beauty and sweetness, unlike pitch and rhythm, are not accessible "by numbers." In the next chapter I consider a sliver of theoretical evidence that the presence of human nightingales—instrumentalists or singers who did not conform to the orthodox requirements for being proper musicians—was noted and appreciated.

2

Birdsong and Human Singing

The theological orthodoxy of medieval music theory differentiates the type of *vox* ("voice" or "note") proper to *musica harmonica* (singing) from the ostensibly musical but nonlinguistic voices of birds on account of the rationality that is natural only to the human animal. Music-theoretical testimony, however, also bears witness to the converse impulse: to praise the good singer's voice by likening it to birdsong conceived positively as natural music, and to characterize singers as birds. This impulse is not strong, is metaphorical rather than literal, and rarely receives unequivocal expression. The more orthodox anthropocentric view of song outlined in chapter 1 is far more powerful. The "birdsinger" view is present, nonetheless, and is facilitated by a certain duality inherent in the conception and value of nature and the liminal place of humans within the natural world. The contested and problematic *nature of nature*—a dittography which sums up two of the key senses of the word—is fundamental to understanding the potentially disruptive use of birdsong, both as a verbal example and as a mimetic musical one, in relation to human singing. In this chapter I examine the problem of medieval nature, the scraps of evidence for positive accounts of birdsong in both music-theoretical writing and the texts of musical pieces, and the increasing centrality of the nightingale in particular as a means of figuring poetic "singing" in later medieval literary culture as a whole.

Natural Talent and the Liberal Arts

For much of the Middle Ages the oral performance of poems is signaled by two interchangeable verbs corresponding to the verbs *to sing* and *to say*, and

with nouns derived from them denoting the object that is performed (sung or said). We have seen how the intertwining of aspects that are separate in today's linguistic and musical practices sponsored synergies between the arts of grammar and music. As the artificial (*per artem*) ordering of something natural to humans—language—grammar is a human art whose rational practice is a worthy reflection of the natural talents of its practitioners. By implication, music has a similar relation to nature, though one complicated by the part of music that is not part of spoken language: its discrete pitches.

In his defense of grammar, the *Metalogicon* (1159), John of Salisbury sets out to answer a critic who thinks that the teaching of grammar is merely the "fallacious profession of the verbose, which dissipates the natural talents of many persons, blocks the gateway to philosophical studies, and excludes both sense and success from all undertakings."[1] He calls this critic Cornificius, punning that he caws ("cornicetur") his misdirected and false accusations against the teachers of the trivium. As appendix 1.2 shows, the sound of the raven or crow is a frequent example in grammatical discourse of literate but inarticulate sound. Like that of birds, the merely "natural" language of those who have not studied grammar is ineloquent and, by implication, meaningless nonsense.[2] John claims that however naturally eloquent a person may be, learning will improve such a gift and neglect worsen it. To illustrate his point, he cites Horace's *Ars poetica*:

> Ingenio fieret laudabile carmen, an arte
> quaesitum est: ego nec studium sine diuite uena,
> nec rude quid possit uideo ingenium; alterius sic
> altera poscit opem res, et coniurat amice.

The question is raised whether a poem [*carmen*] is due to nature [*ingenio*] or art;
But I neither see what study can do in the absence of natural talent,
Nor what natural talent [*ingenium*] can accomplish without cultivation,
So much does one demand the assistance of the other, and so closely do they coöperate.[3]

Horace's words imply a balance between art and nature, with both required. John's gloss slants this toward his own purpose by arguing that natural talent should indeed be cultivated, but that those not blessed by nature should study even more carefully to gain any possible benefit from art. Art is thus of universal assistance, although nature's role is acknowledged. *Natura* is, however, equated with *ingenium*, that is, with the native—and thus rational—quality of

1. John of Salisbury, *The Metalogicon* (trans. McGarry), 31.
2. Ibid., 26.
3. Ibid., 30. Compare *Metalogicon* 1.8 (ed. Hall), 27; and Horace, *De arte poetica*, ll. 408–11, which uses the synonym "natura" for "ingenium" at the start of this passage.

the human mind. In effect, John is engaging with a commonplace of the Latin didascalic tradition, also present in Cicero, Quintilian, Augustine, Boethius, and Hugh of St. Victor, in which the relative values of natural talent (*natura* or *ingenium*), practice (*exercitium*), and art or discipline (*ars* or *disciplina*) are discussed.[4] For medieval monks this is not just, as it was for antique readers, for the purpose of oratorical excellence but is also for moral excellence, in which the understanding of the *artes* is a tool for the acquisition of virtue.[5] Thus, although all three are deemed necessary, the order (nature, practice, art) is not just chronological but marks a clear ranking of their importance and value, with *ars* greatly outranking *natura*.

