sir Gawain	Chaucer	Total
name	0	1	1
nekke	0	1	1
no	0	3	3
noble	0	1	1
of deed	0	1	1
old	0	11	11
oper	1	0	1
perilous	0	1	1
place	0	1	1
Pluto	0	4	4
poore	0	3	3
Proserpyna	0	3	3
queen	0	7	7
renk	2	0	2
runisch	2	0	2
runyschly	1	0	1
schalk (shelk)	4	0	4
segge	4	0	4
sir (syre)	2	1	3
Sire Olifaunt	0	1	1
smiling	0	1	1
sovereyn	0	1	1
stalworth	1	0	1
strengte	0	3	3
trewe	0	2	2
tulk	3	0	3
tyrant	0	1	1
vanished	0	1	1
warloker	1	0	1
wight	0	4	4
wikkid	0	1	1
wodwos	1	0	1
wolues	1	0	1
wonder	3	0	3
wormez	1	0	1
worst	1	0	1
wowrues	1	0	1

Table 4.9 continued

Headword	Sir Gawain	Chaucer	Total
wroth	0	1	1
wy3e	9	0	9
wyf	1	17	18
wymmen	1	0	1
wyse	1	0	1
wyttez	2	0	2
yong	0	2	2

## 4.5 Conclusions

The fact that even with *Sir Gawain*'s Norse-influenced language, “etaynz” only appears twice, and that Chaucer exclusively uses “geaunt” from the Latin etymology, suggests that *eoten* was falling out of use. There is an emphasis on learned traditions of magic (“natural magic”) in both Chaucer and *Sir Gawain* as disruptive forces, but also as less problematic than the wild/natural magic of Fayerye, which might be regarded as demonic in nature by approaching non-Christian beings. This is also proof of the “little tradition” posited by Richard Firth Green, that is a version of fairy as an integrated, yet separate possible system that may stand with or for the Christian traditions, including fairyland as an alternative to the Christian Afterlife. The rest of the discussion of Later Middle English is in Chapter 5, Conclusions.

## 5 CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Summary of Nonhuman Terms over Time with Discussion

#### 5.1.1 Elves and Fairies

As can be seen in Table 3.13, the use of “elf” and “elvish” in non- queen settings decreased from the Early Middle English period to the Late Middle English period. The use of fairye increased from 0 in Old and Early Middle English to 11 in Late Middle English. However, the mentions of elf queens (Argante in EME) nearly doubled from 3 to 5 in LME; if one combines the elf and fairy queen mentions, the number goes from 3 in EME to 12 in LME. Elves and fairies appear to have a tendency to be female in these texts; “sire” and “king” only appear 4 times in LME, and not at all in OE or EME. The only distinct mention of elves in OE in this corpus is from the list of *untydre* descended from Cain. Including additional information from Alaric Hall’s *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England* would give a clearer image of the actual distribution. In addition, liberal usage of the corpora available through the Corpus of Middle English, the Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English, and the Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English would yield a more balanced view of the ways the distribution of words shift over time.

Table 5.1 Diachronic Summary of Nonhuman Terms: Elves and Fairies

Nonhuman Term	Old English	Early Middle English	Late Middle English	Total
all-theodish	0	1	0	1
Argante	0	4	0	4
Avalon	0	7	0	7
bigolen	0	1	0	1
chastitee	0	0	1	1
child	0	0	2	2
compaignye	0	0	2	2
contree	0	0	2	2
creature	0	0	2	2
dame	0	0	1	1
dampnacioun	0	0	1	1
dance	0	0	4	4
deere	0	0	1	1



Table 5.1 continued

Nonhuman Term	Old English	Early Middle English	Late Middle English	Total
disporten	0	0	1	1
elf (ælf, elves)	1	7	4	12
elf-queen	0	0	5	5
elven (elvish)	0	4	1	5
empirice	0	0	1	1
fair	0	0	5	5
fairye	0	0	11	11
feendly	0	0	1	1
filthe	0	0	1	1
folk	0	0	1	1
foul (fouler ...no)	0	0	6	6
four and twenty	0	0	1	1
galder	0	1	0	1
Gawain	0	0	1	1
godes(s)	0	0	1	1
good	0	0	2	2
governance	0	0	1	1
halewei	0	4	0	4
haunt	0	0	1	1
horrible	0	0	1	1
humble	0	0	1	1
incubus	0	0	1	1
joly	0	0	1	1
king	0	0	3	3
la Faye	0	0	1	1
ladies	0	0	4	4
lemman	0	0	1	1
leve	0	0	1	1
loathly	0	0	1	1
love	0	0	2	2
lymytour	0	0	1	1
magestee	0	0	1	1
maid (maiden)	0	3	0	3
make	0	0	1	1
mo	0	0	1	1
mooder	0	0	2	2
no (no...more, noon)	0	0	2	2

Table 5.1 continued

Nonhuman Term	Old English	Early Middle English	Late Middle English	Total
old (oolde, eld)	0	0	11	11
place	0	0	1	1
Pluto	0	0	4	4
poore	0	0	3	3
Proserpina	0	0	3	3
queen	0	3	7	10
sire	0	0	1	1
smiling	0	0	1	1
trewe	0	0	2	2
vanished	0	0	1	1
wigar	0	1	0	1
wight	0	0	3	3
wikkid	0	0	1	1
wittyte	0	1	0	1
woman	0	2	0	2
wrohte	0	1	0	1
wroth	0	0	1	1
wyf (wyfe)	0	0	17	17
yong	0	0	2	2

### 5.1.2 Giants

The most complete and interesting diachronic information is in the distribution of lexical items related to giants. The quality of information available is largely due to luck; the nonhuman persons of Grendel and his mother, along with several groups from *The Wonders of the East* are described as being of extraordinary size. In fact, there are giants in every text except *The Owl and the Nightingale*. *Eoten*, *ent*, *þyrs* and *gigant* are all used in *Beowulf*; Grendel is identified as an *eoten*, and he and his mother are described like giants, i.e., in the shape of human persons, but much larger. When combining Grendel and his mother with the other giants, the data demonstrates a definitive shift over time. Giants are a danger to the spirit in Old and Early Middle English, where they are associated with the *deofol*, and then, when that word acquired a taboo, they were called *scucke*. However, by the Late Middle English period, the spiritual threat of the giant appears to be gone. In fact, the giants are no longer called *feond*, let alone fiends. While the Latin-derived *gigant/giant* is available thorough the entire span of the period, the Germanic *eoten* is exclusively

used in the Early Middle English period, either due to a difference in learning between the poet of *Beowulf* and the other authors, or because the *giant* were originally meant to be the nephilim, who are not present in Layamon's *Brut*. Overall, when examined in conjunction with Grendel and his kin, the semantic field of giants represented in Table 5.2 came to enclose a much less varied and more physically-bound threat than the initial spiritually-charged Old English *eoten*. The overall decline in descriptions of and encounters with giants in the literature in this study would suggest a declining interest in nonhuman persons as foes, a gap that would be filled by othered human persons.

Table 5.2 Diacronic Summary of Nonhuman Terms: Giants including Grendel

Nonhuman Term	Old English	Early Middle English	Late Middle English	Totals
āglǣca	12	0	0	12
andsaca	2	0	0	2
antheus	0	0	1	1
atoll	2	0	0	2
bana	4	0	0	4
bearn	2	0	0	2
brōga	1	0	0	1
cuma	1	0	0	1
cynn	2	0	0	2
dǣdhata	1	0	0	1
dēofol	3	0	0	3
dēor (heapodēor)	1	0	0	1
eafora	1	0	0	1
earming/earmsceapen	2	0	0	2
ent	4	0	0	4
eoten (etaynez)	7	44	1	52
eoten ring	0	1	0	1
fæge	1	0	0	1
færgryre	1	0	0	1
fēond	14	21	0	35
fēondsceaða	1	1	0	2
fīfel	1	0	0	1
firendǣd	1	0	0	1
flāschama	1	0	0	1
frēond	1	0	0	1
ganga	3	0	0	3
gāst	8	0	0	8

Table 5.2 continued

Nonhuman Term	Old English	Early Middle English	Late Middle English	Total
gāstbona	1	0	0	1
geaunt (gigant)	5	0	5	10
ġeniðla (feorhġeniðla)	1	0	0	1
ġeteon	1	0	0	1
ġewinna	1	0	0	1
Gogmagog	0	12	0	12
gram	1	0	0	1
greete	0	0	1	1
Grendel	2	0	0	2
guma	2	0	0	2
hæft	1	0	0	1
half-etayn	0	0	1	1
heaudes three	0	0	1	1
hierde (hyrde)	3	0	0	3
highest	0	2	0	2
hryre	1	0	0	1
ides	1	0	0	1
ingenga	1	0	0	1
inwutfeng	1	0	0	1
kempe	0	1	0	1
King Run	0	2	0	2
lāð	4	0	0	4
lord	0	2	0	2
mæġ	3	0	0	3
maga	1	0	0	1
man	0	0	1	1
mawe	0	0	1	1
mōdor	7	0	0	7
nineteen	0	2	0	2
of deed	0	0	1	1
ōper	3	0	0	3
perilous	0	0	1	1
rinc	1	0	0	1
sāwol (hæþen)	1	0	0	1
scalk	0	1	0	1
sceaða (scaðe)	9	5	0	14
scinna	1	0	0	1

Table 5.2 continued

Nonhuman Term	Old English	Early Middle English	Late Middle English	Total
scua (dēapscua)	1	0	0	1
scucca (scucke)	0	6	0	6
secg	1	0	0	1
Sire Olifaunt	0	0	1	1
stapa (mearcstapa)	3	0	0	3
stronge	0	0	1	1
sunu	2	0	0	2
þegn	1	0	0	1
þēod	1	0	0	1
þēodprēa	1	0	0	1
þing	0	1	0	1
þyrs	1	0	0	1
wald-scaðe	0	1	0	1
weard	1	0	0	1
wearh (heorowearh)	1	0	0	1
wer	2	0	0	2
wiðer-sake	0	2	0	2
wīf	3	0	0	3
wiht (unhælo)	1	0	0	1
wode-scaðe	0	1	0	1
wrāð	1	0	0	1
wrecche (wrecend)	1	2	0	3
wylf	2	0	0	2
wyrcend	1	0	0	1

Re-examining the data without the inclusion of Grendel and his mother, but including data from the nonhuman persons described as being of exceptional size in *The Wonders of the East*, the data looks a little bit different. Figure 3 shows the terms associated with giants with three or more corpus occurrences when the Grendelkin are excluded, while Figure 4 shows the same information, but including the Grendelkin. First, note the general increase in variety of terms that occur three or more times, from eleven to twenty-three. Possibly due to the nature of Old English poetry, there are many different terms applied to Grendel and his kin, which adds to lexical variety. Note the lack of *feond* as a term in Old English if Grendelkin are excluded, along with *scaðe*, *bana*, *deofol*, and *gast*, as well as *āglāca*. Second, note that the terms that remain are generally neutral, with a few exceptions.

The shift when looking at the Grendelkin-exclusive data still demonstrates the shift from use of *eoten* to *giant*, and demonstrates the general sense that nonhuman persons are persons throughout the period, but the spiritual versus physical dimension of the shift is lost.

