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Animalizing Women and Men in an Episode of the *Querelle des femmes* : John Lyly vs Jane Anger

Armel Dubois-Nayt

EDITOR'S NOTE

This essay derives from a paper given at the ESSE seminar “The Inhuman Self across Early Modern Genres: Textual Strategies 1550-1700” in Galway on 24-25 August 2016.

- 1 From the end of the Middle Ages to the first decades of the twentieth century, England, just like France and the rest of Europe, was the arena of a lengthy and lively literary debate on the place and role of women in society. This controversy is known as the *Querelle des femmes* or in English “the Woman question”. In the English context, several key moments have been identified in the debate between 1540 and 1640 by historian Carroll Camden. The first (1541-1579) spread over almost four decades and followed the publication of *The Schole House of Women* (1541?) by Edward Gosynhyll. The second, more political, discussed the legitimacy of female rule in the wake of John Knox’s *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558) until 1590. The third was triggered by Joseph Swetnam and his *Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Forward, and unconstant Women* (1615). It included four replies, three of which were female-authored. The fourth was fuelled by James I’s campaign against women’s impudence in copying men’s dress and started with a book entitled *Hic Mulier : Or, the Man-Woman* (1620), followed a week later by the companion piece *Haec-Vir : Or the Womanish-Man* (1620). The last controversy identified by Carroll Camden focussed on domestic problems. It was initiated by John Taylor in *A Iuniper Lecture. With all Sorts of Women, Good and Bad* (1639) and replied to by Mary Tattlewell and Joan Hit-him-home in *The Women’s Sharp Revenge* (1640).

- 2 Camden mentions another pamphlet of the early modern period, authored by a Jane Anger, which contributed to the debate about women's superiority or inferiority to men. That pamphlet was printed by Thomas Orwin in 1589 with the title *Her Protection for Women*.
- 3 However, Camden does not deal with it in the chapter on "certain controversies over women" and uses it simply as a source of arguments in defence of the female sex. This may be explained by the loss of the original misogynistic pamphlet to which Anger had replied, which according to an entry in the Stationers' Register in November 1588 was entitled *Boke his Surfeyt in love, with a farewell to the folies of his own phantasie* (Shepherd 30). Specialists such as Linda Woodbridge therefore consider Anger's *Protection* to be another defence of the female sex with no traceable attack (Woodbridge 63) and this is why it has been removed from the controversy paradigm that implies the confrontation of two diverging views.
- 4 However, since Camden, other scholars have tried to reconstruct the pamphlet war to which it could have belonged. The initial hypothesis, based on the date of the publication was explored by Helen Andrews Kahin who pointed at Robert Greene's *Euphues his censure to Philautus wherein is presented a philosophicall combat betweene Hector and Achylles* (printed by John Wolfe in London in 1587) as a possible source (Kahin 31-35). However, Linda Woodbridge has since then shown Greene's *Euphues* has "nothing to do with the controversy about women" and that there was a confusion with John Lyly's *Cooling Card for Philautus and all fond lovers*, which is a section of John Lyly's *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* and was first published in December 1578 (Woodbridge 63). Earlier, Simon Shepherd and Judith Hudson had both accepted the assumption that *Boke his surfeyt in love* was heavily influenced by sections of John Lyly's *Cooling Card for Philautus* (Hudson 7). This essay will therefore consider this set of texts as an item and further scrutinize their intertextuality.
- 5 Read together, Anger's *Protection for Women* and *A Cooling Card for Philautus and all fond lovers* form an interesting pamphlet war of attack and defence. Lyly's text is the admonition of Euphues against love in general and its object, women, in particular as he himself has not yet recovered from the pain of rejection. The *Cooling Card* in fact concludes the third part of Lyly's cautionary tale through the mouth of its eponymous hero, a gallant and giddy youth who has fallen in love with his friend Philautus's mistress, before being himself cast off for "one Curio a gentleman of Naples, of little wealth and less wit" (Lyly 80). As for Jane Anger's *Protection*, it claims "to defend [women] against the scandalous reportes of a late Surfeiting Lover, and all other like Venerians that complaine so to bee overcloyed with womens kindnesse" (Anger 29), a category in which we can legitimately place Euphues. Both texts are also intriguing, as each innovates in its own way: Lyly's incorporates the formal controversy in a prose fiction (Woodbridge 66) through his letter of advice to lovers, while Anger's gives women a voice in the debate for the first time.
- 6 We cannot be sure, of course, that Jane Anger was an actual woman. This name was common in Berkshire, Cambridge, Cornwall, Essex and Lincolnshire (Shepherd 30). According to Purkis, we should "resist the temptation of assuming female authorship of defences signed with women's names" (Purkis 69-71). For the time being, I shall ignore Jane Anger, the scriptor and producer of the pamphlet (Barthes 52), to consider only Jane Anger, the performer, who assumes a woman's voice and a female identity to write in defence of her sex just, as John Lyly assumes a male identity by writing against

women. Taking part in the debate as a man or a woman will be treated as a performative act that constitutes gender and legitimizes not trying “to assign an author to a text” (Barthes 53); and authorial gender identity will be viewed here in Butlerian terms as a repetition of cultural conventions “both socially shared and historically constituted” (Butler 530).