Of course, it is unsurprising that the *Metalogicon*, a treatise designed to combat a perceived downgrading of the trivium, should promulgate such a view. What is more unexpected is that a later medieval treatise on poetry, a form central to the arts of eloquence in the trivium, seems to advance an opposing one. At the end of the fourteenth century, Eustache Deschamps seemingly elevates the role of natural talent over that of art, and moreover associates poetry directly with the liberal art of music rather than considering it as belonging to grammar. Despite his realignment of poetry within the liberal arts, Deschamps's 1391 *L'Art de dictier* has usually been held to reflect, or even to bring about, a "divorce" between poetry and melody, words and music. The reason for this is apparent on a cursory inspection of his definition of the two kinds of music, the artificial and the natural, although the preeminent place of *sung* poetry with respect to these definitions has been underplayed in modern readings of this work.[6] Most strikingly for the present purpose, Deschamps clearly values the natural over the artificial. He explains that artificial music

4. See the discussion of Cicero, *De oratore* 1.4.14; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 3, v. 1; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 11.25; Boethius, *In topica Ciceronis commentaria* 6; *PL* 64, 1168C; and Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon* 3.6, in Ivan Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text: A Commentary to Hugh's Didascalicon* (Chicago, 1993), 51.
5. See John of Salisbury, *The Metalogicon*, 33–38, 51; and John V. Fleming, "Muses of the Monastery," *Speculum* 78 (2003): 1071–1106.
6. Critics tend to get involved in questions about Deschamps's musical competence, whether or not he wrote any music, and what inferences to draw from the conclusion that he did not. The views of Kenneth Varty, "Deschamps' *Art de dictier*," *French Studies* 19 (1965): 164–68, and Dragonetti, "'La poésie . . . ceste musique naturele,'" are summarized in Eustache Deschamps, *L'Art de dictier* (ed. and trans. Sinnreich-Levi), 9–15. Sinnreich-Levi follows these in seeing Deschamps as freeing lyric from musical "accompaniment" but does not note that he is simply finding a way of talking about the words of a song separate from the music, just as musicians have already by this period developed a way of talking about (and notating) the melody separate from the words. While it is true that he ranks just words over just music, this is merely a replication of the grammarians' rating of language over non-language. Moreover, the word *polyphony* tends to be used in its Bakhtinian sense to claim an (analogous?) musicality for Deschamps's large and varied output. See Catherine A. Jewers, "*L'Art de musique et le gai sentement*: Guillaume de Machaut, Eustache Deschamps, and the Medieval Poetic Tradition," in *Eustache Deschamps, French Courtier Poet: His Work and His World*, ed. Deborah M. Sinnreich-Levi (New York, 1998), 163–80. The danger in this is that the "phone" in Bakhtin's use of "polyphony" is effectively *vox* in the

> is called artificial because of its art. Because the simplest man in the world may learn by means of its six *notae* [i.e., the *voces* or hexachordal syllables as memorial markers], which are *ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la,* [and] by the shape of notes, clefs, and lines, to perform, to harmonize, to do octaves, to do fifths, to do thirds, to do the tenor, [and] to discant—or at least he can learn enough (supposing that he doesn't have a voice fit for performing or doing good harmony) to know and be able to recognize the concords and discords with all the art of this science. By which [art], and by the *notae* mentioned above, harmony and various sounds are given to steel, iron, wood, and metal, by variously interposed alloys of tin, lead, bronze, and copper, as may be seen in the sound of bells put into various clocks, which, by the striking of various hammers, give concordant sounds according to the aforesaid six *notae*, offering sequences and other pieces of chant of the Holy Church.[7]

By contrast, the other kind of music

> is called natural because it cannot be learned by anyone if his own natural instinct does not bring him to it. It is an oral music of performing metrical words, sometimes in lays, sometimes balades, sometimes in simplex or duplex rondeaux. . . . This natural science is called music because [people] read the *dits* and songs that they have made—or the metrified books—orally, and perform them in a voice that is not singing [*chantable*], so that the sweet words recalled and performed vocally in this way please those listeners who hear them.[8]

Deschamps claims that even a man who lacks a suitable voice could learn enough about the science of artificial music to recognize consonances and dissonances. By contrast, the natural music of poetic recitation cannot be taught unless the spirit is naturally inclined to it. The instinctive and natural aspect of

global sense, not that which is specific to *musica*. Such verbal "polyphony" is thus unpitched, nonsinging—very different from the technical musical use of the term.

7. "Est appellee artificiele de son art, car par ses vj notes, qui sont appellees us, re, my, fa, sol, la, l'en puet aprandre a chanter, acorder, doubler, quintoier, tiercoier, tenir, deschanter, par figure de notes, par clefs et par lignes, le plus rude homme du monde, ou au moins tant faire que, suppose ore qu'il n'eust pas la voix habile pour chanter ou bien acorder, scaroit il et pourroit congnoistre les accors ou discors avecques tout l'art d'icelle science, par laquelle et les notes dessus dictes, l'en acorde et donne l'en son divers aux aciers, aux fers, aux boys et aux metaulx, par diverses infusions interposees d'estain, de plomb, d'arain et de cuivre, si comme il puet apparoir es sons des cloches mises en divers orloges, lequels par le touchement des marteaulx donnent sons accordables selon les dictes vj notes, proferans les sequences et autres choses des chans de saincte eglise." Deschamps, *L'Art de dictier*, 60, 62.