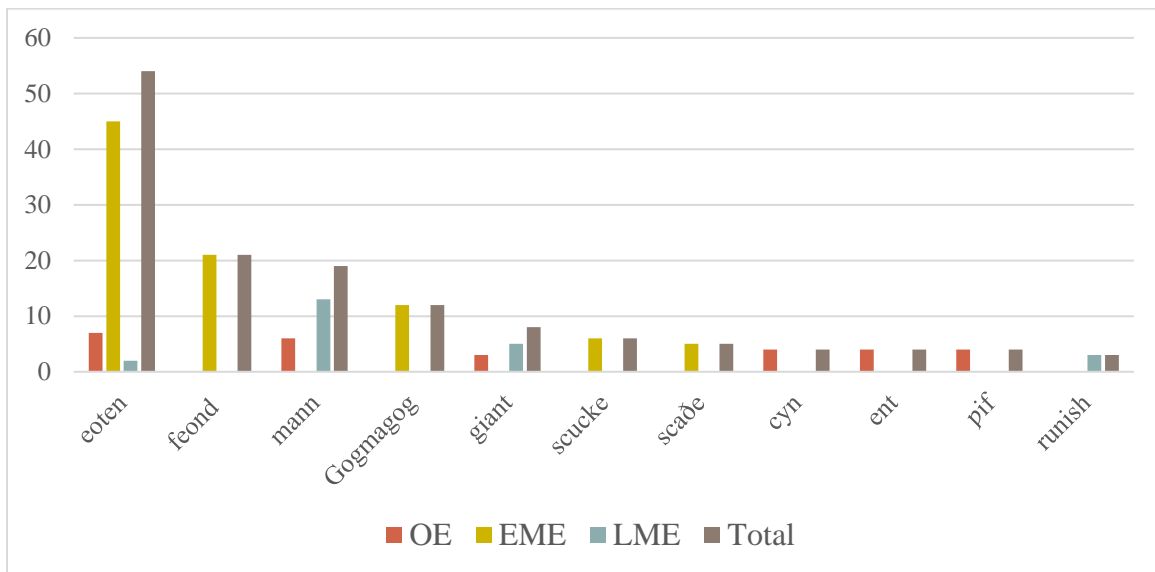


Figure 3 Total Giant Terms Occurring More than Three Times Exclusive of Grendelkin

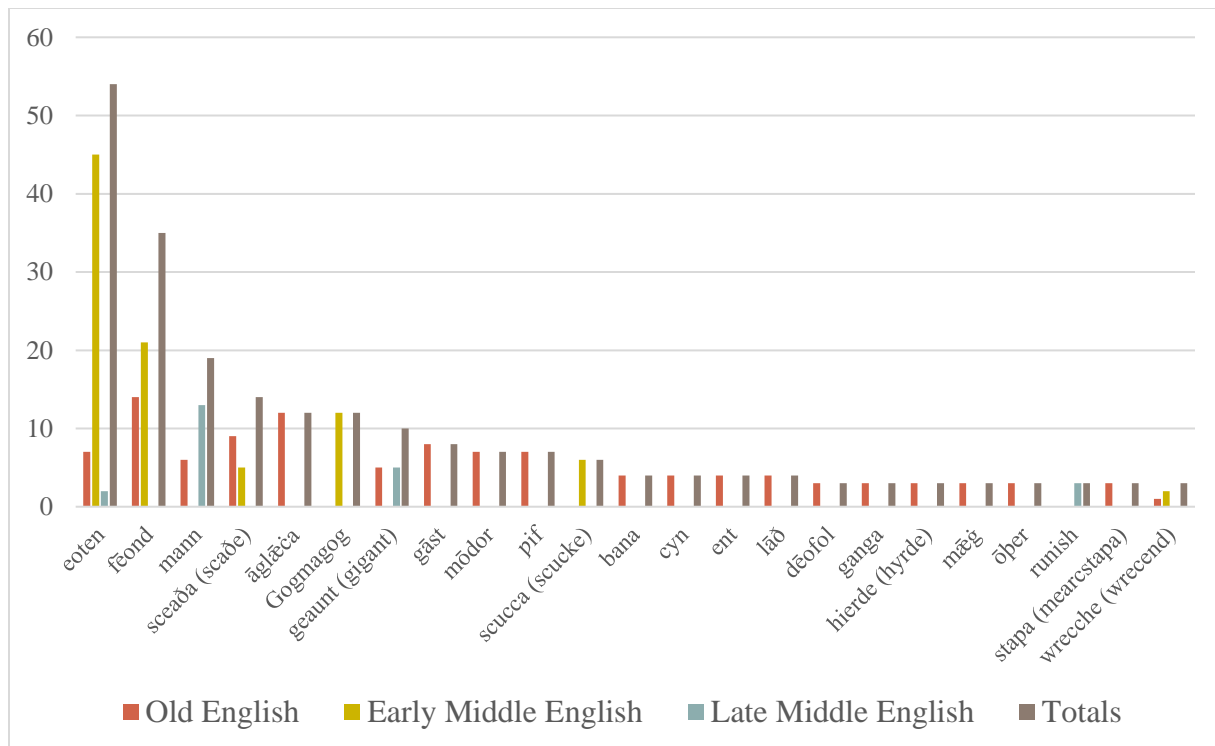


Figure 4 Total Giant Terms Occurring More than Three Times Including Grendelkin

### 5.1.3 Prophets and Magicians

This table, 5.3, contains information not found elsewhere in the study. Information about the learned magical tradition shown in various of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* have been included in this table for comparison. The movement across texts for types of characters seems to be as follows:

- Old English: Donestre, the foretellers/soothsayers; Grendel's magic/ cursed gold
- Early Middle English: Witie (prophets), witie soothsayers who cast lots, astrology vs. witchcraft
- Late Middle English: Clerks, clerics, and academic magic; also fairies

This demonstrates a gradual shift from *witega*, prophets or beings with inherent preternatural gifts for knowledge of hidden things, towards *witig*, people and beings with intelligence and resources allowing them to learn tools to create change or find knowledge. The conflation of the two terms may have aided in the shift between interpretation of characters like Merlin's transition from a young, hotheaded prophet to an elderly scholar. The shift between divine and academic sources for literary magic occurred even as the Universities were coming under additional scrutiny as possible hotbeds of Christian heresies. The shift away from prophecy may have been partially a reaction to the lack of general prophecy about the plague, or partially due to stricter religious guidelines surrounding what was legitimate prophecy rather than heresy or witchcraft.

Table 5.3: Diachronic Summary of Terms Related to Magicians and Prophets

Nonhuman Term	OE	EME	LME	Total
astrologye	0	0	2	2
astronomye (astromye)	0	0	2	2
clærke	0	5	6	11
conable	0	0	1	1
donestre	2	0	0	2
drwry	0	0	1	1
equacions	0	0	1	1
expans yeeris	0	0	1	1
foe	0	2	0	2
foresweoran	1	0	0	1
frihteres	2	0	0	2
geris	0	0	1	1
his tyme yfounde	0	0	1	1
ifere	0	6	0	6
insigt	0	1	0	1

Table 5.3 continued

Nonhuman Term	OE	EME	LME	Total
interrogaciouns	0	0	1	1
Iorem	0	21	0	21
lað	0	2	0	2
leod-swike	0	1	0	1
Magan	0	8	0	8
man	0	7	0	5
mayster	0	0	1	1
maystrés	0	0	1	1
Merlin	0	182	1	183
proporcioneles convenientz	0	0	1	1
queynte (koyntesse)	0	1	2	3
rootes	0	0	1	1
stars	0	4	1	5
studying	0	0	2	2
swikel	0	2	0	2
Sybyl	0	4	0	4
tables tollatanes	0	0	1	1
tacninge	0	3	0	3
Taliesin	0	12	0	12
wicchecrefte	0	2	0	2
wise	0	2	0	2
wittie	0	24	0	24
wynn	0	1	0	1

#### 5.1.4 Collective Terms

From *untydre* and *fifelcynn*, to *deor* and *beste*, to *wight* and *monster*, the language surrounding collective groups of nonhumans demonstrates a shift from words with Germanic roots to those borrowed from Latin or French. *Deor* narrows to the meaning of only deer, while *beste* is borrowed into the English language through French. Likewise, *feond* narrows to hellish fiends, as *foe* takes its place to describe more general enemies. Table 5.4 gives a brief diachronic overview of the terms used to refer to nonhuman persons over the three time periods explored in this work.



Table 5.4 Diachronic Summary of Collective Nonhuman Terms by Language Period

Collective Term	OE	EME	LME	Total
beste	0	2	1	3
creature	0	0	2	2
deofol	3	0	2	5
deor	0	18	0	18
feond	16	23	1	40
fifelcynn	1	0	0	1
foe	0	3	2	5
gast	18	1	1	20
kin	9	6	0	15
kind	0	4	0	4
maeg	4	0	0	4
mann	20	18	12	50
monster	0	0	3	3
scaðe	15	7	0	22
scucca	1	6	0	7
thing	0	11	0	11
untydre	1	0	0	1
wif	8	0	18	26
wight	3	7	4	14
woman	0	6	1	7
wrecche	1	17	0	18
Total	100	129	47	276

Interpretation of this table should be undertaken carefully. Absolute counts like this one are slightly deceptive; for example, there are many synonyms for *mann* and *wif* and *woman* that were not added into the table, which is largely why the number of Late Middle English tokens is so low. However, this table does indicate that *gast* became far less prevalent while *creature*, *beste*, and *monster* became more prevalent. *Scucca/scucke* increased in prevalence during the Early Middle English period, when the use of *deofol* dropped to zero. *Feond* decreased as *foe* increased. *Wif* and *Woman* both became more common in nonhuman discussions towards the Late Middle English period. Interestingly, kin terms for nonhuman persons decreased over time. I believe that if compared to the data in Appendix D, kin and inheritance terms for human persons will increase over this same period.

### 5.1.5 Overall Summary Table

Table 5.5 provides an overview of all of the terms and data discussed in the study.

Table 5.5: Diachronic Summary of Nonhuman Terms Occurring Three or More Times in Selected Medieval English Texts Sorted by Frequency

Standard	Headword	OE	EME	LME	Total
Merlin	Merlin	0	182	1	183
eoten	eoten (etayn)	7	44	1	52
fēond	fēond	16	23	1	40
lord	lord	0	2	38	40
mann	man	20	18	0	38
foul	foul (ful/fouler...none)	0	20	6	26
witie	witie	0	24	0	24
wyrm (wormez)	wyrm (wormez)	23	0	1	24
Ioram	Iorem	0	21	0	21
gāst	gāst (gost, ghost)	18	1	1	20
lāð	loþ (lað, lodliche)	4	14	1	19
deor	deor	0	18	0	18
knight	knyȝt	0		18	18
elf	elf (ælf, alu, -ish, en)	1	11	5	17
lady	ladies	0	0	17	17
āglæca	āglæca	16	0	0	16
wrecche	wrecche (wrecend)	0	16	0	16
kin	cynn (kin,-rede)	9	6	0	15
sceaða	sceaða	15	0	0	15
draca	draca (dragoun)	13	0	1	14
guma	guma (gome)	2	0	12	14
freca	freca (freke)	1	0	12	13
weard	weard	13	0	0	13
Gogmagog	Gogmagog	0	12	0	12
man	man	0	0	12	12
Taliesin	Taliesin	0	12	0	12
fairy	fairye (of fairye)	0	0	11	11
old	old	0	0	11	11
þing	þing	0	11	0	11
queen	queen	0	3	7	10
shame	schame (-ie)	0	10	0	10

Table 5.5 continued

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Headword</b>	<b>OE</b>	<b>EME</b>	<b>LME</b>	<b>Total</b>
sunu	son (sunu)	2	8	0	10
burne	burne	0	0	9	9
frēond	freond	1	8	0	9
mōdor	mōdor	7	0	2	9
wise	wise (wyse)	0	8	1	9
wyȝe	wyȝe	0	0	9	9
child	child (children)	0	6	2	8
giant	geaunt (gigant)	3	0	5	8
wīf	wīf (wyf)	8	0	18	8
Avalon	Avalon	0	7	0	7
bana	bana (bane)	5	2	0	7
hāpel	hāpel	0	0	7	7
ifere	ifere	0	7	0	7
knave	knave	0	7	0	7
scucca	scucca (scucke)	1	6	0	7
goodman	godmon	0	0	6	6
hierde	hierde	6	0	0	6
mereminne	mereminne	0	6	0	6
swikel	swikel (-dom, -hed)	0	6	0	6
woman	woman (women)	0	6	0	6
bodes	bodest	0	5	0	5
dēofol	dēofol (Deuelez)	3	0	2	5
elf-queen	elf-queen	0	0	5	5
fair	fair	0	0	5	5
flēogende	flēogende	5	0	0	5
foe	foe (uo/foo)	0	3	2	5
lie	liȝe	0	5	0	5
scaðe	scaðe (sceaða)	0	5	0	5
scalk	scalk, (schalk/shelk)	0	1	4	5
secg	secg (segge)	1	0	4	5
Argante	Argante	0	4	0	4
beast	beast (booste)	0	2	2	4
Brutael	Brutael	0	4	0	4
kind	cunde	0	4	0	4
dance	dance	0	0	4	4