- 7 Whatever the biological sexes of the producers of these early modern texts then, as a pair, they show the arguments used at the time on both sides of the controversy to define the nature of woman in general and, by a mirroring effect, that of man. Specialists of the debate have studied at length the different arguments of the controversy : in most cases, they resort to similar *topoi* : the order, place and method of creation of Adam and Eve as exposed in the Book of Genesis, the episode of the Fall and Eve’s and Adam’s roles in it as well as their separate punishments, the physical differences between the sexes in terms of strength and beauty inherited from Ancient and medieval authors, gender roles in procreation as presented in the Aristotelian and Galenic traditions, the moral virtues of both sexes, their intellectual capacities, political abilities, talents in war, and their capacity for knowledge (Angenot 99-148).
- 8 The substantial research that has been carried out since the beginning of gender studies in the 1980s seems, however, to have left out another aspect of this dual ontology, namely the positioning of man and woman in relation to the non-human and more particularly to the animal. As far as I know, there is no comprehensive study of the bestiaries of the sixteenth-century *Querelle des femmes*, that is, the discourses on the equality and/or inequality of the sexes in an exchange of views between a misogynist and a philogynist. There are of course a few studies on some aspects of the female bestiaries in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance but they do not necessarily define women in relation with the other sex. With the controversy in which John Lyly and Jane Anger took part, this changes as both men and women are compared to other species in the course of the argument and repositioned in the great chain of being. Around thirty animals are mentioned in the *Cooling Card* and just under twenty-five in *Her Protection*, which is another reason why these texts should be read in parallel as they give an opportunity to analyze how animal analogies are used by two authors on either side of the debate. This paper will also contend that Jane Anger not only redefines the female sex in her defence of women, but that she also starts a pre-feminist tradition in her attack that demotes mankind, as opposed to womankind, to the animal realm. But first, I will look at the implications of introducing bestiaries into the dispute, as animal insults were no doubt more offensive to the early modern Christians than to post-Darwinian Western readers.

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- 9 Early Christianity defined humans as different from animals and only granted a soul to the former. This was supported by Plato’s theory on human uniqueness, which was grounded on the exercise of reason. The Greek philosopher had indeed opposed the animals’ lack of intelligence and their entire dedication to sensual fulfilment to the human ability to restrain one’s urges and passions (Plato 272-73 (589a-590c)). Later, Christian thinkers reemphasized the need to set a clear boundary between humans and animals, and by the High Middle Ages any crossing of that border, whether through bestiality or simply dressing as an animal, was condemned by the Church. The task,

however, was not easy, even on a theoretical level, since Western thought throughout the Middle Ages and up to the early modern period was also influenced by other ancient philosophers, starting with Theophrastus who saw “parallels between people and animals” (Salisbury 114). Theophrastus even believed that “human beings and other animals share[d] the same basic components of character” (Boehrer 8). This conviction led to the increasing use of animals as human exemplars in edifying literature and it explains why, by the thirteenth century, it was broadly accepted (Salisbury 114).

- 10 Blurring the distinction between the human and the non-human was indeed a powerful rhetorical device to condemn those who were acting without reason, and it was more and more frequently present after the thirteenth century in the sermons of preachers who wanted to admonish lust (Salisbury 84). Conversely, praising an animal for its moral conduct was a forceful way to reprove the opposite behaviour in humans; in Hassig’s words : “For if an irrational animal – unendowed with human reason and without knowledge of the Divine word – was able to embrace a Christian way of life, should not a rational human be able to do so more easily ?” (Hassig 54).
- 11 The resulting evolution of bestiaries from typological works to moralizing ones also explains why they eventually, though almost insensibly, entered the *Querelle des femmes*, which was clearly a debate about the place of women in an ethical hierarchy. All the more so as bestiaries were a source of serious misogynistic literature just waiting to be tapped. This was true of the traditional Latin prose bestiaries studied by Hassig, which “concerned themselves primarily with the characterisation of sex as formidable and dangerous – and principally promoted by women” (Hassig 71-72), but not only. Most of those that contain a siren entry show clear hostility towards women, whether they ascribe bird-parts, fish-parts, dragon-parts or snake-parts to the female monster symbolizing the lure of desire and betrayal. Sirens, which originally were shown to be male or female, progressively became gendered and scorned. In the *Physiologus* for instance, where the siren appears for the first time in the Bern edition as a woman with fish attributes¹, she epitomizes deception and unreliability: “They speak piously / and their deeds are wicked. / Their behavior is different/ From that which is spoken from their mouth” (Armistead 88 v.411-14).
- 12 The animosity towards women reached a climax in the entry for “fire rocks” present in most bestiaries inspired by the *Physiologus*, a collection of moral beast tales from third- or fourth- century Alexandria, which became the palimpsest of the medieval bestiary until the thirteenth century. As Debra Hassig explains, “[a]ccording to Bestiarists, fire rocks live in pairs on a mountain, and most significantly, they are gendered: one is male and the other is female. As long as the male and female remain on opposite sides of the mountain, all is well, but if they come together, they burst into flames and destroy everything in the vicinity” (Hassig 82). The fire rocks entry concluded that the two sexes were incompatible and supported clerical advocacy of celibacy.²
- 13 Another theoretical shift that had its repercussions on the later controversy about women took place in the thirteenth century with Richard de Fournival’s *Bestiary of Love* which, for the first time, endorsed male carnal goals as opposed to spiritual ones in a love hunt that aimed exclusively at the conquest of the woman. This step in courtly literature completely changed the bestiary’s approach to femininity and masculinity as he stopped showing self-commiseration and identified with “a cock crowing

desperately for his lady's attention" or compared "his unsuccessful love-pleas to dog vomit cheerfully reswallowed" (Hassig 84).