8. "Est appellee naturele pour ce qu'elle ne puet estre aprinse a nul, se son propre couraige naturelment ne s'i applique, et est une musique de bouche en proferant paroules metrifiees, aucunefoiz en laiz, autrefoiz en balades, autrefrois en rondeaulx cengles et doubles . . . est appelle musique ceste science naturele pour ce que les diz et chansons par eulx faiz ou les livres metrifiez se lisent de bouche, et proferent par voix non pas chantable, tant que les douces paroles ainsis faictes et recordees par voix plaisant [i.e., plaisent] aux escoutans qui les oyent." Ibid., 62, 64.

performing poetry orally makes it unteachable; it may be nurtured, but it is essentially an inborn skill. Poetry set to music—song—is not included in either category. Deschamps carefully defines artificial music in a way that does not mention its having a text; rather, it is theoretically grounded melody, the rational, teachable, and thus artificial part of the sonic whole. Sung poetry represents "a marriage" between these two species of art and nature—species we might label (wordless) melody and recitation. For Deschamps, both are types of *musique* and both are similar in that they are "performed and articulated by the sweetness of *vox* and through an open mouth."[9] Artificial music (performance of melody) is ennobled by the text to become more worthy than it would be alone. Similarly, natural music (the recitation of poetry) is "embellished by the melody and by the untexted tenor, triplum, and contratenor of artificial music. And nevertheless, each of these two [words and harmonized melody] is pleasing to hear by itself; one of them can be performed by *vox* and art, without words, and the other of these types of songs may be often recited in many places where they are very willingly heard, in which the song of artificial music would not always have a place."[10]

Although most commentators, including Deborah Sinnreich-Levi, editor of the 1994 edition of the treatise, think that Deschamps is setting out to denigrate music in general, *including singing*, in favor of poetry, this is too strict an understanding of the verb *chanter*, which, like *cantare*, signifies musical performance on any instrument, including, but not limited to, the voice. For example, Richard de Fournival says that the three types of sirens "cantent"—perform—on trumpet, harps, and voices, respectively.[11] In fact, Deschamps's conclusion is that the two types of music—*naturele* and *artificiele*—*together* are superior to either alone, although each has its own place and is pleasing in its own right. As John of Salisbury pointed out in citing Horace, nature and art together are best, but in contrast to John, for Deschamps nature is better than art. Deschamps's identification of poetry as a natural skill is familiar from Boethius' middle category of musician. Both Deschamps and Boethius place the poet above the player of instruments, although for Boethius this is because instrumentalists are mechanicals, ignorant of the liberal art of music. For Deschamps the instrumentalist has knowledge of the practical art of music, but

9. "Toutes sont prononcees et pointoyees par doucour de voix et ouverture de bouche." Ibid., 64.

10. "Les chansons natureles sont delectables et embellies par la melodie et les teneurs, trebles et contreteneurs du chant de la musique artificiele. Et neantmoins est chascune de ces deux plaisant a ouir par soy; et se peut l'une chanter par voix et par art, sanz parole; et aussis les diz des chancons se puent souventefoiz recorder en pluseurs lieux ou ilz sont moult voulentiers ois, ou le chant de la musique artificele n'aroit pas tousiours lieu." Ibid. This implies that the words of *musique naturele* are carried only in the cantus part when set to artificial music.

11. "Et cantent toutes .iij. les unes en buisines, les autres en harpes et les tierces en droites vois; et est lor melaudie tant plaisans." Richard de Fournival, *Bestiaires d'amours* (ed. Segre), 30. See also my discussion in chapter 5 and my comments in chapter 1, note 79.

that knowledge does not elevate him above the naturally gifted poet, whereas for Boethius the poet's reliance on nature had placed him beneath the man who knows music as a liberal art.

The ultimate source of Deschamps's positive valuation of nature over art is his advocacy of the vernacular: he defines French as a natural language and Latin as an artificial one in the context of a poetry treatise written in and concerning the former.[12] Deschamps's opening definition of artificial music specifically treats music as a theoretical *ars*—a man who cannot sing can learn it—but also as the music of instruments played by hands or blown by the breath, in contradistinction to the orality of natural music. Deschamps specifically designates as artificial the music that he mentions at the outset as being made "with the breath of the mouth, and touching of the fingers," before listing a number of musical instruments.[13] Where he does discuss sounding musical performance, it involves the sounds ("sons") of instruments. Even his reference to ecclesiastical chant is not to its singing but rather to its being played on instruments, probably an allusion to the church carillons and mechanical clocks that began to appear in the fourteenth century and often played pieces of chant. In 1321 the Abbey of St. Catherine near Rouen had a "sonnerie" which played the hymn *Conditor alme siderum*. In 1352 the clock of the cathedral in Strasbourg had a mechanism in which the three Wise Men passed the Virgin and Child while the chimes played psalms using ten notes, terminating with a cock crowing from the top of the device.[14]

Deschamps may also have found support for valuing the natural over the artificial from later medieval music theory sources. His valuation of the natural over the artificial corresponds to one already present in the way in which *musica instrumentalis* is subdivided. The triple subdivision of *musica instrumentalis* comprises two kinds of music whose sounds (*soni*) are produced by artificial instruments (*musica organica* and *musica ritmica*) and one, singing (*musica harmonica*), produced by a subset of sound called *vox*. As I will show, music theorists typically deem the natural instrument of voice superior to the sounds of artificial instruments. As in Deschamps's poetics, nature is better than art in terms of the *instrument* of production. Yet, as we have seen in chapter 1, the natural instrument of voice is not unique to humans; it is the sound that is generated by the voices of many animals. Human voices are differentiated from animal voices only because *musica harmonica* is produced strictly *per artem*, using human rationality. In terms of the producing agent's *method* of production, art is superior to nature. The instrument that is used artfully—or artificially—however, is the *natural* instrument of voice, as op-

12. See Deschamps, *L'Art de dictier*, 15–18; and Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, *The Color of Melancholy: The Uses of Books in the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Baltimore, 1997), 6–17.