Table 5.5 continued

Standard	Headword	OE	EME	LME	Total
ent	ent	4	0	0	4
fish	fisc	0	4	0	4
gram	gram	2	2	0	4
halewei	halewei	0	4	0	4
Homodubii	Homodubii	4	0	0	4
mǣġ	mǣġ	4	0	0	4
marvel	maruayl (meruayl)	0	0	4	4
Pluto	Pluto	0	0	4	4
schende	schende	0	4	0	4
Sybil	Sybyl	0	4	0	4
evil/foul	uuel	0	4	0	4
wight	wight (wiȝt, with)	2	4	4	4
elder	alder	0	0	3	3
bearn	bearn	2	1	0	3
bryd	bryddes (burde)	0	0	3	3
dear	dear (deere)	0	2	1	3
fēondsceaða	feond-scaðe	1	2	0	3
flesh	flasse	0	0	3	3
fowl	fuzel	0	3	0	3
ganga	ganga	3	0	0	3
good	good (ȝode)	0	0	3	3
king	king	0	0	3	3
leude	leude (lude)	0	0	3	3
maid	maid (maiden)	0	3	0	3
monster	monstres	0	0	3	3
no	no	0	0	3	3
ōper	ōper	2	0	1	3
poor	poore	0	0	3	3
Proserpina	Proserpyna	0	0	3	3
rinc	rinc (renk)	1	0	2	3
runisch	runisch(-ly)	0	0	3	3
Sir (syre)	Sir (syre)	0	0	3	3
strength	strengte	0	0	3	3
tacninge (token)	tacninge (token)	0	3	0	3
þrete (þretest)	þrete (þretest)	0	3	0	3

Table 5.5 continued

Standard	Headword	OE	EME	LME	Total
tulk	tulk	0	0	3	3
unriȝt (-fulness)	unriȝt (-fulness)	0	3	0	3
unwight	vnwiȝt	0	3	0	3
wonder	wonder	0	0	3	3
wolf	wylf (wolues)	2	0	1	3

## 5.2 Conclusions

There is a definitive shift from the earlier texts to the later. There is an overall move to more general terms, as *unwight* and *wight* are conflated, along with the introduction of the word “monster”. French and Latin derived terms are on the rise, as *geaunt* and *fayrye* replace *eoten* and *elf*. The descriptions of the Green Knight and Sir Oliphant are almost indistinguishable from the “hero” knights except a few supernatural details, demonstrating a movement to a more socially-integratable nonhuman person, even as fairy lovers slowly break down the barriers as acceptable partners. The move towards othered humans as larger threats than preternatural others is underway as this period comes to a close.

I began this project with three initial research questions. First, I wanted to know what terms, specifically collective terms, were being used to refer to nonhuman persons in medieval English before the word “monster” was borrowed into the language. Second, I wanted to know how human the labelling and descriptions were for nonhuman persons through the period, and to see if it shifted. Finally, I wanted to create and test a useful way of distinguishing nonhuman persons from human persons and from other nonhuman beings. Overall, this project was a success.

First, in regards to the collective terms for nonhuman persons in medieval English, the initial terminology leaned more heavily on euphemism and on negation to express the unnaturalness of the beings in question. *Tūdor* (offspring) became *untydre* (anti-offspring, misborn); *wight* (being) became *unwight* (un-being); *sceaft* (creation, creature) became *unsceaft* (un-creation, abomination); *deofol* became *scucke* (at least for a time).

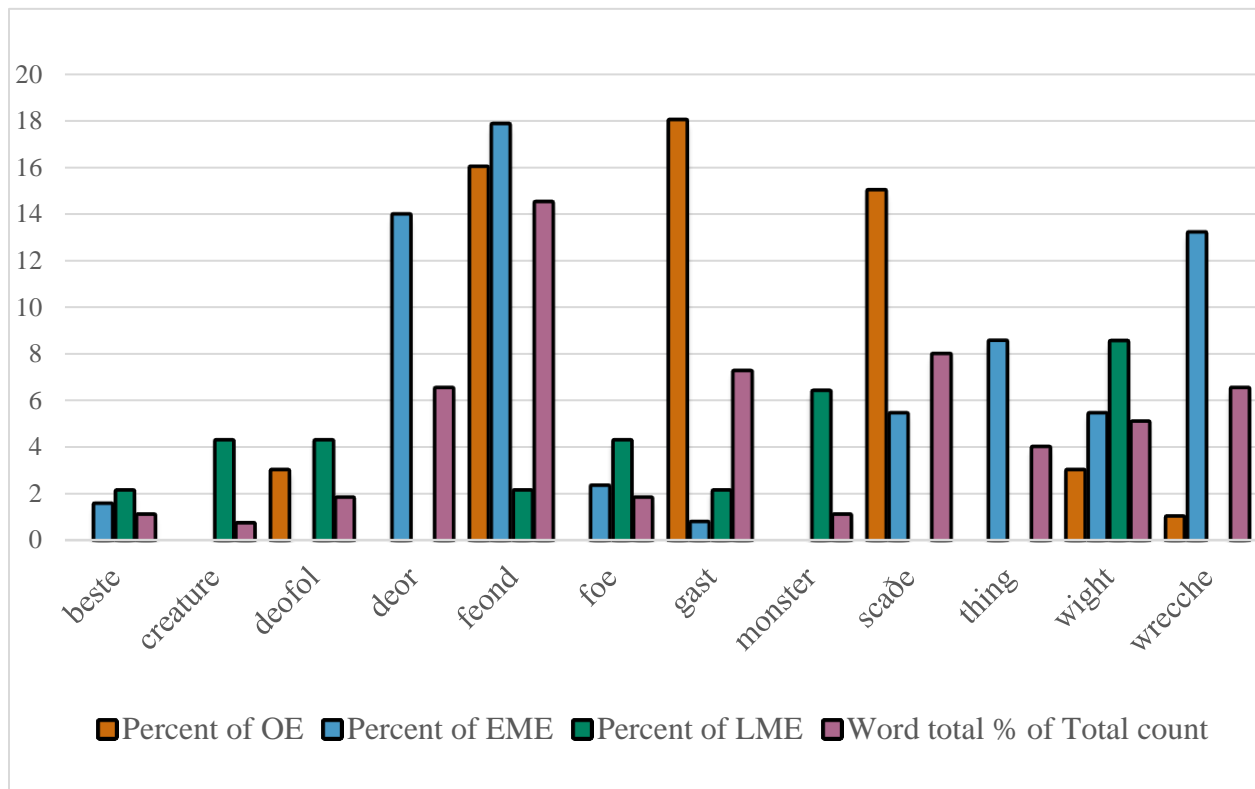


Figure 5 Diachronic View of Selected Collective Nonhuman Terms as Percent of Period Total Collective Nonhuman Samples

As I predicted, Figure 5 shows an increase in French-derived terms over time, along with a decrease in Germanic-derived terms. In addition, there is a decrease in the use of strong threatening terms in relation to the nonhuman; non-specific “thing,” “wight,” “wrecche,” “creature”, and “beste” increase through the medieval period. This may be due to my limited sample size, but is suggestive.

My second question regarding the overall tendency of nonhumans to be described in human terms required combined categories where all related terms were conflated; for example, *queen*, *woman*, and *wif* were all combined into the category “woman.” The top categories by count are

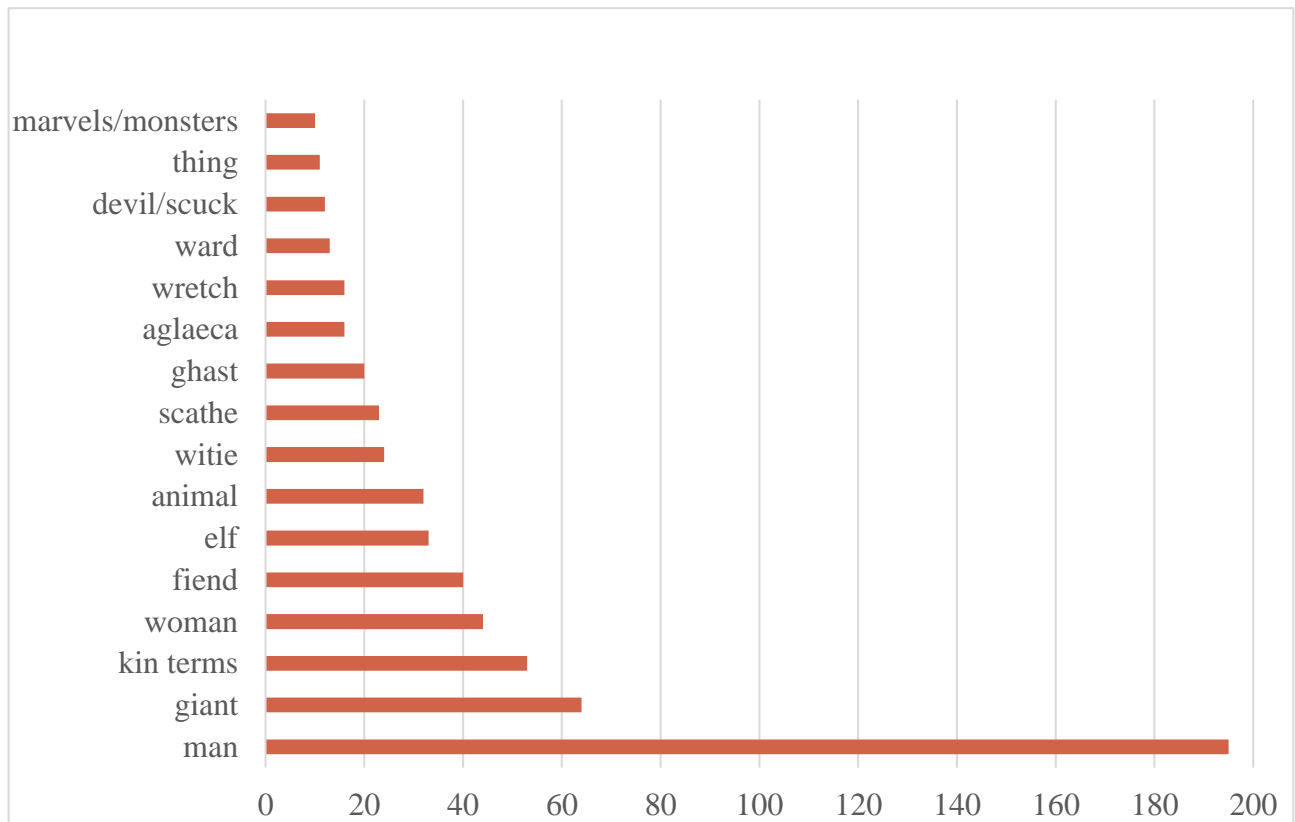


Figure 6: Top Nonhuman Terms as Absolute Counts, Combined Categories

given in Figure 6. Overwhelmingly, the terms used for nonhuman persons is generally the same as that used for human persons, except when referring to one specific kind of nonhuman person, such as a giant or an elf.

Finally, in terms of testing my three criteria for nonhuman persons, I believe the tests were a general success. I do see the need to make the first criterion, the one that determines personhood, more generally applicable across cultures and periods; I would like to avoid a classification issue *a la* Diogenes. It may be that merely specifying “sentience” will be the best criterion, and will also allow the examination of potentially immortal beings and personifications. Additional testing of the three criteria more broadly across samples and fields will ultimately demonstrate the utility of my classification system.

Nonhuman persons are an inherent part of human imagination. The enduring tales of giants, dragons, elves, and fairies demonstrate their grip on humans. In examining the lexical underpinnings of monster theory, I hope to illustrate not only that these persons have a theoretical role in defining humanity. I hope to give a foundation of data that can lead to new conceptions and new understanding of the interactions between peoples and persons over time. I am not trying to define the range of humanity; I am instead demonstrating the extent to which personhood is boundless.