- 14 All this means that by the time John Lyly and Jane Anger set pen to paper, bestiaries were everywhere and had shown themselves to be perfectly suited for the gender debate as they could redefine each sex in terms of its degree of humanity but also express discomfort at the social changes that partly fuel this new episode of the *Querelle des femmes* (Dulac 186).
- 15 Both texts indeed share the pessimistic belief that there is no reason for hope: in women and love according to John Lyly's narrator and in men and marriage according to Jane Anger, as their common essentialist approach to nature prevents any possibility of change for the better. This static and despondent ontology is characteristic of the Christian bestiary that is based on the idea that the essence of an animal – which can be identified to "its end", "its purpose" in the early modern tradition based on Aristotle – precedes its existence. The qualities that make each and every animal what they are have been translated into the names Adam gave them, as well as their functions in the universe.
- 16 In one of her *caveats*, Anger switches to another part of God's creation to warn her fellow women: "Esteem of men as of a broken reed: / Mistrust them still, and then you well shall speed" (Anger 37), which pertains to the same essentialist pessimism. As for Euphues whose supreme goal is the anatomy of "wit", although his story is here to show that nature is not sufficient to deal with a corrupt environment and that education might help, he concludes that, in the case of women, neither nature nor nurture will give them access to enlightenment as "no wit spring[s] in the will of women" (Lyly 93).
- 17 But this is not genuinely the conclusion of their misogynistic or misandristic tales and the many references to animals point to another form of anxiety. The latter builds "around the fragility of the status of human" in the early modern period as established by Erica Fudge (Fudge, *Renaissance Beasts* 2). This is where there is in both texts a form of positivity as each offers ways of reasserting the "boundary between the human group and the animal group" (Fudge, *Renaissance Beasts* 2) after first describing the disappearance of this boundary.

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- 18 If we start chronologically with *Euphues*, comparisons with animals are first used to hint at the fragility of the human status of both men and women. It is the beastliness of desire, a common staple since at least Plato, which is unsurprisingly first introduced to foretell the looming degeneracy of humankind. The Woman question itself is compared to a run with the hare and a hunt with the hounds, the first animal being an image of women's lust and the second, an illustration of men's intellectual sharpness since at least Lucretius. As a partaker in the debate, Euphues, the narrator, makes it clear that he will not argue for both sides as was often the case. He will only take the men's side and oppose what he considers to be the trap for humanity: courtly love.
- 19 In the process, he does not mind the animal insults that will be thrown at him for deserting the love fight. On the contrary, he is quite happy to "be accounted a Meacock, a Milksop, taunted and retaunted, with check and checkmate, flouted and reflouted with intolerable glee" (Lyly 90). For the meekness of which he could be wrongly

accused is in fact the very fault of the courtier who accepts to be treated as a pet. The narrator then asks his male peers: “Wilt thou resemble the kind spaniel which the more he is beaten the fonder he is, or the foolish eyas which will never away?” (Lyly 90). The analogy of the young hawk on which the sentence ends suggests the question of training and education, which is at the core of the *Cooling Card* and the whole *Anatomy of Wit*. But we will see next that, although the narrator mentions in passing that “women shall also reape profite” from his work and that for instance if “Pasiphae [were now to take counsel she would not be] so monstrous to love a Bull” (Lyly 89), women have a much longer way to crawl back up to humanity.

- 20 This impression is created by the cluster of animal analogies gathered to revile two supposed female flaws: their deceitfulness, and their physical repulsiveness which reflects their moral failure. The siren and the serpent obviously come up, but also the cunning crab who eats the oyster after a game of patience, the hyena who can counterfeit the voice of men and so entice them out of their houses and devours them as one could read in the Geneva gloss on Eccles. 13.18 (Dent 436). All these powerful parallels lead to the conclusion that “women when they be most pleasant pretend most treachery” (Lyly 91).
- 21 Their uncontrolled display of emotions and natural ugliness are also ridiculed through associations with animals. The narrator pretends that he sees nothing attractive in women’s laughter and tears: “In the one, her grinning will show her deformed. In the other her whining, like a Pig half roasted” (Lyly 95). As medieval misogynistic literature written to promote clerical celibacy had done before, he sneers at what is left of the coquette when she is deprived of her apparel : “Take from them their periwigs, their paintings, their jewels, their rolls, their bolsterings, and thou shalt soon perceive that a woman is the least part of her self [...] when they be once robbed of their robes, then will they appear so odious ; so ugly, so monstrous, that thou wilt rather think them serpents than saints, and so like Hags, that thou wilt fear rather to be enchanted then enamoured” (Lyly 95).
- 22 This conventional denunciation of female cosmetics and ornament echoes the Elizabethan sumptuary statutes issued in 1574 in order to restrict sumptuousness of dress, curb an early modern version of conspicuous consumption focused on apparel and reassert social differences. The Statutes of apparel of 1574, contrary to the earlier ones of 1562 that did not specifically devote distinct clauses to women, do not however have the eschatological undertones of Lyly’s text where female “excess of apparel” turns them into serpents and hags. Here it is clearly to the Genesis serpent that Lyly is referring, not to the cautious serpent from the *Physiologus* given to the Christian as a model of humility, steadfastness and contrition that repels the devil (Armistead 36-38). As for the hags, they evoke witchcraft superstitions that were the antonyms to true religion.
- 23 This is how nudity, one of the distinctions commonly noted between humans and animals, is deployed as a counter-argument to prove not the superiority of women as post-lapsarian creatures endowed with a moral sense, but their inferiority in a hierarchy that values the modesty of dress. This positioning of women midway between the animal and the human realm is followed by an ontological question that is answered in a way that confirms the split between mankind and womankind along the chain of being. That question is: do women have reason ? It clearly announces the debate that was to be reopened around the same time by an anonymous young scholar

from Brandenburg, Valens Acidalius, a decade later in his *Disputatio nova contra mulieres* (1595): “Do women have souls?”. In both cases it is the question of the relation of women to rational thought that is raised. Here the animal metaphor is extended not to show what humans are or can become but to define “wit” as a male idiosyncrasy and hence to propose an absolute difference between the sexes.