13. "Par souflement de bouche et touchement de doiz." Deschamps, *L'Art de dictier*, 60.

14. See Alfred Chapuis, *Histoire de la boîte à musique et de la musique mécanique* (Lausanne, 1955), 19–20.

posed to the artificial instruments that generate the other two categories of *musica instrumentalis*.

In an erotic dialogue poem that pursues a protracted conceit in which musical instruction stands for sexual initiation, Deschamps's male speaker claims that he will make his female pupil "chanter par art de nature." This he truly does: the solmization syllables that the discipline of his lesson makes her voice, enact the performance of the music written in her book (vagina) with his pen (penis).[15] In the balade's envoy, the more clerkly voice of the narrator reflects that the young can master this art in three days. This supports both the statement in the *Art de dictier* an art (music or "love") can be taught to anyone (and quickly) and that it uses a natural "instrument" (the voice or the body). Deschamps's choice of three days is even the same as the amount of time that Guido of Arezzo claims it will take for a young boy to learn music using the same solmization system in which Deschamps's music teacher is metaphorically instructing his female charge.[16]

The Natural Instrument in Music Theory

Medieval music theorists typically comment that the natural instrument—the human voice—is superior to other, artificial kinds of *musica instrumentalis* since it is made by a living instrument rather than by either a dead one (skin drums, reeds, gut strings, wooden instruments) or an inanimate one (such as metal trumpets). Aegidius of Zamora, who offers an extensive section on particular types of artificial instruments, specifically equates his division of *musica instrumentalis* into living and dead with the more common theoretical one into natural and artificial:

> Instrumental music is called living if living instruments produce it, or dead if it is produced by dead instruments such as the *vielle* [fiddle], *cithara* [harp], organ, or other instruments of this type, which we will speak of at the end of this treatise. Or, to speak as other theorists do, the instruments that allow the practice of music are of two kinds: natural instruments and artificial instruments. Natural, as in the arteries, tongue, palate, lips, and lungs that form the voice. . . . Artificial instruments give an artificial sound: that is the case with citharas, organs, vielles, and other musical instruments that are made by artifice and not by nature, and we see that they give an artificial rather than a natural sound: our perception tells us this distinction.[17]

15. Deschamps, *Oeuvres complètes* (ed. Queux de Saint-Hilaire and Raynaud), 6:113–15, balade no. 1169; also in Jean-Patrice Boudet and Hélène Millet, eds., *Eustache Deschamps en son temps* (Paris, 1997), 226–28.

16. *The Early Christian Period*, 107.

17. Johannes Aegidius de Zamora, *Ars musica*, 60, 62. The ellipsis between the definitions of the two types of instrument contains Aegidius' discussion of discrete and indiscrete *vox*: "Boethius says that the sound of natural instruments, according to the formation of the voice, is apt to give

The voice is clearly the premier instrument of the Middle Ages and does much to promote the positive value of *natura*. Jacques of Liège, for example, comments that natural instruments are more perfect ("perfectiora") than artificial instruments, which can never attain the amount of melody ("modica melodia") of which the voice is capable.[18]

The positive use of "natural" in this context sets up a binary opposition in which "artificial" represents the negative side of the divide. The artificial is lifeless, dead, or inanimate. This is in direct conflict with the relative values of the same two terms in the binary opposition discussed at the end of the last chapter, "per artem" / "per usum," which is used to separate the rational language-using *musicus* from the merely imitative, bestial *cantor*. And birds are implicated on both sides: they have sweet, natural voices comprising rational pitches, but they are imitative, irrational, languageless beasts. On the one hand, the voice links humans to nature, placing the singer above all artificial musical instruments. On the other hand, the owner of that natural instrument must learn the art of music so as to differentiate his practice from the irrational, instinctive voices of natural creatures.

As discussed in chapter 1, however, the element that makes the music of the human voice most worthy is not its display of the discrete pitches taught by the art of music, but its capacity to perform language, which is indicative of the rational, understanding agent who is producing the song. Yet language, too, is a natural human capacity to the extent that rationality is considered part of human nature. In particular, the increased use and status of vernacular languages in the period from the twelfth to the fourteenth century promoted the idea that such languages are natural. Dante conceives of the vernacular as one's natural language even though he turns to the seriousness of artificial grammar (Latin) to write his treatise in favor of such natural verse; and Deschamps writes the first extant *vernacular* treatise on vernacular poetry. But being natural does not guarantee goodness, despite a strong literary and poetic tradition for seeing nature in a positive light. The wider history of the problematic term "nature" now deserves some attention.

Art and the Nature of Nature

The strand of medieval thinking that sees the natural (in opposition to the unnatural) as good is so strong in poetic literature that recent scholars have

a harmonious melody by the dual action of tension and resolution. But, instead, a distinction must be made: the sound of natural instruments that give voice is twofold—discrete or indiscrete. Discrete if it takes account of differentiation and *consonantia*; indiscrete if it does not, as in laughing, moaning, or gestures." The *soni* of artificial instruments can also be discrete or indiscrete, but only discrete sounds pertain to music, whether made by art of by nature ("siue fiat arte uel etiam per naturam," 62). Note that this is ambiguous as to whether it is merely shorthand for "by artificial or natural instruments" or whether it means "by knowledge of the art" and "by natural instinct."