### 5.3 Future Directions

Due to the natural limitations on time and scope of a project like this, there are many ways the study could be expanded, as well as additional uses for the data collected in Appendix D. First of all, while I collected concordance data for two manuscripts of *The Travels of John Mandeville*, I was unable to pursue a close reading of these texts within the scope of this study. As one of the most popular late medieval texts—based on number of extant manuscripts in a number of different languages—a comprehensive evaluation of the language utilized for nonhuman persons in the different versions would be interesting, especially across languages.

I am currently cleaning and re-lemmatizing the information in Appendix D, including creating additional concordances of *Beowulf*, *The Wonders of the East*, and *The Canterbury Tales*. The information within the concordance-based table could be examined for evidence of more semantic shift regarding the fields of warriors, kings, women, children, magic, animals, and clergy. In addition, thematic fields can be set into juxtaposition; for example, there may be an increase in the frequency of terms related to inheritance and lineage along with a decrease in the variety of terms for nonhuman persons. These trends can be tied to historical events such as changes to legal inheritance, or the presence or absence of human peoples to be treated as dehumanized threats. I regret being unable to devote sufficient time and space to explore the overlap in terms between nonhuman persons, human traitors, and nonhuman beings such as angels, pagan deities, devils and demons. One additional future expansion of this project would be a more thorough examination of these three kinds of being within any of the particular texts in my corpus.

I would like to expand the number of texts examined within the Early Middle English section in order to gain a clearer image of the transition from the Old English concept of nonhuman persons to the Later Middle English concept of nonhuman persons. This could be done through



more extensive use of existing corpora attached to the texts of the Middle English Corpus of Prose and Verse, or through the corpora data from the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* and the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English*. The advantage to using the Linguistic Atlas data is it might be possible to localize particular nonhuman concerns or variations within medieval England.

Finally, a more thorough, cross-linguistic examination of nonhuman persons in the *Brut* tradition, from Geoffrey of Monmouth through Malory, will have to wait as the work of a career, rather than that of a graduate degree.

## APPENDIX A. TRANSCRIPT AND TRANSLATION OF *WONDERS OF THE EAST* BRITISH LIBRARY COTTON MS TIBERIUS B V/1.

[British Library Digitised Manuscript] online 28/12/2021

[Editing notes: (bar thorn)= abbreviation for þæt. Have ignored diacritic marks. (dot y and dash a, etc). Highlighting and [] for unclear places on manuscript, missing characters, holes, etc.

Original manuscript usually gives the Latin text followed by the Old English. Exceptions noted.

Latin has been omitted from transcription, except in a very few cases]

f. 78v; A.

1. Seo landbuend onfruman from antimonlina þam/ landum. ðæs landes is onrime- þæs læssan milge-/tæles The leuua hatte ðreohund & eahta & Ryxtig./Onðam ealand byð micel menigeo sceapa & þanon/ is to babidlonia þæs læssan milgetæles stadia/ hundteontig & eahta & Ryxtig. And ðær/ micclan þe leuua hatte fiftyne. And hund/ teontig :

1. That settlement is distant from the land Antimolina. The land is in distance the lesser miles () and the greature leagues called three hundred and eight and thirty. On that island are a great many sheep and from there it is to Babylon the less measure (stadia) 120 and 8 and 30 adn te greater called leagues 15 and 120.

f. 78v;B.

2. Seo landbunes is spiðost cype monnum geseted. þær/ beoþ peðeras acennede on oxna micelnesse. þa buað/ oð meda burh þæse burhge noma is archemedon./ Seo is mæst to babilonia byrig. þanon is to babilonia/ inþæs læssan milgetæles stadia .ccc. & þæs maran/ þe leuua hatte .cc. from archemedon. þær syndon/ þa mycclan mærdða (&þ)ryndan ðage peorc ðere miccla/ macedonisca alexander het gepyrcean. Ðæt lond/ is onlenge & onbræde ðæs læssan milgetæles/ ðe stadia hatte .cc. & þær micclan ðe leuua/ hatte .cxxxiii. & an half mil:

2. That land is mostly settled with merchants. There are goats born of the size of oxen. That dwells Meda town. This town's name is Archemedon. That is closest/largest after Babylon city. From there it is to Babylon in the less measure stadia 300 and the more called leagues 200 from Archmedon. This is the largest, most glorious, and famous work that great macedonian alexander commanded be made. That land is on length and on breadth the less measure called stadia 200 and the greature called leagues 133 and ½ mile.

f. 79r; A.

3. Sum stop is mon færið to ðare readan sæ seo is/ gehaten lenubelsinea on ðan beoð henna/ akende gelice ða þe mid us beoð reades hipes & gyf/ hi hlyc mon niman pile. oððe hyra æt hrineð/ ðonne forbærnað hi sona eall hir lic (& þæt) syndon/ ungefrelicu lyblac:

3. There is a place as people travel to the Red Sea. That sea is called Lenubelsinea. On there are hens born like those that are with us of red color and if them any person wishes to seize or them pursue then they soon burn up all their bodies. And that is un-believable/ unheard of (lyblac witchcraft)

4. [---] ac spa ðær beoð pildor kennede. þa deor þon/ [----] hi monnes stefne gehyrað þonne raðe/ 4. And also there are wild animals born those animals when they hear people's voices then they f. 78v; B.

[---} hi fleoð. þa deor habbað eahta fet & pælkyrian/ eagan. & tpa heafda gyf hi hpylc mann ge fon/ wile. þonne gepræðað hy sona grimlice onten (bar thorn) syndon ungefregelicu deor: swiftly flee. Those animals have 8 feet and valkyrie eyes and two heads. If any person wishes to seize them then they become enraged and they immediately burn them. Those are unbelievable/unheard of animals.

5. Harcellentia hatte (bar thorn) land. þon mon to babi/lonia færð (bar thorn) is þonne ðæs læssan milgetæles/ þe stadia hatte. ix. mila lang & brad (bar thorn) bueð oð/ medarice (bar thorn) land is eallu godum gefylled:

5. Harcellentia is called that land. when a person goes to Babylon that is from there the less measure called stadia 9 miles long and broad. From that dwelling until Medea kingdom, that land is filled with all good things.

6. ðeos steop næddran hafað þa næddran/ habbað tpa heafda ðæra eagan scinað nihtes/ spa leohte spa blacern. :

6. This place has serpents. Those serpents have two heads. Their eyes shine at night as brightly as lanterns.

f.79v; A.

7. On sumon lande assan beoð akende þa habbað/ spa micle hornas spa oxan þa syndon on ðam/ mæstan [p/p/s/r]ertene (bar thorn) is on ða suð healfe fram/ babilonia þa buað to þære readan sæ for/ ðæra næddrena mænigeo þe in ða stopum/

7. In a certain land asses are born which have horns as great as those of oxen. That is mostly in the wastes that is on the south part reaching? from Babilonia to the Red Sea. For the many serpents that are in that place

f. 79v; B.

8. beoð þa hattan corsias. Ða habbað spa/ micle hornas spa peðeras gyf hi hpylcne/ monn sleað

8. oððe æthrinað þon spylt he/ sona:

it is called Corsias. Those have as large of horns as goats. If they strike or seize any person then they die immediately.

[no latin]

9. On ðam londum byð piperes genihtsumnys/ þone pipor þa næddran healdað onhyra georn/ fulnysse. Ðone pipor mon spa nimeð (bar thorn) mon/ þa stope mid fyre anæleð & þon ða næddran/ of dune on eorðan (bar thorn) hi fleoð for ðanre pipor/ byð speart. Fram babilonia oð (barred p)siam þa/ burh ðær þe pipor peaxet. is þæs læssan/ milgetæles þe stadia hatte eahta hund mila/ of þam is geteald þæs miclan milgetæles þe/ leuua hatte syx hund & .iii.& xx. &.i. healfmil/ seo stop is unpæstm berendlicu for þæra/ næddrena menigeo.:

9. In that land are an abundance of peppercorns. Those peppercorns the serpents hold. In people's eagerness to take the pepper that person in that place lights a fire and then the serpent drops it on the earth so that they can flee. For that reason the peppercorns are dark. From Babilonia to Persia the city there the peppercorns grow is the less measure called stadia 800 miles of them is told, The larger meature which are called leagues 600 and 3 and 20 and ½ mile. That place is barren due to the many serpents.

f.80r; A.

10. Eac spylce þær beoð cende healfhundingas ða/ syndon hatene conopoenas. hi habbað horses/ manan & eoferes tuxas & hunda hea(rv)da &/ heora oruð byð spylce fyres lig. þar land beoð/ neah ða burgu þe beoð eallu poruldpelu gefylled/ (bar thorn) is sað healfe aegiptna landes.:

10. Also likewise there are born halfhounds. Those are called conopoenas. They have horses' manes and boars' tusks and hounds' heads and their breaths are like flames of fire. That land is near the city which is filled with all worldly weal. That is south part of Egyptian lands.

f. 80r; B.

11. On sumon lande beoð menn aþcende ða beoþ/ onleng sixfotmæle lange hi habbað beardas/ of cneop side & feax oð helan homo dubii hi sindon hatene (bar thorn) bioð tpylice & be hreapan/ fisceon hi libbað & þa etað:

11. On a certain land are people born that are in length six foot measures tall. They have beards down to the sides of their knees and hair to their heels. Homodubii they are called that are of two kinds and by raw fish they live and those eat.

f. 80v; A.

12. Capi hatte seo ea inðare ylcan stope þe is ha/ten gorgoneus (bar thorn) is pælcyrɡinc þær beoð aþcende/ æmættan spa micle spa hundas hi habbað fet/ spylce græshoppan hi syndan reades hipes/ & blaces þa æmettan delfað gold up of eorðan/ fram foran nihte oðða fiftan tid dægēs:

12. Capi is called that island in that same place which is called Gorgoneus (that is, Valkyric). There are born ants as large as hounds. They have feet like grasshoppers'. They are of red color and black. Those ants dig gold up from the earth from before night until the fifth hour of day.

-Illustration-

13. Ða menn ðe to ðam dyrseige beoð (bar thorn) hi (bar thorn) gold/ nimen þonne nimað hi mid him olfenda/ myran mid hyra folan & stedan. þa folan hige/ tigað ær hi ofer þa ea faran. (bar thorn) gold higeƿfetað/ onða myran & hi sylfe onrittað. & þa stedan/ þær for lætað. Ðone ða æmettan hi on/ ƿindað. & þa hpile ðe þa æmettan ymbe ða/ stedan abiscode beoð þon ða men mid þam/

13. When people are daring enough that they wish to take the gold then they take with them a camel mare and her foal and a stallion. The foal they tie before they go over the river. That gold they load on the mare and they themselves ride on her and the stallion they abandon when they find the ants and then while the ants busy themselves around the stallion then the people with the f. 80v; B.

myran & þa golde ofer ða ea forað hi beoð/ to þam spifte [þæt] ða men penað þæt hi fleogende syn.:

mare and the gold cross over that river. They are so swift doing it that people believe that they are flying.

-Illustration; Latin text-

14. Betpyn þyssum tpa ean is londbunes locot heo/ hatte (bar thorn) is betpyh nile & brixonte gefeted/ Seo nil is ealdor fullicra ea & heo fareð of/ egiptnalande. & hi næmnað ða ea archoboleta/

(bar thorn) is hatten (bar thorn) miccle pæter. On þyssu [stopu]/ beoð akende þa miclan menigeo ylpenda.

14. Between these two rivers is the settlement called Locotheo that is between the Nile and Brixonte fallen. The Nile is an entirely ancient river and she comes from Egypt land and they call that river Archoboleta that is called that great water. In this place are born those many great camels.  
f. 81r; A.

-Illustration, Latin-

15. Ðær beoð akende menn ða beoð fiftyne fota/ lange & hi habbað hpit lic & tu neb one anum/ heafde bið (þat) cneo spiðe read & lange nosu/ & speart feax þon hi kennan pillað þon farað/ hi to indeum & hyra ge cynd on peorold/ bringað:

15. There are people born that are fifteen feet tall and they have white bodies and two noses on are on one head. The knees are extremely red and [their] noses are long and [they] have dark hair. When they wish to reproduce then they go to India and there bring their kind into the world.