- 24 Euphues claims with the arrogant expertise of a pseudo-naturalist that the female is a habitat in which reason (“wit”), itself likened to an animal, cannot live: “In Rhodes no Eagle will build her nest, no owl live in Crete, no wit spring in the will of women.” (Lyly 93) This simile is drawn from Pliny’s *Natural History* where the ancient philosopher comments: “it is a remarkable fact, that nature has not only assigned different countries to different animals, but that even in the same country, it has denied certain species to certain localities” (Book VIII, 83 (58)). As such, it is characteristic of Lyly’s attempt to write a distinguished and refined prose, as remote from the tongue of the common people as possible and which shows off male classical learning, cleverness and supposed superiority over the ignorant sex (Baggs 11).
- 25 His leniency towards man further manifests itself through his acceptance of his post-lapsarian duality, a common feature of the human and the natural worlds where evil entered as a punishment for sin. In this binary world, the faults of men seem to be redeemed by the simple act of confession and this imparts to them the neutrality of those natural elements that cannot be considered as either good or bad, for they are both: “The Scorpion, though he sting, yet he stints the pain; though the herb nerius poison the sheep, yet is [it] a remedy to man against poison” (Lyly 89). Here Lyly simply paraphrases Pliny’s teachings about the Scorpion and the *nerium oleander* as both poison and remedy in his *Natural History* to make his point about man’s duality or rather moral neutrality: “for the sting of Scorpion [...] the Scorpion itself either; applied to the wound, grilled and eaten, or taken in two cyathi of undiluted wine” (Book XXIX, 29); “to beasts of burden, goats, and sheep it is poisonous, but for man it is an antidote against the venom of serpents” (Book XVI, 33).
- 26 When Lyly’s narrator turns to how love alters men’s and women’s natures, desire is once more the door into animality. But it is the interaction with the opposite sex that is going to determine a man or a woman’s worth. For both men and women, the animal simile indicates the decline of human self-control, but while passion turns women into dominant beasts, it turns men into domesticated animals. It is therefore not only the fact that men and women cross the boundary between the two groups which is at stake with the passions but more importantly the change in the power ratio between men and women and the fear of a collapse of the patriarchal hierarchy.
- 27 Hence the description of the ravaging force of infatuation through the vermin metaphor which again deconstructs their earlier use in the bestiary of desire where the same small animals, particularly the rabbits and the squirrels, are employed to describe sexually attractive women pursued by enamoured men (Hassig 72): “I have read that in a short space there was a town in Spain undermined with conies, in Thessalia with moles, with frogs in France, in Africa with flies. If these silly worms in tract of time overthrow so stately towns, how much more will love which creepeth secretly into the mind [...] consume the body, yea, and confound the soul” (Lyly 91). This is again a direct quote from Pliny’s illustration through examples of the destruction wrought by despised animals in the *Natural History* (Book VIII, 39) and a new attempt by Euphues’s *persona* to appropriate the expertise of the renowned Roman naturalist in order to

flaunt male education. It also has the knock-on effect of pointing to female ignorance without, obviously, taking responsibility for it as a defender of the patriarchal order.

- 28 Yet, as is customary in the misogynistic attacks of the *Querelle*, Lyly claims in the epistle “to the grave matrons and honest maidens of Italy” that comes after his *Cooling Card* that he is not “so dogged as Diogenes to abhor all ladies” (Lyly 97-98). To make his point beyond doubt, he compares himself to Diogenes the Cynic and takes up the animal insult thrown at the philosopher and his school of thought for challenging conventional manners and epitomizing misogyny. This comparison would later be exploited by pamphleteers of the controversy about women; for instance, in 1617, Constantia Munda published her answer to Swetnam’s attack on women under the title *The Worming of a mad Dogge*. Writing in 1578, Lyly merely hinted at the ancient philosopher and for the matter in question, the differences between women, he followed the literary canons of the genre by condescendingly making a distinction between the “lewd” and the honest matrons. But again his personal touch is added through a bird metaphor probably inspired, by Aesop’s fable *The Crow and The Swan* that tells us about the pointlessness of changing one’s habits to change one’s nature. Lyly expands on the moral of this fable to reassert the ontological differences between the two species of birds and, by extension, between good and bad women: “The Black Raven [has] the shape of a bird as well as the white swan” (Lyly 91). However, when it comes to giving advice, he exclusively focuses on men since women are incapable of learning by nature.
- 29 In the guidance he provides to his fellow men, Lyly also deconstructs the hunting theme that characterizes the *Bestiary of Love* by encouraging men to prefer traditional hunting to the love hunt and more generally to associate with other animals than women: “For honest recreation after thy toil, use hunting or hawking, either rouse the deer, or unperch the pheasant; so shalt thou root out the remembrance of thy former love, and repent thee of thy foolish lust” (Lyly 94) or, earlier: “Go into the country. Look to thy grounds, yoke thine oxen, follow the plough, graft thy trees, behold thy cattle, and devise with thyself how the increase of them may increase thy profit” (Lyly 93). Here again, Euphues does not take the voice of Pliny the naturalist but that of the moralist in the *Aesopica*; he speaks to his fellow men as a father speaks to his sons when he encourages them to dig and turn up the soil. The lesson of Euphues’s story is that women should be avoided in favour of work, nature and domestic animals, which form an anti-courtly world he entirely defines in simple Aesopian terms.
- 30 Interestingly enough, although Lyly considers men to have been bestowed with reason, he associates male education with taming since it relies on the same iterative mechanisms: “But at the first the ox wieldeth not the yoke, nor the colt the snaffle, nor the lover good counsel; yet time causeth the one to bend his neck, the other to open his mouth, and should enforce the third to yield his right to reason” (Lyly 94). This cross-species analogy echoes the analogical imagination that aligned the human with the non-human in Renaissance educational treatises for boys according to Juliana Schiesari. It is to be noted, however, that Lyly does not focus exclusively on the highly revered horse, considered by both men of the classical and early modern worlds as the closest being to man (Schiesari 376). His anti-love pedagogy instead is an art of dressage, described in a continuum, from the mundane ox to the human through the virtuous horse.