18. Jacques de Liège, *Speculum musicae*, 1:54.

sought to counter its power. The polemical frame of Hugh White's study of nature in the later medieval English literary tradition points out that the natural, as well as being the positive opposite of the unnatural, can be the negative opposite of the rational, making "nature" a "moral middle term." The opposition to animal nature of human rational understanding has been seen to be uppermost in medieval music-theoretical writings. The negative use of beasts—Augustine's nightingale, Guido's she-ass, and Marchetto's crow and cuckoo—promotes the anthropocentric rationalism of singing. Thus the usual picture of nature in music theory seems opposite to that most common in literature. But an inherent tension has already been noted in the use and value of the natural in music treatises. In short, the song's (discrete) sound is the "artificial" product of a (rational, human) producer operating *per artem*, yet its production utilizes the most worthy natural instrument (the voice). White's analysis of the shifting perspectives on nature's morality that existed in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries is thus useful:

> Very frequently, to be sure, the natural is good and right. A standard conception is that the natural law enshrines the moral dictates of natural reason, another, consonant with this, that the natural law is to be identified with the moral commands of the Old Law and the Gospel. One may do naturally the things of the law, in the Pauline phrase, because Nature has endowed one with reason. But it is also perfectly standard to see the natural as what the human being shares with the animal and this animal side of the human being does not necessarily (though it may) press towards goals reason would endorse and is therefore not guaranteed to direct to what is good. The medieval understanding of Nature as it bears upon human beings (if we are to think of a single understanding) is unstable at just this point. What is it truly natural for the human being to do—what indeed is a human being's true nature? Should one regard the human being as fundamentally rational, as *rationale* first and *animal* second, or should it be the other way round? If the other way round, can the natural order still be seen as morally benign?[19]

Comparisons with the natural world are thus poised between those made by thinkers who, like Alan of Lille, see man's natural part as including reason (which then means that sin is unnatural), and those of later vernacular authors, who tend to think that reason is separate from a more purely animal nature (sin is consequently natural, and thus nature is sinful). The fourteenth-century English poet John Gower, for example, mainly understands "nature" to mean natural instinct, the unthinking, impulsive actions of an animal nature. Similarly, White detects frustration and disappointment in the poetry of

19. White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, 67.

Chaucer, who is writing within a cultural world in which love and reason are not, and ultimately cannot be, harmonized.

Literature exhibits an increasing interest in nature during the fourteenth century, and an increasing recognition of the tensions between its two potential values. Discussion often centers on the appetites of the sensual part of the soul, which should accord with reason if both reason and animal sense are natural to humans. While it is thus natural to desire unrestrained sexual activity or endless food, it is not morally correct in the light of human reason, as Aquinas, for example, stresses.[20] Theologians proposed that the opposition of (animal) nature and reason is natural to man's fallen state, in which his desires are unchecked by now lost grace. Animals do not need reason to restrain their appetites because nature does this for them. Animals could even serve as exemplars of the naturalness of temperate desire since they mate only in season, and certain species pair for life.[21] The birds in Chaucer's *Parlement of Fowles* ultimately celebrate the "acord" of their seasonal mating by singing a roundel—a circular musico-poetic form with a text celebrating the endless natural cycle of the seasons. The implication is that birds mate in spring only, and only for procreation: they are moral, or at least morally neutral, natural creatures.[22] Nature ensures the continuation of the creatures of created nature by making sexual desire part of their innate nature (symbolized by the heart-shaped bellows in Nature's forge in figure 1.2). Yet human reason is able to separate pleasure and procreation so that the natural desire for pleasure works against the natural function of sex in prompting non-inseminative sexual acts for gratification alone. Modern commentators have focused on such issues of procreation and sexual sin; these concerns will be treated further in chapters 4 and 5.[23] Here I am more concerned with creation than with procreation, and specifically with artistic creation in enacted forms (performance), including enactment through writing.[24] As types of production or reproduction, performance and writing are linked within discussions of nature, as has already been noted in the work of Dante and Deschamps.

20. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province), Second part of the second part, Q. 148.2; and chapter 5, note 74.

21. White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, 256.

22. Alternatively, they are "foul" because they go to it without moderation when the season is right. This is the implication in Clanvowe of the cuckoo's abstinence, which has deliberate intertextual links to Chaucer; see chapter 5. In the context of the *Parlement*, the formel, who refuses to take a mate, is symbolic of human free will; if human beings have rationality by nature and yet can use it to go against the workings of nature (either to abstain in spring or to have nonreproductive sex), this pits the nature of man against itself. Ibid., 236–43.

23. See ibid.; also Jan M. Ziolkowski, *Alan of Lille's Grammar of Sex: The Meaning of Grammar to a Twelfth-Century Intellectual* (Cambridge, 1985); and the essays in Ziolkowski, *Obscenity*.

24. The classic text on the medieval page as a performance space is Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca, 1987). For similar approaches that include a greater focus on the place of music and musical notation in this bookish performance, see Emma Dillon, *Medieval Music-Making and the "Roman de Fauvel"* (Cambridge, 2002); and Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France: From Jean Renart to Guillaume de Machaut* (Cambridge, 2002).