B. Illustration, Latin,

16. Liconia in gallia hatte (bar thorn) lande þær beoð men[0]/ acenned/ þreo sellices hipes. þara hefda beoð/ gemona spa leona heafdo & hi beoð tpenages/ fota lange & hi habbað micelne muð spa/ fann gif hi hpylcne man on ðam landum on/ gitað oððe him hpylc folligende bið þon/ feorriað hi & fleoð. & blode (bar thorn) hi spætað/ þas beoð menn gepenede:

16. That land is called Liconia in Gallia were there are people born of three excellent colors. Their heads are manes like the heads of lions and they are twenty feet tall and they have mouths as large as winnowing fans. If they percieve any people on that land or any are following them then they depart and flee and they sweat that blood. They are believed to be people.

f. 81v; A

-Illustration, Latin (red capital), Green capital OE-

17. Begeondan brixonte ðære ea east ðanon/ [0] beoð men acende lange & micle þa habbað/ fet & sceancan tpelf fota lange siðan mid breostum seofan fota lange hi beoð spear/ter hipes & hi syndan hostes nemde./ Cuðlice spa hpylcne mann spa hi gefoð/ þonne fretað hi hine:

17. Beyond the river Brixonte east from there are people born tall and large. Those have feet and shanks twelve feet long and then [also] from the breasts seven feet tall. They are of dark colors and they are named Hostes. Certainly as soon as any person they capture, then they eat them.

f. 81v; B. Illustration, Latin (green capital); Red Capital OE

18. Ðonne syndon on brixonte wildeor/ þa hattan lertices hi habbað eoseles/ earan. & sceapes pulle & fugles fet:

18. There are by Brixonte wild animals that are called lertices. They have donkey's ears and sheep's wool and bird's feet.

f. 82r; A.

-Illustration, Latin (red capital), Green Capital OE-

19. Ðonne is oðer ealand suð fra brixonte/ onþam beoð menn akende butan heaf/dum. þa habbaþ onbreostum heora/ eagan & muð hi syndan eahta fotallange/ & eahta fota brade.

19. Then is another island south from Brixonte. On that are people born without heads. Those have their eyes and mouth on their breasts and they are eight feet tall and eight feet broad.

f. 82r; B.

Illustration, Latin (red capital), Green Capital OE

20. Ðær beoð dracan kende ða beoð onlengen/ hundteontiges fot mæla & fiftiges/ lange & beoð greate spa stænene spera(s)/ micla for ðara dracena micelnysse/ nænig mann naht eaðelice on (bar thorn) land/ gefaran mæg:

20. There are dragons born. Those are on length 120 feet and fifty long and are as large as great stone columns. Due to the size of those dragons no person may easily travel in that land.

f.82v; A.

Illustration, Latin (red capital); Green Capital OE

21. Fra þisse stope is oðer rice on ða suð halfe/ þær garsecgas. (bar thorn) is geteald þær læssan/ milgetæles stadia .ccc. & þreo & tþentig & þær/ miclan ðe leuua hatte .cc.l. v. & an mil. & þær/ beoð kende homodubii þæt byð tþylice hi/ beoð oð ðene nafelan on mennisca gescape/ & syððan on eoseles gescape hi habbað long/ sceancan spa fugelas & liðelice stefne/

21. From this place is another kingdom on the south half of that settlement that is measured in the lesser miles called stadia 300 and three and twenty and the larger called leagues 255 and one mile. And there are born Homodubii that are twofold [of dual nature]. They are until the navel in person's shape and afterwards in donkey's shape. They have long legs like birds and soft voices.

f. 82v; B.

gyf hi hþylcne mon on ðam landu ongitað/ oððe geseoð þonne feorriað hi & fleoð:

if they any person in that land percieve or see then they depart and flee.

-Illustration, Latin Green Capital; Red Capital OE-

22. Ðon is oðer stop ellreorde men beoð on & þa/ habbað kyningas under him ðæra is getald/ .cx. (bar thorn) syndon ða pyrstan men & þa ellreor/digestan þær syndan .ii. sea ðar oðer sunnan/ & oðer monan. Se ðe sunnan is se byð dægēs/ hat & nihtes ceald. & se ðe monan is/ f. 83r; A.

se bið neahtes hat & dægēs cald heora/ pide is .cc.mila ðæs læssan getales þe/ stadia hatte & ðæs maran ðe leuua hatte/ .cxxxiii. & an healf mil:

22. Then is another place where foreign-speaking people are. They have kings over them; 110 is the count. Those are the worst people and the most foreign-speaking. There are two seas there, one of the sun and the other of the moon. The one of the sun is by days hot and by nights cold. And the one of the moon is by nights hot and by days cold. Their width is 200 miles of the lesser measure called stadia and the larger called leagues 133 and a half miles. .

Illustration, Green capital Latin, Red capital OE

23. On þysse stope beoð treopcynn þa beoð laur/ beame & ele treopu gelice. Of ðam treopu/ balsamum se deorpeorðesta ele bið eall/ kenned seo stop is þær læssan milgetæles/ ðe stadia hatte .cli. & þær maran þe leuua/ hatte .li. :

23. On this place are the kinds of trees that are like laurel and elm trees. From those trees balsam, the most precious oil, is all made. This place is the lesser miles called stadia 151 and the more called leagues 51.

f. 83r; B. Illustration, Red capital Latin, Green capital OE

24. Ðonne is sum ealand on ðære readan sæ/ þær is mon cyn (bar thorn) mid us donestre/

f. 83v; A.

genemned. þa syndon gepeaxene spa/ frihteras fram ðan heafde oð ðone/ nafelan. & se oðer (dæl) byð mannes lice/ gelic & hi cunnon eall mennisc gereord/ þon hi fremdes kynnes mann gereod/ (?) næmnað hi hine & hir magar cuðra/ manna naman & mid leaslicum pordu/ hine bespicað & hi onfoð & þæn æfter þan hi hine fretað ealne butan his heaf/de & þon sittað & pepað ofer ðam heafde:

24. Then is an island in the Red Sea. There is the kind of people that among us is named “Donestre”. They are grown like (diviners) from the head until the navel and the other part is like people’s bodies adn they know all people’s speech. Then they comfort foreign kinds of people and name them and know the names of the person’s kin and with lying words they decieve them. and seize them and then after that they eat them all excpt their head and then sit and weep over that head.

Illustration, Red Capital Latin,



f. 83 v; B. Latin ctd. Green Capital OE

25. Ðanan is east ðær beoð men aþcenned þa beoð/ apæstme fiftyne fotlange & on bræde tyn/ fotmæla hi habbað micle heafda & earan/ spa fann oþer eare hi him onniht under/ breðað & mid oðran hi preoð him beoð þa earan spiðe leohte & hi beoð anlichoman/ spa hþite spa meolc & gif hi hpylcne mann/ onðam landu geeseoð þon nimað hi hora earan onhand & feor (bar thorn) to hi fleoð spa hrædllice/ spa is pen (bar thorn) te hi fleogen.

25. From there to the east there are people born that are in growth fifteen feet tall and in breadth ten feet. They have large heads and ears like winnowing fans. The one ear they spread under themselves and with the other they wrap themselves. Those ears are very light and they are in bodies as white as milk. And if they any person on that land see then they seize their ears in hand and they flee far so swiftly that is is thought that they fly.

Illustration, Green capital Latin

f. 84r; A Red capital OE

26. Ðonne is sum ealand inðam beoð men akend/ þara eagan scinað spa leohte spa ma micel/ blacern onæle on þystre nihte:

26. There is an island on which people are born. Their eyes shine as brightly as may large burning lanterns in dark night.

Illustration. Green Capital Latin, Red Capital OE

27. Ðon is sum ealand (bar thorn) is ðæs læssan milge/ tæles ðe stadia hatte onlengi & on bræde/ ccc. & lx. & þær miclan ðe leuua hatte .xc. þær/ pæs timbred on beles dagum þæs cinges io/ bes templ of irenum gepeorcum & of ærenum/

f. 84r; B.

geporht. & on ðære ylcan stope is east ðanon/ eac oþer templ sunnan halig to þa is sute þun/ gen & gedefe sacerð toge sea & he ða lifa ge/ healdeð & begymeþ:

27. There is an island that is the less measure called stadia 300 and 60 in length and breadth and the larger called leagues 90. There was build in Bele's day the king Job's temple of worked iron and of worked brass. And in that same place is east from there also another temple holy to the sun. To the care/company of that is provided an excellent and suitable priest and he that dear holds and attends.

Illustration, Red capital latin, green capital OE

28. Ðon is gylde pingearð æt sunnan upgange/ se hafað berian hundteontiges fotmæla/ lange 7 fiftiges on ðam bergian beoð cende spylce meregrota oððe gymmas:

28. Then is golden vinyard at the upgoing of the sun. It has berries one hundred twenty feet long and fifty. From those berries are born likewise pearls and gems.

f. 84v; A. Illustration, Red capital Latin, Green capital OE

29. ðonne is oðer rice on babilonia landum/ þær is seo fæste dun betpeoh media du/ ne & armenia. Seo is ealra duna mæst & higest þær syndon gedefelice menn þa hab/bað him to kynedome & to anpealde þa/ readan sæ þær beoð kende þa deorþorþan/ gimmas:

29. Then is another kingdom in Babylonian land. There is a the secure (place) between Media town and Armenia. That is of all (settlements) largest and they who are there there are proper people. Those have a kingdom and to rule the Red Sea. There are born the most precious gems.

f. 84v; B. Illustration, Red capital Latin, Green capital OE

30. Ymb þa stope beoð pif ða habbað beardas/ spa side oð heora breost & horses hyda hi/ habbað him to hrægle gedon þa syndan hun/ti gyferan spiðe ge nemde & fore hundem/ tigras & leopardos (bar thorn) hi fedað (bar thorn) syndan/ þa kenestan deor & ealra ðæra pildeora/ kynn þæra þe on ðære dune akende beoð/ (bar thorn) hige huntigð.

30. Around that place are women that have beards to the sides of their chest and horse hides have they have made to clothing. Those are huntresses often named and instead of hounds tigers and leopards that they raise, which are the keenest animals. And all kinds of those wild animals which are born on their down, they hunt.

f. 85rA. illustration,  
red capital latin

31. Et ali[ae] sunt mulieres ibi dentes ap[ro]rum haben/tes capillos usq[ue] ad talos. in lumbis caudas/ boum. quae sunt altae pedum .xiii. spetioso/ corpore q[ua]si mormore candido. pedes habentes/ cameli. ap[i]nos. q[ae]rum mult[a]e ex ipsis cetide[runt] p[ro] sua/ obscenitate a magno n[ostr]o macedone alexan/dro. quia illas uiuas ad[pro]hendere [non] potuit/ occidit ideo quia sunt publicato corpore &/ inhonesto.

Green capital OE

31. Ðone sindon oðre pif ða habbað eoferes tuxas & feax oð helanside & onlendenu oxan/ tægl. þa pif syndon ðreottyne fota lange &/ heora lic bið on marmorstanes hpit/nysse & hi habbað olfenda fet & eoferes teð for/

f. 85r; B.

heora mycelnysse hie gefelde purdon fram ðam/ mycclan macedoniscan alexandre þa he hi lifiende/ gefon ne mihte þa acpealde he hi for ða hi/ syndon æpisce on lichoman & unpeorðe:

31. There are also other women. Those have boars' tusks and hair until the sides of the heels and on the ends ox tails. Those women are thirteen feet tall and their bodies have the whiteness of marble stone and tehý have camel feet and boar's teeth. For their greatness they were felled/killed by that great Macedonian Alexander. Then when he could notd seize them living, he killed them because they were lewd in body and unworthy.