- 31 In the reforming programme he is writing to preserve men's humanity, women are not completely absent. In fact, the first step of the treatment for infatuation is to prefer bigamy to monogamy as it will mathematically tone down the effects of passion and its side effects: "It is safe riding at two anchors, a fire divided in twain burneth slower, a fountain running into many rivers is of less force, the mind enamoured on two women is less affected with desire, and less infected with despair. One love expelleth another and the remembrance of the latter quencheth the concupiscence of the first" (Lyly 95). This is an unusual programme provided to young men to overcome desire, which is a natural feature of the human condition according to classical philosophers such as Plato but one that should be addressed with faithfulness and temperance (*Laws*, Book VIII, 835b). Lyly unlike his predecessors does not advocate fortitude or moderation, but a double life. He thus turns the Protestant *ethos* that rejected celibate life and sexual continence into a carefree attitude about human sexuality and women.
- 32 The second step of the reforming programme, expressed in a typically Euphuistic sentence built on a succession of phrases of equal lengths, consists, however, in freeing men completely from intoxicating women and making them prefer the company of men: "Take clear water for strong wine, brown bread for fine manchet, beef and brewis for quails and partridge, for ease labour, for pleasure pain, for surfeiting hunger, for sleep watching, for the fellowship of ladies the company of philosophers" (Lyly 97). This food analogy, in accordance again with the Platonic tradition, aligns eating and drinking with sexual appetite. It draws an indirect parallel between man and animals with whom man shares these basic appetites but which he, alone, can consciously control through temperance. Lyly thus eventually reintroduces temperance as the final goal of his educational programme, although he does not believe that it can be reached on one's own. He considers man as a social animal who should "avoid solitariness" (Lyly 97), for it could trigger a relapse and lead to lust. In this way, the initiatory journey of Lyly's eponymous character brings him back to his university where neither women nor animals were allowed. Conversely in the conclusion of his *Cooling Card*, he advocates the retreat of men to equivalent segregated bastions and leaves the reader with the overriding impression that the two sexes are incompatible in the human world just as fire rocks were in the animal world.
- 33 This brief analysis of the parallels with animals, inspired by Pliny's *Natural History* or Aesop's fables, in Lyly's attack on women in *Euphues* has shown therefore that what has often been considered as a rhetorical device characteristic of his style does not merely have an ornamental function. The extended similes cannot be seen as mere stylistic devices. They are part of the discourse that defines woman as a borderline figure, and denies her full humanity, excluding her from the civilized world of men. As such, they illustrate men's supposed intellectual superiority.

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- 34 This explains why Jane Anger could not ignore them in her response and why she also multiplies abusive animal epithets and, conversely, laudatory animal comparisons. Her vision of the world is in fact also one of resemblances and analogies in which the loss of distinction between the human and the animal is condemned, but this time to conclude upon the inferiority of the male sex. This makes her a pre-feminist as opposed to a feminist, insofar as she does not question the patriarchal order. Her acceptance of

women's submission to men is manifest, for instance, in her rejection of female rule, which she presents as a punishment for men's failure. This argument falls into line with the anti-gynecocratic theories developed in the early modern period (see Shepard). It is illustrated in the lines she devotes to Ninus, the husband of the Assyrian queen Semiramis, who, according to Jane Anger traded his throne for pleasure : "Himself and crown he brought to thrall, which passed all the rest; / His foot-stool match he made his head, and therefore was a beast" (Anger 34). This residue of conservatism is a feature of her thought, which, in line with the Renaissance dominant episteme, assumes that everything has a place and should remain in its place.

- 35 Jane Anger posits that man is at the centre of the world and apart from the rest of the animal world. She takes a stand against the confusion between the human and the animal introduced by her contemporaries who no longer recognized rationality as a distinctively human property: "men were grown to be so unreasonable, as he could not decide whether men or brute beasts were more reasonable" (Anger 36). Montaigne, borrowing from Plutarch, brought the human and the animal closer by claiming that animals shared with men the capacity for reason and even that "there is more difference between a given man and another than between a given man and a given beast"³ (Montaigne 258). This new philosophical stance did not make any sense for Jane Anger, who thought that it only proved that men had lost their reasoning abilities as well as their rational superiority over women – and, by the same token, their ability to think rationally about the differences between men and women.
- 36 To this modern school of thought, she preferred neo-platonism and its "answer to a vicar of fools which asked the question, being, that he knew not whether to place women among those creatures which were reasonable or unreasonable" (Anger 36). This response, which "beautified" Plato's "divine knowledge" according to Anger (Anger 36), contested the idea that women could be "*in nullo tertio*" and this is why she places women alongside men in her natural hierarchy - and even above them in the wake of what she regards as the philosophical and misogynistic nonsense of her time.
- 37 Besides, Jane Anger's *Protection*, composed as an answer to a misogynistic attack, relies naturally on retort or counter-charge as her main rhetorical device.⁴ It consists in turning the arguments of women's detractors, from ancient writers to unknown author of the 1588 attack on the female sex, against them. Her main line of attack therefore is to demonstrate the decline of men to the status of animals in a discussion of the opposition between passion and reason. According to her, men's humanity is undone by human vice and their alienation from reasonable beings. This is why she multiplies *exempla* and animal analogies. According to Maria Prendergast: "for Anger, men are jades (old usually female horse) worn out by chasing women. She also refers twice to men as serpents or snakes and once to a variety of animals, including ass, chameleon, bull, dog, and hawk" (Prendergast 192). In most cases, she points to men's fall into bestiality through their loss of self-control and their sexual pursuit of women: "Some of them will follow the smock as Tom Bull will run after a town cow" (Anger 34).
- 38 She also symbolizes this degrading metamorphosis through the regression of human speech in misogynistic pamphleteering to inarticulate, animal forms of communication. She argues that the misogynist "display[s] his beastliness through his wicked and filthy words" (Anger 38) and later adds "But lest some should snarl on me, barking out this reason, that 'none is good but God, and therefore women are ill'" (Anger 39). In early modern philosophy, speech is indeed the superior "means by which