The works of nature are apt for man to copy for two reasons: first, his creativity shows his rationality, but second, they themselves are closer to God than anything he can produce. The created products of human ingenuity are thus of unstable value. If the human propensity for *fictio* produces objects *per artem* using the rationality that elevates them above the rest of creation, one might expect, therefore, that the artistic rational song of man will be superior to the natural irrational songs of the birds. This, as we have seen, is the orthodox position propagated in music theory and corresponds to the negative use of birds and beasts as natural *cantores* from which the true *musicus* should seek distinction. Human creations, however, are a third degree of creativity, following both the Idea or Pattern in the mind of God and the "bringing forth" of the works of nature. In this analysis, birdsong would be closer to God's Idea than human singing, and human music making should strive to imitate more closely the music of nature.

The problematic character of human creativity thus forms part of the threefold Aristotelian hierarchy, mentioned briefly in chapter 1. This was transmitted to the later Middle Ages by texts such as Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*.[25] The natural world reflects the Idea present in the mind of God at the Creation itself. God created nature, and the operative force of "nature," often personified as Natura in her forge, the vicar of God, enacts the divine will to produce a world that mirrors his Idea. Of the created nature that Nature stamps or mints in her forge, humans alone are endowed with the rationality to undertake their own artistic creations. These creations are at a further remove from the Idea, a testimony to rational human skill, but essentially an adulterate imitation of nature. The creations of nature, such as the song of birds, are both *less* praiseworthy than song made through human artifice because they are irrational, and *more* praiseworthy because they are closer to the mind of God.

Hugh of St. Victor's tripartition of nature has much older philosophical roots in the Plotinian and pseudo-Dionysian philosophy of a universal *natura* evident in the fourfold division of nature given by John Scottus Eriugena.[26] This alternative picture of nature not as a reminder of their base animal nature from which humans should strive to differentiate themselves but as a model of harmony, also influenced a particular strand of music theory.[27]

25. See Hugh of St. Victor, *The Didascalicon* 1.10 (trans. Taylor). This book was highly influential; the composer Philippe de Vitry is known to have lent his copy of it to the theorist Johannes de Muris. See Lawrence Gushee, "New Sources for the Biography of Johannes de Muris," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 22 (1969): 13.

26. For an introduction to this philosopher in English, see Deirdre Carabine, *John Scottus Eriugena* (Oxford, 2000).

27. See Calvin M. Bower, "Natural and Artificial Music: The Origins and Development of an Aesthetic Concept," *Musica Disciplina* 25 (1971): 17–33, on which much of what follows is based.

John Scottus Eriugena, *Natura*, and *Musica naturalis*

Writing at a time of East-West dialogue in the late ninth century, John Scottus Eriugena was an important translator of the works of Dionysius the Areopagite (now known as Pseudo-Dionysius) from Greek into Latin. Eriugena's own metaphysics was thereby influenced by the blend of Gnostic and Plotinian ideas that he found in Pseudo-Dionysius. Using the process of *diairetikē* (effectively positing paired binary oppositions such as those present in Priscian's fourfold division of *vox*), Eriugena classified the four species of universal nature according to whether or not it could create and whether or not it was also created. This effectively gives the types of creation found in Hugh of St. Victor, with the addition of a fourth "impossible" species, which is not created and cannot create and therefore cannot be (a feature of no relevance to the current discussion).[28] Like other Neoplatonists, Pseudo-Dionysius, and therefore Eriugena, viewed the material world as an image of divine harmony. In a manner influenced by Plotinus, the world's multiplicity has an underlying unity: God is all things and not all things, he is immanent and transcendent. The invisible and incomprehensible divine nature "becomes visible and comprehensible only when it creates itself as other in an other."[29] This theophany affects an understanding of *musica*, and in particular the ordering of music's subspecies differs from that of more standard Pythagorean Neoplatonists, such as Boethius. Most notably affected is the place of human song, which now partakes of a complete reality that is unified in God. As God, the creator of universal nature, is the ultimate cause from which this reality proceeds and to which it will return, the natural is clearly valued over the artificial, and music made by humans is at some level part of a greater unity with the music of other natural creatures and of the heavens.

According to the holistic worldview in Pseudo-Dionysius, ecclesiastical songs are transmitted from heaven to the terrestrial human singer, who then transmits their rational harmonies in a form that makes sense in the sublunary world, that is, as sound. In calling this kind of music *musica naturalis*, in contrast to the *musica artificialis* that is the product of human invention, John Scottus Eriugena differentiated ecclesiastical song from the art of *musica* by which it was taught. His *Commentary on Dionysius' Celestial Hierarchy* glosses the idea that visible beauty reflects invisible beauty by means of a tripartite list: the highest light is intelligible and invisible and illuminates the soul; the middle light is natural and shines in the sun and other heavenly bodies; the lowest light—artificial light—is made by man in his artifices.[30] Comparing this with Hugh of St. Victor's three "works" and their attendant types of creation would suggest that ecclesiastical song is not an adulterate creation of man but a creation of nature in a more direct imitation of the divine.