Illustration, Red Capital Latin, Green Capital OE

32. Be ðam garsecge is pildeora cynn. þa hattan/ cat(i/t?)ni þa syndon freaplitige deor & þær/ syndon menn. ða be hreapan flæsce & be/ hunige lifigeað:

32. By that settlement is the kind of wild animal that is called Catini. Those are most beautiful animals and there are people that live by raw flesh and by honey.

f. 85v; A. Illustration, Red Capital Latin,

33. In (s/f)inistre parte regio est catinorum & ibi re/ges sunt hospitales subsemultos habentes/ syrrannos confines secus oceanum. (lambda?)sini (s/f)tra/ pa(s/f)te sunt. reges conplures:

Green Capital OE

33. On þam pynstran dæle þær rices þe ða deor/ onbeoþ catinos & þær beoð gastliðende menn cyningas þa habbað under him mæ/nig fealde leodhatan. heora landgemære/ buað neah þam garsecge & þanan fram/ þam pynstran dæle syndan manege/ cyningas:

33. In the left part of that kingdom where those catinos animals are, and there are hospitable people. Kings they have from them, manifold tyrants. Their frontier dwells near that sea and then from the left part are many kings.

f. 85v; B. Illustration, Red Capital Latin,

34. Hoc genus hominum multos uivit annos/ homines sunt benigni & (t/s?)iqui adeosuener/ cummulicrib: eos remittunt. Alexander/ (d/a)ut(bar e) mededis. cum a deos uenissae mirat(°)/(bar e). eor(bar u) humanitatem nec uoluit eis nocere/ nec ultra uoluit occidere.

Green Capital OE

34. Ðis mann cynn lifað fela geara & si syndan/ fremfulfe menn. & gyf hpylc mann/ to him cymeð þonne gyfað hi him pif/ ær hi hine on peg lætan. Se macedonisca/ alexander þa ða he him to com

þa pær/ he pundriende hyra menniscnysse/ ne polde he hi cpellan ne him napiht/ laðes don: (faded word here?)

34. This kind of person lives for many years and they are useful people. And if any person to them comes, then they give them a woman before they let them on way. The Macedonian Alexander, then when he had come to them, he wondered at their humanity, nor would he kill them nor do them any injury.

f. 86r; A. Illustration, Red latin, Green OE

35. Ðonne syndon treop cynn of ða ða deor/peorstan stanar beoð acende & þanon/ (bar thorn) tre hi gropað :

35. Then is that kind of tree from which the most precious stones are born and from thence, that tree, they grow.

Illustration

f. 86r; B. Red capital latin, Green OE

36. Ðaer mann kynn is syndan speartes hipes/ on ansyne þa man hateð silhearpan:

36. There is a kind of person of dark color in countenance. those people call Silhearwan. (Latin: &iopians/ OE sigel= sun, hwierfan= changed; or sigel hweorf (victory troop); less likely)

Illustration, red latin, green OE

37. Ðone is sum land pingeardas peaxat on/ spiðast þær bið rest of elpenda bane geporht/ seo is onlengre preo hund fotmæla langa & syxa:

37. Then is a land vineyards grow on. Mostly there is the resting-place of elephants bones made. That is on length 300 feet long and 6.

f. 86v; A. Illustration, Red Latin, Green OE, Illustration

38. Ðonne is sum dun aðamans hatte on ðære/ dune bið (bar thorn) fugel cynn þe grifus hatte þa fu/gelar habbað feoper fet & hryðeres tægl & earnes/ heafod:

38. Then is one down called Athamans. On that down is that kind of bird that is called Grifus. That bird has four feet and a cow's tail and an eagle's head.

f. 86v; B. Red Capital OE

39. On þære ylcan stope byð oðer fugelcynn/ fenix hatte þa habbað cambar onheafde spa/ papan & hyra nest (bar thorne)te hi pyrcað of ða deor/peorðestan pyrt geman gum þe man cinna/ momum hateð & of hir æðme æfter þusend/ gearum he fyr on æleð & þonne geong/ upp of þam yselum eft ariseþ :

39. In that same place is the other kind of bird called Fenix. That has a combe on head like a peacock and her nest tat she makes from the most precious plants mixed which people call cinnamon and of their breath. After a thousand years they burn on fire and then young up from the ashes after arises.

Illustration, Green Capital Latin, Red capital OE

40. Ðonne is oðer dun þær syndon spearte menn & nænig oðer mann to ðam mannu/ geferan mæg for ðam þe seo dun byð eall/ byrnende:

40. Then is another down. There are dark people and not any other people to those people may travel because the down is all burning.

**APPENDIX B. TRANSCRIPT AND PARTIAL TRANSLATION OF  
WONDERS OF THE EAST BRITISH LIBRARY COTTON MS. VITELLIUS  
A. XV**

From British Library Digitized MS.

Transcription, Description, partial Translation

f. 98v

1. Seo land buend onfruman/ (xxx) rom antimoline þæm/ (xxx) ande þæs landes is on ge-/rime þæs læssan mil ge-/ (xxx)les þe stadio hatte/ (sss)mind & þær miclan þe leones hatte þreo/ hund & eahta & .lx. On þæm ealande bið micel menegeo sceapa & þanon is to babilonian þær/ læssan mil ge tæles stadio hund teontig. &/ eahta & .lx. & þær miclan milge tæles þe leones/

2. [þat] hatte fiftyne & hund teontig/(xxx)lond bunis is spyðust/ (xxx)[q]ie monnu geseted/ þær beoð pedras acen/ned on oxna micelnes/ se þa buað oð meda/ burh þære burge nama is arche medon/ ho is mæst to babilonia burh þonon syndon/ þær lassan mil getæles stadi .ccc. & þæs/ maran þe leon hatte .cc. from Archemedon/

f. 99r

þær syndon þa miclan mærdða (bar thorn) syndon þa peo (xxx)/ þere micla macedonsica alexander het ge-(xxx)/ pyrcan. (bar thorn) land is onleng. & onbræde. cc. þæs/ læssan mil ge tæles stadi & þæs miclan þe le(xxx)/ hatte .c.xxx & healf mil

There is that greatest famous exploit that was that (peo) there Great Macedonian Alexander commanded to make. That land is on length and on breadth 200 of the lesser miles stadia and the greater called leagues 130 and half miles.

3. Sum stop is mon fereð to/ þære readan sæ so is/ haten lentibelsinea þæm/ beoð henna acenned onlice/ þonne þe mid us beoð reades/ heopes. gif hi hpylc man niman pile oþþe hina/ æt hrineð þonne forbærnað hy sona eal (xxx)/ lic (bar thorn) syndon ungefrægelicu liblac.

4. Eac þonne þær beoð pildeor/ acenned. þa deor þonne/ hy mannes stefne ge hy/rað þonne fleoð hy feor./ þa dor habbað eahta fet. & pælcyrian eagan. & tpa headu gif/ him hpylc mon onfon pille þonne hiera lichoman/

f. 99v

[could be bar thorn, hy] (xxx) onælað (bar thorn) syndon þa ungefrægelicu deor.

-Illustration crossing page -

5.

6. (xxx)s stop hafað nædran. þa nædran habbað/ tpa heafdu þara eagan scinað nihtes spa/ [leo]hte spa blæcern./

7. IN sumon lande eoselas/ [bið] acende þa habbað spa/ micle hornas spa oxan/ þa syndon on þære mæstan/ [p. ist] me (bar thorn) is on þa suð healfe/ [from] babilonia. þa buað/ (xxx)[o] þæm readan sæ for/ þara nædrena mænego/ þe in þæm stopum

8. beoð þat hatton corsias./ þa habbað spa micle hornas spa peðeras./ Gif hy hpicne man sleað oþþe a æthrined/ þonne spylteð he sona.

9. On þam landu bið pipores ge niht sum nis/ þone pipor healdaþ þa næddran on heora/

f. 100r

ge neornesse. þone pipor mon spa nimeð (bar thorn) (xxx)/ þa stope mid fyre onæleð & þa nædran þonne/ ofdune on þa eorþan (bar thorn) fleoð forþon se pipor bið/ speart from babilonia oð persiam þa burh þan se pipor peaxeð is þær læssan mil ge teles [þe]/ stadia hatte eahta hund mila. of þæm is ge/ teald þær miclan milgeteles þ leones hatte/ iv. hund &. xxiii. & an healf mil. Seo stop is u[n](xxx)/ pæstm berenlicu for þara nædrena mæneg[o]/

10. Eac spylce þær beoð cende/ healf hundingas þa syndon/ hatene conopenas hy hab/bað horses mana & eoferes/ tuxas & hunda heafdu & heo/ra oroð bið spylce fyres leg/ þas land beoð neah þæm bur/gu þe beoð eallum worlde ge/lum gefylled (bar thorn) is on þa suð healfe egypta/na landes.

11. On sumon lande beoð men acende þa beoð

f. 100v

(xxx) onlengi syx fot mæla. hi habbað bear/(xxx)[d]as oþ cneop side & feax oð helan. homo dubii/ hy syndon hatene (bar thorn) beoð tþimen & be hreapum/ fixum hy lifiað & þa etap.

12. Cap[i/u] hatte seo ea in þære ilcan stope þe is/ haten gorgoneus. (bar thorn) pælkyrging þær beoð/ cende æmetan spa micle? spa hundas hy habbaþ/(xxx) [sp]elce spa græs hoppan hy syndon reades heopes/ (xxx) [&] blaces heopes þa æmettan delfað gold up/ of eaorþan from foran nihte oð ða fiftan tid/ dages.

13. þa men þe to þon dyrstige beoð (bar thorn) hi þæt/ gold nimen þonne lædað hy mid him olfendan?/ meran mid hyra folan & stedan. þa folan hy ge/fætað on þa meran & hy spylfe onsittað & þa/ stedan þær forlætað. þonne þa æmettan/ hy onfindað & þa hpile þe þa æmettan embe/ þone stedan abysgonde beoð. þonne þa men/ mid þam meran & mid þam golde ofer þa ea/ farest hy beoð spa hrædlice ofer þære ea

f. 101r

[þe]t men penað þæt hy fleogan.

-Illustration of Ant hounds-

14. Betpih þyssson tþam ean is lond bunis. loco/ theo hatte (bar thorn) is betpih nile & bryxonte[s]/ gereced seo nil is ealdor fallicra ea. & heo/ flopeð of egypta lande. & hi nemnað þa/ ea archoboleta (bar thorn) is haten (bar thorn) micle pæter.

f. 101v

(xxx)[o]n þyssum beoð acende þa miclan mænego/ olfenda.

15. Ðær beoð cende men/ (xxx) hy beoð fiftyne/ (xxx) fota lange. & hy hab/bað hpit lic & tþa neb on anum heafde/ (xxx) & cneapu spyðe/ reade & lange nosa & speart feax. þonne hy/ cennan pillað þonne farað hy onscipum to/ indeum. & þær hyra gecynda inþorlð bringaþ/

16. Ciconia in gallia hatte/ (bar thorn) land þær beoð men a/ cende on drys heopes/ þara heafdu beoð ge/monu spa leona heaf/du. & hi beoð .xx. fota/ lange & hy habbað/ micelne muð spæ fon. gyf hþylcne mon/nan on þæm landu ongitað odðe geseoþ/ odðe him [mæ](xxx)/ folgia[nde] (xxx)

f. 102r

odðe him hpilc man folgiende bið. þonne (xxx) [for]/ (bar thorn) hi fleoð & blode hy spætað: þas beoð men gepende.

17. Begeondan brixonte/ þære ea east þonon/ beoð men acende lange/ & micle þa habbað fet/ & sconcan. xii. fota lange/ sidan mid breastu seofon/ fota lange. hostes hy/ synd nemned cuplice/ spa hþylcne man spa hy/ gelæccað þonne fretað hi hyne.

18. Ðonne seondon/ pildeor þa hatton/ lertices hy hab/bað eoseles ea/ran & sceapes/ pulle & fugeles fet.

19. þonne syndon oþere ealond suð from (xxx) [brixontes]

f. 102v (italics indicate late ME, early mod. English hand glosses)

(xxx) [en þon] beoð. buton/ (xxx) *heftu þy habbyt./* heafdu þa habbað/*on hyre bresten/* on hyra breasttum/ heora eagan & muð/ *at afote/* (xxx) seondon eahta/ *long at/* fota lange & eahta/ *fote brode/* fote brade.