other distinguishing features of human - reason - can be asserted" (Fudge 2004 23). According to Ben Jonson, "speech is the only benefit man hath to express his excellency of mind above other creatures. It is the instrument of society" (Fudge, *Renaissance Beasts* 23). Contrary to the narrator in Euphues who distanced himself from Diogenes, the Dog, she reiterates the traditional link between the woman-hater and Diogenes, whose school was named after the canine because of the sneering sarcasm of its members. This is a way for Jane Anger to indicate his degeneracy through the loss of a human voice. Meanwhile, she apologizes for her railing form of speech, which though "incompatible with such early modern codes of femininity as meekness, modesty, domesticity and submissiveness" (Prendergast 182) remains intelligible and wise.

- 39 If we look deeper into her contribution to the human ontology debate, it seems that she does not think that men and women are different in matter in the Aristotelian sense of the term. Through the physical comparison of the cock and the hen, she confirms that they are made of the same matter, with different forms: "On the same place where down is on the hen's head, the comb grows on the cock's pate" (Anger 37). But there is more behind the shape of the comb than a mere physical dissimilarity. According to Aristotle, the form of a thing is its definition or essence. By pointing out the distinct essence of the male and the female chicken, Jane Anger points to the difference between men and women. Just as the hen's comb is shorter than the cock's, women's vices are smaller.
- 40 Earlier in the text, Anger had perverted the meaning of cock to conclude that the Gods had given men the phallus, but had given women actual phallic power. To do so, she shifted from "cock" - with the usual double entendre (OED [n. 1]. II. §, 7, 13 d) - to "coxcomb", i.e. the fool's hat (Prendergast 193): "The gods, knowing that the minds of mankind would be aspiring, and having thoroughly viewed the wonderful virtues wherewith women are enriched, lest they should provoke us to pride, and so confound us with Lucifer - they bestowed the supremacy over us to man: that of that coxcomb he might only boast, and therefore for God's sake let them keep it" (Anger 35).
- 41 If we can agree with Joan Kelly that Jane Anger, like other early modern feminists, "lacked such a vision of social movement to change events" (Kelly 6) or with Katherine Henderson and Barbara McManus that she accepted "the biblical mandate for female subordination" (Henderson & McManus 28), it must however be stressed that she does so with much irony. She also introduced sexual innuendoes and reckoned that women were less corrupt than men.
- 42 Her early modern feminism, which does not question the domestic role of women, can also account for her predilection for domesticated animals in her analogies. She is exclusively concerned with marital disharmony and does not expand the female sphere beyond the family. This explains why the jade metaphor extends throughout the pamphlet. It is applied to both men and women to break with the misogynist literary tradition. The latter cultivated the horse/rider analogy to assert men's superiority and the figure of the "galled horse" to naturalize that superiority by aligning it with emotional self-control as the opposite of "anger" (Kennedy 25, 28). As a member of the equine family, the jade suggests the loyalty and dedication that should prevail in a husband/wife relationship. As a broken-down animal that here turns against an abusive master, it is reminiscent of marital violence and desertion: "When provender pricks the jade will winch" (Anger 38). In that it is a vicious animal, it is a reference to

the lover corrupted with his attraction to women: “They graze so greedily as they become surfeiting jades” (Anger 37).

- 43 But the choice of this term is also provocative because it clearly reclaims a misogynistic insult, as “jade” also refers to a “disreputable woman” at the time. Here, Jane Anger forces the reader to reconsider the animal and to forget its stereotyped symbolism, just as she forces him/her to reconsider women for what they are, not what they are slanderously held to be. At the same time, as Prendergast has shown, the reference to men as jades was particularly degrading, for in Renaissance culture and since at least Galen, horsemanship traditionally symbolized the superiority of men as rational creatures (Galen 154).
- 44 Jane Anger’s counter-charge leads her back to the hunting theme that runs through Lyly’s attack and here again the sequence of cynegetic images stages women as preys or game. While Lyly suggested avoiding the company of women and preferring that of huntsmen, Jane Anger turns hunting into the most spectacular display of male domination over the opposite sex in a society which viewed venery as the supreme expression of human dominance over animals : ungrateful husbands “become ravenous hawks, who do not only seize upon us, but devour us” (Anger 35), a married woman “a goose standing before a ravenous fox” (Anger 37), the lover is shown “singing [...] a bait to catch us” (Anger 42), the misogynist is “a wolf clothed in sheep’s raiment” (Anger 44), a phrase which originates in the New Testament (Matthew 7:15).
- 45 However, the natural world is not one of implacable fatalism in her *Protection*, it is also to be imitated since she invites women to fashion themselves on other animals: “There is a continual deadly hatred between the wild boar and tame hounds: I would there were the like betwixt women and men unless they amend their manners” (Anger 36). The image suggests the analogy between the domesticated hunting dog and man and between the boar and woman, which paradoxically attributes to woman the role of a male animal “that does not flee, that stands its ground, that is armed literally to the teeth, that is extraordinarily strong and many times the [hound]’s body weight” (Bates 1). It thus turns the boar hunt, which has traditionally been seen as the ultimate test of masculinity since at least Homer’s *Odyssey*, into a new model for a more aggressive femininity.⁵
- 46 Besides, if an element of pathos undeniably transpires throughout the extended hunting metaphor, the physical superiority of men over women is also mocked through the figure of the bull. This horned animal here symbolises both the strength and the weakness of men through cuckoldry:
- Yet truly their sex are so like to bulls that it is no marvel though the Gods do metamorphose some of them to give warning to the rest (if they could think so of it), for some of them will follow the smock as Tom Bull will run after a town cow. But lest they should, running, slip and break their pates, the gods, provident of their welfare, set a pair of tooters on their foreheads, to keep it from the ground; for doubtless so stood the case with Menelaus – he running abroad as a smell-smock, got the habit of a cuckold, of whom thus shall go my verdict. (Anger 34)
- 47 Jane Anger’s sources here are difficult to identify for she refers to men metamorphosed into bulls by gods, whereas the first example of such a metamorphosis that comes to mind is that of Zeus in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. This myth conveys the sexual connotation wanted by Anger but to find an animal transformation that is a divine punishment as suggested by her text, one must turn to the Bible and the Book of Daniel (Chapter 4, verses 32-33), where Nebuchadnezzar is humbled by God for boasting about his