28. Carabine, *John Scottus Eriugena*, 30–66.

29. Ibid., 49.

30. Bower, "Natural and Artificial Music," 24–26.

Via commentaries on Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, whose ninth book deals with *musica*, John Scottus Eriugena's ideas influenced the epistolary *De harmonica institutione* of the ninth-century music theorist Regino of Prüm.[31] Regino places the music of the human voice in the same category as that of motion of the heavens. For him, natural music is "that which is made by no instruments nor by the touch of fingers, nor by any touch or instigation of man: it is modulated by nature alone under divine inspiration teaching the sweet modes, such as there is in the motion of the sky or in the human voice." In addition, he reports that "some say there is a third type, namely, the voice or sound of irrational creatures."[32]

These three types of natural music contrast with artificial music, which is thought up by man's artifice and played on string, wind, and percussion instruments. Regino's division would thus group birdsong with human singing, with both ranking higher than, but only explicable in terms of, the artificial music of five tones and two semitones, the *septem discrimina vocum* of the octave, as taught in the art of *musica*.[33] Birdsong and human singing—and Regino is writing specifically of ecclesiastical song—are both natural sonic reflections of a divine music. Because the root of Regino's theory of natural music is in holistic Plotinian cosmography, he even expresses a lack of surprise that music making is natural to humans, given that some bird species practice a manner of song. "It is no wonder . . . the influence of music is so great among men," Regino says, "since also birds, such as the nightingales [*lusciniae*], as the swans, and others, also practice a certain method of musical art in song [*cantum veluti quadam disciplina musicae artis exerceant*]. Of swans Virgil says: 'With their throats they produce the modes, etc.' "[34] This view, deriving from Macrobius, differs from the more usual idea found, for example, in Isidore, in which natural creatures may be acted upon by music but cannot author it. Regino does go on to talk about music's effects on animals, but it is highly notable that he first mentions their practice as a kind of music.[35] Chant

31. Regino probably knew the longer and widely distributed commentary of Remigius of Auxerre, who was influenced by John Scottus Eriugena. See ibid., 25; and Susan Boynton, "The Sources and Significance of the Orpheus Myth in *Musica Enchiriadis* and Regino of Prüm's *Epistola de Harmonica Institutione*," *Early Music History* 18 (1999): 47–74.

32. See Bower, "Natural and Artificial Music," 21. Regino of Prüm, *De harmonica institutione* (ed. and trans. LeRoux), 32.

33. This tag from Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.646, describes the notes used by the priestly citharist to accompany dancing. It was widely cited, significantly in Guido of Arezzo's *Micrologus*, 62. One of the chief tasks of the Guidonian system was to reconcile the four qualities of the Dasian system with the seven different letter-name notes that arose from positing octave equivalence. See Norman Carey and David Clampitt, "Regions: A Theory of Tonal Spaces in Early Medieval Treatises," *Journal of Music Theory* 40 (1996), 125–26, 144n20.

34. Regino, *De harmonica*, 43. This is part of an unattributed quotation from Macrobius (*Commentarium in somnium Scipionis*, 583; *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, 195) into which the acknowledged citation from Vergil (*Aeneid* 7.701)—which could derive from a glossed copy of Macrobius—has been interpolated. See also chapter 5.

35. For comments on the effects Regino cites, see chapter 5.

was itself commonly viewed as having been taught to Pope Gregory directly by the Holy Spirit, an episode often illustrated iconographically as in figure 2.1, in which a dove sings into the author's ear.[36] This encapsulates the idea of chant being, like the birdsong through which is it mediated, divinely inspired and natural.

Regino's idea that natural music is better than that of the art of *musica* is found up until the early twelfth century as an active aesthetic. After that time the division becomes integrated into the general classification of the species and subspecies of *musica* in a tradition for dividing *musica* that parallels, but is separate from, the Boethian tripartition.[37] This kind of division can be seen, for example, in Johannes and in the *Summa musice*. Artificial music is that reflected in the human body's anatomy (what Boethius would term *musica humana*) and that which is made by strings, vessels, or apertures—that is, by artificial instruments. The former is inaudible and designed by God, the latter is audible and a product of human artifice. Natural music is similarly divided into the inaudible music of the spheres (Boethius' *musica mundana*) and an audible music, which the *Summa musice*, for example, terms *musica humana*. This "human music" is *not* the Boethian concord of soul and body, which has already been classified as an inaudible form of artificial music. Instead it is specifically the music of the human voice, the authors' self-confessed central subject.[38] Perhaps the consideration of vocal music as *musica naturalis* gained support from the classificatory division between natural and artificial instruments within Boethian *musica instrumentalis*. The *Summa musice* verses call the human voice pre-eminent ("prestantius") since "it provides words that carry meaning to lie beneath the note."[39] Paradoxically, the natural instrument is elevated above artificial instruments by its capacity to use language—the very capacity that is a crucial part of the rationality that differentiates human music making from that of the natural world.

36. The interpolated version of Paul the Deacon's life of Gregory mentions the dove in the context of the composition of his *Homilies on Ezekiel*, a version taken from the earliest life of Gregory (by the eighth-century Monk of Whitby). The later version by John the Deacon has this story told about his writings in general in an attempt to stop the posthumous burning of Gregory's books. An Anglo-French life from 1326 uses John's version but describes the dove putting the song more directly into Gregory's mouth by placing its beak between his lips. See Anonymous Monk of Whitby, *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* (ed. and trans. Colgrave), 123, 157n110; *La vie saint Gregore: poème normand du XIVe siècle, publié avec introduction, notes et glossaire* (ed. Sandqvist), 156, ll. 1939–41: "Et, des ce qu'il se reposoit, / La coulombe li reposoit / Son bec dedens sa bouche arriere."

37. See Bower, "Natural and Artificial Music," 32–33.

38. *Summa musice*, 64 (English), 151 (Latin); John, *On Music*, 106–7.