20. [þa beth on lenþe] Ðær beoð cende þa beoð onlengen hundteontige/ [*fet nale lange & fifty/*] (xxx)mæla lange. & fiftiges hy beoð greate/ spa stæn(o)ene speras micle. for þara dra/cena micelnesse n(o)e m(0)eg nan man/ [n]ayþelice on (bar thorn) land gefaran/



21. [f]rom þisse stope is/ (xxx)(o) oðer rice on þa suð/ healfe garsegeges/ (xxx) (bar thorn is ge teald þær/ (xxx) [s s/d an] milgeteles

f.103r

þe stadia hatte .ccc. & xxxiii. & þæs m[iclan]/ þe leones hatte .cc.liii.& an mil þær beoð/ cende homo dubii (bar thorn) beoð. hy habbaþ oðþone/ nafolan onmenniscu gesceape & syþ þan on/ eoseles gelicnesse & hy habbað longe sconca[n]/

22. Ðonne is oþer stop/ elreord geni beoð/ on. & þa habbað cyni/gas under þara is/ geteald .c. (bar thorn) syn/don þa pyrstan men & þa elreordegestan & [þar]/ syndon tpegen seaþas oþer is sunnan oþer/ monan se sunnan seað se bið dæges hat & nih/tes ceald. & se monan seað se bið nihtes hat/ & dæges ceald. heora pidnes is .cc. þæs læsse/ mil ge teles stadia. & þæs maran þe leones/ hatte .cxxxiii. & an healf mil.

f. 103v

23. On þysse stope beoð treop/ cyn þa beoð lapern beabe/ & ele treopum onlice of/ þæm treowu balzamu/ se deorpeorðesta ele/ bið acenned. seo stop is/ þæs læssan mil ge teles þe stadia hatte/ c. li. & þæs miclan þe leo .lii.

-beside picture of tree-

24. Ðonne [is sum] ealond/ in þære readan sæ/ þær is mancyn þæt/ is mid us donestre/ [n]emned. þa syndon/ [p]eaxe ne spa [fis?]/ [ceras?] fram þam/ heafde oððone nafolan & se oðer dæl bið/ manisce onlic & hy cunnon mennisce ge/reord þonne hy fremdes cynnes mannan/ [of] seoð þonne nemnað hy hyne & his magas/ [c]uþra man na naman & mid leaslicum/

-beside picture of large humanoid (nude, with high-placed genitalia, seal-like head) holding ripped of leg of clothed human, standing beside donestre with long tunic/skirt pulled up to show one missing foot.-

f. 104r

þordum hy hine bespicað & hine gefod [k/p o ff/ss]/ þan hy hine fretað ealne buton þon [he]afd[e]/ & þonne sittað & pepað ofer þam heafde

25. Ðonne is east þær beoð men acende þa beoð/ on pæstme fiftyne fotlange & .x. brade/ hy habbað micel heafod & earan spæ [f]an [longe?]/ eare hy him onniht/ under breað & mid/ oþran hy preoð him/ beoð þa earan spiðe leohte & hy beoð spa/ on lichoman spa hpi/te spa meolc gyf hy/ hpicne mannan on þæm lande geseoð/ oð þe ongytað þonne nymað hy hyra ea[ran]/ him on hand & fleoð spyðe. spa hræðlice spa [xxx]/ [p]en þæt hy fleogen.

26. Ðonne is sum ealond on þæm beoð men acende/ þan[d] eagan scinaþ spa leohte spa [iibni]/  
f.104v

(xxx) micel blacern onele/ (xxx) þeostre nihte/

27. (xxx)ne is su ealond (bar thorn) is/ (xxx) læssan milgeteles/ (xxx)e stadia hatte onlen/ (xxx) e  
& on bræde .ccc. & lx./ (xxx) miclan þe leones/ (xxx) .cx. þær pæs getymbro on beles dagum/  
(xxx) obes temple of iernum geporcu. & of glæs/(xxx)e gotum & on þære/ ilcan stope is æt/ sunnan  
upgange/ (xxx)setl quietus þæs/ (xxx) stillestan bisceopes/ (xxx)se næ nine oþerne/ (xxx)te ne þige  
buton/ (xxx)[s]æ oftrum & be þam/ he lifede

28. Ðonne is gylden pingeard æt sunnan upgonge/ se hafað bergean hunteontiges fot  
f. 105r

mæla & fiftiges. of þæm/ bergean beoð cende/ [s]ara gimmas? sarazim mas?

29. Ðonne is oþer rice on/ babilonia landum. þær/ is seo mæste dun be/ tpih med[i]a dune &  
armoenia. seo is ealr[a](xxx)/ duna mæst & hyhst. to cyne dome þone r[ea]/dan sæ & to anpalde  
þær beoð cende saroz[ins](xxx)

-Illustration of various figures behind shields-

30. Ymb þas stope beoð pif acenned þa habbað/ beardas spa side oð hyra breost. & horses/ hyda  
hy habbað him to hrægle gedon hundic/gean spiðast nemde. & from tigras & leon/  
f.105v

(xxx)[lo]eas. (bar thorn) hy fedað þæt/ syndon þa cenestan/ [d]eor & ealra þara/ deora cyn þe on/  
[p]jere dune acende/ beoð mid heora scin/(xxx) (bar thorn) hy to huntiaþ./

-beside picture of figure in horse cloak (head covered, beard trailing out, clothed) holding bow (?)  
with a tiger(?) climbing up-

31. (xxx)ie syndan oþere/ [wif](xxx) þa habbað eoferes/ tuxas & feax oð helan/ side. & oxan tagl  
on endumum þa pif syndon þrytterne fota lange/ hyra lic bið or mar/monstanes hipnes se/(xxx)  
habbað olfendan/ (xxx) & eoseles teð of/ hyra micelnesse hy/ gefylde pæron fro/ þæm miclan  
macedo/niscan alexandre

-beside picture of nude figure (oddly positioned breasts suggest female) with long hair, tusks, teeth,  
and hooves/ camel feet holding something like a stick/scepter-

f. 106r

þa cpealde he hy þa he hy lifiende ofer fo[n]/ ne mehte for þon hy syndon æpisce on lichoman &  
unpeorþe.

32. Be þæm garsecge pildeo/ra cyn þa hatton cati/nos þær syndon frea/pliti deor & þær syndon/  
men þe be hreapu flæs/ce & be hunie hy lifiað

-Beside a picture of a clothed figure seated in an archway with red hair and loose chin/jowls around  
neck; cloudk or tail under it.-

33. On þæm pynstran dæle/ þæs rices þe þa deor on beoð catinos & þær beoð/ gæstliþende men./  
cynningas þa habbaþ/ under monigfealde/ leod hatan. heora/ land gemæra buaþ/ neah þæm  
garsecge/ þanon fræm þæm/ pynstran dæle syn/don fela cyninga.

-Beside image of two running lions? and two clothed figures conversing, seeming in mirror image,  
but with different clothing. one carries shepherds/pilgrims staff/crook/stick-

f. 106v (very damaged)

34. (xxx) man cyn lyf [to] fela/ (xxx)[ara] & hy syndon/ (xxx) [frem]fulle men gif/ (xxx)[spy]lc  
mon hi to cymð/ (xxx)n gifað hy him pif/(sss) hy hine onpeg læ/(xxx)en. se [ma]cedonisca/  
(xxx)[al]exander þe he him/ (xxx) com þa pæs he pun/drende hyra menniscnesse no polde he/ hi  
cpellan ne him non lað on.

35. Ðonne syndon treop cyn/ on þæm þa deorpyrþystan/ (xxx)[st]anas synd of acende.

-sign of extended capital, now missing body -

(xxx) onon hy gropað

36. (xxx)n mon cyn is seondon/ speartes hyipes on [oi]syne/ þam on hateð/ sigel para.

(end of text, next page begins Letter of Alexander to Aristotle.)

## APPENDIX C: COMPLETE COUNTS OF NONHUMAN TERMS FROM ENTIRE STUDY BY TIME PERIOD

Table 5.6: Terms Covered in Entire Study

Standard	Headword	OE	EME	LME	Total
Acheloys	Acheloys	0	0	1	1
accursed	acursi	0	2	0	2
rotten egg	adel-eye	0	1	0	1
either/other	æghwæðer / ððer	1	0	0	1
ælwihht	ælwihht	1	0	0	1
āglāca	āglāca	16	0	0	16
elder	alder	0	0	3	3
all-theodish	all-theodish	0	1	0	1
amanset	amanset	0	1	0	1
andsaca	andsaca	2	0	0	2
Antheus	Antheus	0	0	1	1
Argante	Argante	0	4	0	4
harpies	arpies	0	0	1	1
ateliche	ateliche	0	1	0	1
atoll	atoll	2	0	0	2
aventure	aventure	0	0	2	2
ancient	auncian	0	0	1	1
aunt	aunt	0	0	2	2
Avalon	Avalon	0	7	0	7
bana	bana (bane)	5	2	0	7
bearn	bearn	2	1	0	3
beast	beast (booste)	0	2	2	4
bear	berez		0	1	1
Bertilak	Bertilak de Hautdesert	0	0	1	1
bigog	bigog	0	0	1	1
beguile	bigolen	0	1	0	1
belie	bilegge	0	2	0	2
beswike	biswike	0	1	0	1
bodes	bodest	0	5	0	5
bone	bone	0	0	2	2
boar	boore (borez)	0	0	2	2
brōga	brōga	1	0	0	1
Brutael	Brutael	0	4	0	4

Table 5.6 continued

Standard	Headword	OE	EME	LME	Total
bryd	bryddes (burde)	0	0	3	3
bull	bullez	0	0	1	1
burh-knave	burh-knave	0	2	0	2
burne	burne	0	0	9	9
Busiris	Busiris	0	0	1	1
Cacus	Cacus	0	0	1	1
Centauros	Centauros	0	0	1	1
Cerberus	Cerberus	0	0	1	1
champion	champioun	0	0	1	1
chastity	chastitee	0	0	1	1
child	child (children)	0	6	2	8
company	compaignye	0	0	2	2
conqueror	conqueror	0	0	1	1
country	contree	0	0	2	2
craft	craft	0	0	2	2
creature	creature	0	0	2	2
cruel	crueel	0	0	2	2
cuma	cuma	1	0	0	1
kind	cunde	0	4	0	4
kin	cynn (kin,-rede)	9	6	0	15
dædhata	dædhata	1	0	0	1
dahet	dahet	0	2	0	2
dame	dame	0	0	2	2
damnation	dampnacioun	0	0	1	1
dance	dance	0	0	4	4
dear	dear (deere)	0	2	1	3
dēofol	dēofol (deuelez)	3	0	2	5
deor	deor	0	18	0	18
dim	dim	0	1	0	1
disport	disporten	0	0	1	1
daughter	doȝter	0	0	1	1
Donestre	Donestre	2	0	0	2
draca	draca (dragoun)	13	0	1	14
dweole	dweole	0	1	0	1
eafora	eafora	1	0	0	1
earmsceapen	earming/earmsceapen	1	0	0	1
elf	elf (ælf, alu, -ish, en)	1	11	5	17

Table 5.6 continued

Standard	Headword	OE	EME	LME	Total
elf-queen	elf-queen	0	0	5	5
empress	empirice	0	0	1	1
ent	ent	4	0	0	4
eoten	eoten (etayn)	7	44	1	52
eoten ring	eoten ring	0	2	0	2
eremig	eremig	0	1	0	1
fæge	fæge	1	0	0	1
færgryre	færgryre	1	0	0	1
fair	fair	0	0	5	5
fairy	fairye (of fairye)	0	0	11	11
feondly	feendly	0	0	1	1
fele	fele	0	0	1	1
fēond	fēond	16	23	1	40
fēondsceaða	feond-scaðe	1	2	0	3
ferly	ferly	0	0	2	2
fifel	fifel	1	0	0	1
filth	filthe	0	0	1	1
firendæd	firendæd	1	0	0	1
fiery	firy	0	0	1	1
fish	fish	0	4	0	4
flāschoma	flāschoma	1	0	0	1
flesh	flasse	0	0	3	3
flēogende	flēogende	5	0	0	5
foe	foe (uo/foo)	0	3	2	5
fole	fole	0	0	1	1
foliot	foliot	0	1	0	1
folk	folk	0	0	1	1
fordeme	fordeme	0	1	0	1
forlere	forlere	0	1	0	1
foul	foul (ful/fouler...none)	0	20	6	26
four and twenty	four and twenty	0	0	1	1
freca	freca (freke)	1	0	12	13
frēond	freond	1	8	0	9
fowl	fuzel	0	3	0	3
galder	galder	0	1	0	1
ganga	ganga	3	0	0	3
gāst	gāst (gost, ghost)	18	1	1	20
gāstbona	gāstbona	1	0	0	1