achievements. The king of Babylon was in fact cut off from the rest of humanity and made to eat grass like an ox, a transformation that was still understood literally by some in the 16th century while others, such as John Calvin in his *Commentaries on Daniel*, suggested that this was absurd and that “we did not fancy a change of nature” (Beckwith 294). Jane Anger probably did not intend her readers to scrutinize her classical references and simply aimed to give her pamphlet a scholarly undertone. This can also explain why she is comfortable blaming Menelaus’s character in Homer’s *Iliad* for the lack of sexual loyalty in his marriage, whereas it was customary to attribute the fault to Aphrodite or his wife Helen. Her verbal jousting thus changes the outdoor war leader into the epitome of matrimonial disloyalty and lost masculinity.

- 48 One must however underline the fact that Jane Anger does not intend to correct the reputation of women as creatures of desire or to deny completely their kinship with animals in that regard. What offends her is the double standard that always favours men and to which she wishes to put an end: “If men would as well embrace counsel as they can give it, Socrates’ rule would be better followed” (Anger 38). But to her contemporaries, this reference to the idea of self-knowledge and the *dictum* that is supposed to have come from the Oracle at Delphi, “Know thyself”, could be considered as a further onslaught on the humanity of men. As Erica Fudge has shown, the idea that self-knowledge is crucial to becoming a reasonable being is central to early modern thought (Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning* 27). Anger hereby suggested that taking part in the *Querelle des femmes* instead of examining one’s own nature was in itself a regression to the status of an animal: “Their unreasonable minds which know not what reason is make them nothing better than brute beasts” (Anger 36).
- 49 This leads her to her final blow, the argument that women are natural creatures contrary to men who have become disfigured and denatured. Her demonstration is threefold. First, she argues that they have developed unnatural habits contrary to women whose behaviour is in conformity with nature: “The Lion rageth when he is hungry, but man railleth when he is gluttied. [...] The viper stormeth when his tail is trodden on, and may not we fret when all our body is a foot-stool to their vile lust” (Anger 36). This makes them even scarier than other harmful creatures: “The properties of the snake and of the eel are the one to sting and the other not to be held: but men’s tongues sting against nature and therefore they are unnatural” (Anger 41).
- 50 Man is also unnatural according to Anger because, contrary to what happens in the physical world where all things are dual and can alternate between good and evil, his essence is simple and bad; this runs counter to what Lyly argues (89) through the examples of the scorpion and the *nerium oleander*: “The property of the chameleon is to change himself; But man always remaineth at one stay, and is never out of the predicaments of dishonesty and inconstancy. The stinging of the scorpion is cured by the scorpion, whereby it seems that there is some good nature in them. But men never leave stinging till they see the death of honesty” (Anger 41). Through the chameleon simile, Anger does not only contest Lyly’s vision of male multiplicity. She may also be referring to Pico della Mirandola who argued in his treatise *De hominis dignitate* (1486) that the distinctive power of man consisted in being mutable and therefore free, contrary to all other natural creatures, plants and animals, who “lead their lives within a uniform and ever-repeated rhythm of existence” (Cassirer 330).
- 51 Pico had himself used the chameleon imagery: “Who does not admire this our chameleon, or who, at least feels greater admiration for anything else ? Asclepius the

Athenian quite rightly said that, on account of his mutability and his self-changing nature, the human being is symbolically represented by Proteus in the mysteries” (Gildenhard 210). In light of such a praise of the unlimited human power of self-transformation, Anger’s criticism reads as a denial of man’s changeability. It brings them back to their bestial nature as sexual harassers and to the Fall. Conversely, it heralds the ensuing sexual perdition of women. This takes Anger back to the earlier medieval and early modern religious debate about man’s irredeemable sinfulness.

- 52 This argument is a clear riposte to Lyly’s dual rehabilitating vision of mankind, but Anger does not stop here as she finally contends that man has become an oddity in the natural world by forgetting that he is a political animal. Anger’s demonstration has clear Aristotelian undertones, for it is based on the idea that misogynists like Euphues were potentially deserting the very nucleus of the *polis*, the couple formed by the two sexes. In the text, Euphues runs back to his university in Athens where he can seclude himself from the opposite sex and be in what he regards as good company. Anger views this move as the last step of a full dehumanization for, “without our care they lie in their beds as dogs in litter and go like lousy mackerel swimming in the heat of summer” (Anger 39). It is true that she invites her female addressees, “The Gentlewomen of England” and “All women in general” to join her in a private conference: “Let us secretly, our selves with our selves, consider how and in what they that are our worst enemies are both inferior unto us and most beholden unto our kindness” (Anger 39). But she has no intention to break up humanity into two irreconcilable groups. On the contrary, she chooses, once more, to follow the animal model and invites her fellow women to re-create an orderly society based on reason and where each sex should be treated according to their contribution: “For as it is reason that the hens should be served first which both lay the eggs and hatch the chickens; so it were unreasonable that the cocks which tread them should be kept clean without meat” (Anger 43).
- 53 Like other women’s advocates in the Elizabethan debate, however, she emphasizes here the importance of maternity, to counter the negative image of women as consumers of male goods and services (Miller 161-162). The same point was made by Edward Gosynhyll in *Mulierum Paeon* (1542) four decades earlier (Henderson & McManus 162). In the line of defence that attributed the idle vanity of consumption to surfeiting jade-like men (Miller 172), the hen turns out to be a fruitful element of comparison, as an image of productive domesticity, also suggesting a caring mother and her maternal responsibilities.

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- 54 When the *Querelle des femmes* started with Christine de Pizan’s *Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), it was argued that the animal world could offer an inspiring lesson to those who spoke ill of women, for it ignored the subjugation of one sex to the other (Dulac 186). The Tudor controversy studied here shows on the contrary that the animal world became an inspiring model for both misogynists and philogynists. Theoretically, animal metaphors are used to describe relations between the two sexes both positively and negatively, to criticize or justify the early modern patriarchal social system and to place both sexes along an ethical hierarchy. They make the pamphlets more lively, but they also display the pessimism of their authors and their conception of biological

determinism that leaves little scope for improvement in the relationships between women and men. Both pamphleteers, however, eventually reaffirm the boundary between humans and animals and here, as elsewhere, animals are figurative vehicles for moral instruction (Hassig xi). This may be where Lily and Anger find a common ground that both reunites men and women.

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NOTES

1. Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 318, fol. 13^v, <https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/bbb/0318/13v>.
2. Aberdeen Bestiary, Univ. Lib. MS 24, <http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast536.htm>. "On a certain mountain in the east, there are fire-bearing stones which are called in Greek terrobolem; they are male and female. When they are far from each other, the fire within them does not ignite. But when by chance the female draws near to the male, the fire is at once kindled, with the result that everything around the mountain burns. For this reason, men of God, you who follow this way of life, stay well clear of women, lest when you and they approach each other, the twin flame be kindled in you both and consume the good that Christ has bestowed upon you. For there are angels of Satan, always on the offensive against the righteous; not only holy men but chaste women too."
3. "Il y a plus de différence de tel homme à tel homme qu'il n'y a de tel homme à telle bête."
4. In sophistry, retort consists in turning the arguments of one's adversary back against themselves.
5. *Odyssey*, 17.290-327; 19.226-31, 391-469; 21.217-25; 23.73-7; 24.330-5.

ABSTRACTS

Jane Anger's *Protection for Women* (1589), the first defence in English written by a female authorial persona, is part of the controversy known as the *Querelle des femmes*. As such, it posits an opponent whose arguments are rebutted. In this paper, this opponent, whose identity remains uncertain, is considered to be John Lyly in his *Cooling Card for Philautus* (1578). Both texts are analyzed through the bestiaries they build to define both female nature and male nature. In a first part, it analyzes the philosophical stakes of these animal similes. In a second part, it discusses Lyly's defence of the gender order based on his positioning of the female sex at the boundary between the human group and the animal group. Finally, it shows how Anger retorted by demonstrating that misogyny and misogamy were taking men straight back to bestiality.

La première défense en anglais écrite par une persona autorale féminine, Jane Anger, sous le titre *Protection for Women* (1589) appartient à la controverse connue sous le nom de *Querelle des femmes*. À ce titre, elle envisage un opposant dont elle récuse les arguments. Dans cet article, l'opposant, dont l'identité réelle demeure incertaine, est John Lyly dans sa *Cooling Card for Philautus* (1578). Les deux textes sont analysés à travers les bestiaires qu'ils construisent pour

définir les natures féminine et masculine. Dans un premier temps, il analyse les enjeux philosophiques de ces comparaisons animales. Dans un second temps, il étudie comment la défense par Lyly de l'ordre des sexes se fonde sur le positionnement du sexe féminin à la frontière entre l'humain et l'animal. Enfin, il établit comment Anger déconstruit l'attaque de son adversaire en démontrant que la misogynie et la misogamie ramènent les hommes au rang des bêtes.

INDEX

Mots-clés: Jane Anger, John Lily, bestiaire, ordre des sexes, misogynie

Keywords: Jane Anger, John Lily, bestiary, gender order, misogyny

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Armel Dubois-Nayt est Maîtresse de conférences à l'Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin. Elle travaille sur les théories autour du pouvoir des femmes à la période moderne en Écosse et en Angleterre, et plus généralement sur l'histoire des femmes en Grande-Bretagne au début de la période moderne. Elle a récemment co-dirigé le numéro 34 d'*Études Épistémè* consacrés aux sens dans la construction du genre. Elle a signé plusieurs articles sur John Knox, Marie Stuart, George Buchanan, Marie de Guise, Ann Dowriche et Jane Anger. Ses travaux récents dans le cadre de ses activités au sein de la SIEFAR ont porté sur la querelle des femmes et elle a édité les troisième et quatrième volumes consacrés à ce vaste débat avec Nicole Dufournaud et Anne Paupert : *Revisiter la « Querelle des femmes ». Discours sur l'égalité / inégalité des sexes, de 1400 à 1600*, Saint-Étienne, PUSE, 2013, avec Marie-Élisabeth Henneau et Rotraud Von Kulessa, *Revisiter la « Querelle des femmes ». Discours sur l'égalité / inégalité des sexes en Europe, de 1400 aux lendemains de la Révolution*, Saint-Étienne, PUSE, 2016. Elle travaille actuellement à la rédaction d'une monographie sur Marie Stuart (1542-1587) dans la querelle des femmes.