Table 5.6 continued

Standard	Headword	OE	EME	LME	Total
Gawain	Gawain	0	0	1	1
giant	geaunt (gigant)	3	0	5	8
gebūgan	gebūgan	1	0	0	1
ġeniðla	geniðla	2	0	0	2
ġewinna	gewinna	2	0	0	2
giddy	gidie	0	1	0	1
goddess	goddes(s)	0	0	1	1
goodman	godmon	0	0	6	6
Gogmagog	Gogmagog	0	12	0	12
golnesse	golnesse	0	2	0	2
good	good (ȝode)	0	0	3	3
governance	governance	0	0	1	1
gram	gram	2	2	0	4
great	greete	0	0	1	1
Grendel	Grendel	2	0	0	2
grisly	grisly	0	0	2	2
gryre	gryre	1	0	0	1
guma	guma (gome)	2	0	12	14
hæft	hæft	1	0	0	1
halewei	halewei	0	4	0	4
half-etayn	half-etayn	0	0	1	1
half-suster	half-suster	0	0	1	1
hapel	hapel	0	0	7	7
haunt	haunt	0	0	1	1
heapodēor (dēor)	heapodēor (dēor)	1	0	0	1
heads three	heaudes three	0	0	1	1
hell	helle	0	0	1	1
Hercules	Hercules	0	0	2	2
hate	hete	0	1	0	1
hierde	hierde	6	0	0	6
high bounty	high bontee	0	0	1	1
highest	highest	0	2	0	2
Homodubii	Homodubii	4	0	0	4
horn	horns	0	0	1	1
horrible	horrible	0	0	1	1
Hostes	Hostes	2	0	0	2
hound	hound	0	0	1	1

Table 5.6 continued

Standard	Headword	OE	EME	LME	Total
humble	humble	0	0	1	1
huntress	hunticge	2	0	0	2
ides	ides	1	0	0	1
ifere	ifere	0	7	0	7
incubus	incubus	0	0	1	1
ingenga	ingenga	1	0	0	1
insight	insiȝt	0	1	0	1
inwittfeng	inwittfeng	1	0	0	1
Ioram	Iorem	0	21	0	21
jolie	joly	0	0	1	1
kempe	kempe	0	1	0	1
king	king	0	0	3	3
king Run	King Run	0	2	0	2
clerk	klerk	0	0	1	1
knape	knape	0	0	1	1
knave	knave	0	7	0	7
knight bearn	knight bearn	0	1	0	1
knight	knyȝt	0		18	18
curse	kursest	0	1	0	1
la Faye	la Faye	0	0	1	1
lady	ladies	0	0	17	17
leader	leder	0	0	1	1
lemman	lemman	0	0	1	1
leod-swike	leod-swike	0	1	0	1
leude	leude (lude)	0	0	3	3
leve	leve	0	0	1	1
lie	liȝe	0	5	0	5
lord	lord	0	2	38	40
lāð	loþ (lað, lodliche)	4	14	1	19
love	love	0	0	2	2
luþer	luþer	0	1	0	1
limiter	lymytour	0	0	1	1
mæġ	mæġ	4	0	0	4
maga	maga	1	0	0	1
majesty	magestee	0	0	1	1
maid	maid (maiden)	0	3	0	3
mate	make	0	0	1	1



Table 5.6 continued

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Headword</b>	<b>OE</b>	<b>EME</b>	<b>LME</b>	<b>Total</b>
mann	mann (man)	20	18	12	50
mansing	Mansing	0	2	0	2
marvel	maruayl (meruayl)	0	0	4	4
maw	mawe	0	0	1	1
master	mayster	0	0	1	1
mastery	maystrés	0	0	1	1
mere	mere	0	0	1	1
mereminne	mereminne	0	6	0	6
Merlin	Merlin	0	182	1	183
misdede	misdeed	0	1	0	1
misrede	misread	0	2	0	2
more	mo	0	0	1	1
mōdor	mōdor	7	0	2	9
monster	monstres	0	0	3	3
Morgne	Morgne	0	0	2	2
mundbora	mundbora	1	0	0	1
mighty	mighty	0	0	1	1
name	name	0	0	1	1
neck	nekke	0	0	1	1
niker	niker	0	2	0	2
nineteen	nineteen	0	2	0	2
nipe	nipe	0	2	0	2
no	no	0	0	3	3
noble	noble	0	0	1	1
nothing	noȝt	0	2	0	2
deed	of deed	0	0	1	1
old	old	0	0	11	11
on Irish prost	on Irish prost	0	1	0	1
onde	onde	0	1	0	1
orcneās	orcneās	1	0	0	1
ōper	ōper	2	0	1	3
perilous	perilous	0	0	1	1
place	place	0	0	1	1
Pluto	Pluto	0	0	4	4
poor	poore	0	0	3	3
Proserpyna	Proserpyna	0	0	3	3
qued	qued	0	2	0	2

Table 5.6 continued

Standard	Headword	OE	EME	LME	Total
queen	queen	0	3	7	10
Rinc	rinc (renk)	1	0	2	3
runisch	runisch(-ly)	0	0	3	3
sāwol	sāwol	1	0	0	1
scaðe	scaðe	0	5	0	5
scalk	scalk, (schalk/shelk)	0	1	4	5
sceaða	sceaða	15	0	0	15
shame	schame (-ie)	0	10	0	10
schende	schende	0	4	0	4
scinn/scinna	scinn/scinna	1	0	0	1
screwen	screwen	0	1	0	1
scua	scua	1	0	0	1
scucca	scucca (scucke)	1	6	0	7
searunīþ	searunīþ	1	0	0	1
secg	secg (segge)	1	0	4	5
seolliche	seolliche	0	1	0	1
sir (syre)	sir (syre)	0	0	3	3
Sire Olifaunt	Sire Olifaunt	0	0	1	1
smiling	smiling	0	0	1	1
smīþ	smīþ	1	0	0	1
sunu	son (sunu)	2	8	0	10
sovereyn	sovereyn	0	0	1	1
stalworth	stalworth	0	0	1	1
stapa	stapa	2	0	0	2
stiward	steward	0	2	0	2
strength	strengte	0	0	3	3
swikel	swikel (-dom, -hed)	0	6	0	6
Sybil	Sybyl	0	4	0	4
tacninge (token)	tacninge (token)	0	3	0	3
Taliesin	Taliesin	0	12	0	12
þegn	þegn	1	0	0	1
þēod	þēod	1	0	0	1
þēodþrēa	þēodþrēa	1	0	0	1
Þing	þng	0	11	0	11
þrete (þretest)	þrete (þretest)	0	3	0	3
Þyrs	þyrs	1	0	0	1
trewe	trewe	0	0	2	2

Table 5.6 continued

tūdor	tūdor	1	0	0	1
tulk	tulk	0	0	3	3
tyrant	tyrant	0	0	1	1
unclene	unclene	0	1	0	1
ungod	ungod	0	2	0	2
unhwate	unhwate	0	1	0	1
unihoded	unihoded	0	1	0	1
uniuele	uniuele	0	1	0	1
unlede	unlede	0	1	0	1
unmilde	unmilde	0	1	0	1
unred	unred	0	2	0	2
unriȝt (-fulness)	unriȝt (-fulness)	0	3	0	3
unsiȝe	unsiȝe	0	1	0	1
unwrenche	unwrenched	0	1	0	1
unwreste	unwreste	0	1	0	1
evil/foul	uuel	0	4	0	4
vanished	vanished	0	0	1	1
unwight	vnwiȝt	0	3	0	3
wald-scaðe	wald-scaðe	0	2	0	2
warlock	warloker	0	0	1	1
weard	weard	13	0	0	13
wearh	wearh	1	0	0	1
wer	wer	2	0	0	2
wicchecrefte	wicchecrefte	0	2	0	2
wiðer-sake	wiðer-sake	0	2	0	2
wīf	wīf (wyf)	8	0	18	8
Wigar	Wigar	0	1	0	1
wight	wight (wiȝt, with)	2	4	4	4
wicked	wikkid	0	0	1	1
wise	wise (wyse)	0	8	1	9
witie	witie	0	24	0	24
wode-scaðe	wode-scaðe	0	1	0	1
wodwos	wodwos	0	0	1	1
woe	wōȝe	0	1	0	1
woman (women)	woman (women)	0	6	0	6
wonder	wonder	0	0	3	3
worst	worst	0	1	1	2
wowrues	wowrues	0	0	1	1
wrāð	wrāð (wrooth)	1	0	1	2

Table 5.6, continued

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Headword</b>	<b>OE</b>	<b>EME</b>	<b>LME</b>	<b>Total</b>
wrecche	wrecche (wrecend)	0	16	0	16
wright	wroht	0	1	0	1
wyȝe	wyȝe	0	0	9	9
wolf	wylf (wolues)	2	0	1	3
woman (women)	wymmen	0	0	1	1
winn	wynn	0	1	0	1
wyrgend	wyrgend	1	0		1
wyrm (wormez)	wyrm (wormez)	23	0	1	24
wit	wytteȝ	0	0	2	2
idle	ydel	0	2	0	2
young	yong	0	0	2	2

## APPENDIX D: COMPLETE LISTS OF NONHUMAN AND HUMAN TERMS BY TEXT

A corrected and more complete version will be made available on HammeRR. The version that goes with this dissertation is currently saved and available on HammeRR as a supplement of approximately 200 pages. I have provided a small sample of standardized data for one of the more important terms of this study: namely, *eoten*. The term is spelled a wide variety of ways, so the challenge is standardizing meaning across graphemes in order to trace patterns. The following abbreviations appear in Table 5.7 below:

Table 5.7 Abbreviations in Table 5.7

<i>Brut C</i>	Lazamon's <i>Brut</i> MS Caligula MS Cotton Caligula A IX	<i>ON J</i>	<i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i> Jesus College, Oxford, MS 29 (II)
<i>Brut O</i>	Lazamon's <i>Brut</i> MS Otho MS Cotton Otho C XIII	<i>WoE T</i>	<i>The Wonders of the East</i> , MS Cotton Tiberius B V/1
<i>SGGK</i>	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> , MS Cotton Nero A X	<i>WoE V</i>	<i>The Wonders of the East</i> , MS Cotton Vitellius A XV
<i>MT C</i>	<i>Mandeville's Travels: The Cotton Version</i> Ms. Cotton Titus C.XVI	<i>Beo</i>	<i>Beowulf</i> Manually sequenced from Klaeber
<i>MT E</i>	<i>Mandeville's Travels: The Egerton Version</i> Egerton MS 1982	<i>CT</i>	Chaucer's <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> Manually added from Oizumi and Kunihiro
<i>ON C</i>	<i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i> MS Cotton Caligula A.ix	$\Sigma$	Mathematical Sum; Total count in all texts

Table 5.8 Lexical Items Data Spreadsheet Sample

[illegible]

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“‘That was a good king’: Gender Politics in the Unstable Communities of *Beowulf*.” Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association Conference. Seattle, Washington. October 2012.

“Monstrous Fellows: Violence and Masculine Identity in the Use of “Freke” in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*.” Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association Conference. Claremont, California. November 2011.

## PUBLICATIONS

“Save versus Nostalgia: Dungeons and Dragons, Race, Gender, and the Imaginary Past,” in *Roll for Initiative: An Anthology of Scholarly and Creative works about Dungeons & Dragons*. (Forthcoming).

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