39. *Summa musice*, 62–63 (English), 150–51 (Latin). This treatise is presented as gnomic verses, placed at the center of each page, which are then glossed in surrounding prose. The prose here calls the voice "most worthy [*dignissimum*] because it produces both pitch and words [*et sonum et verba*], while the [other instruments] serve only for sound [*de sono*], not for a note and words [*de voce et verbis*]."

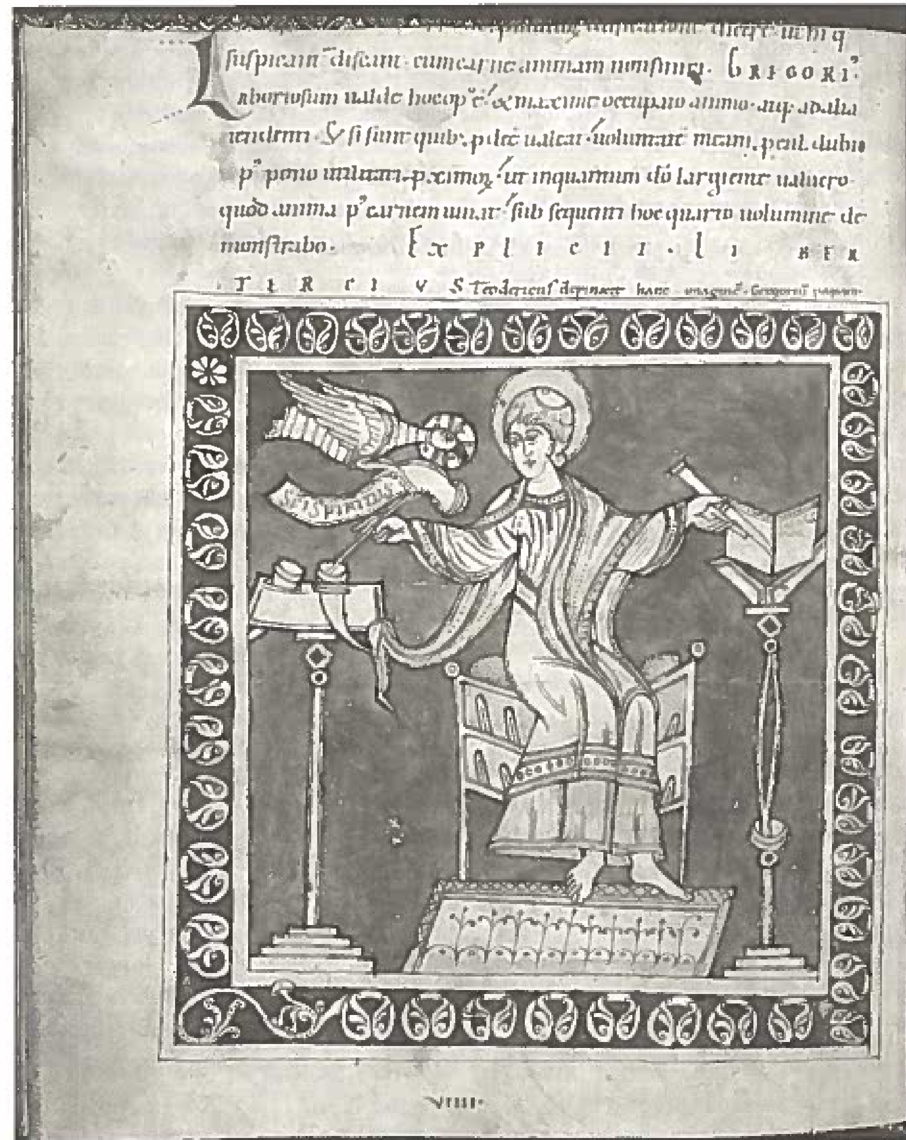

Figure 2.1. Avian musical dictation: Gregory and the dove, ca. 1050, from *GB-Lbl* Harley 3011, f.69v. By permission of the British Library.

By the thirteenth century, the full theological and aesthetic power of Eriugena's theophany was reduced to merely vestigial levels in a classificatory scheme.[40] Nevertheless, the relative value of his terms implicitly challenges the preeminence of *ars* (the rational understanding gained through study) that music treatises set out to inculcate. At a time when an increasingly book-centered literary-poetic culture reflects a growing frustration with natural impulse and an unresolved discord between sense and reason, the quintessentially oral nature of musical performance comes to be figured increasingly as having its most important basis in nature.[41]

For most theorists concerned professionally with defining music and teaching men to sing, birdsong forms a non-music from which to differentiate rationally based human music making. For teachers of the *ars musica*, nature is perfected by virtue of learning. This orthodox voice, however, is not the only one present in the testimony of this period, although the others are palpably fainter (in the case of music theory) or fraught with interpretative difficulties (in the case of literary and musico-poetic sources). It is to these voices that we must now attend if we are to understand the tensions present in the musical practice of this period.

Positive Birds in Late Medieval Music Theory

One way of extolling the virtues of singers' actual vocal practice is to use the equivocal possibilities inherent in the term *natura*, as partly outlined earlier in this chapter. Defending singers from the charge that they sing from habit alone—that is, through the repeated use of a non-intellectual skill, through practice or imitation rather than understanding—can be attempted rhetorically by describing singing *positively* as "natural." Accomplished singers are able to make perfect use of their natural instrument, and to make that use seem, in a positive sense, untutored, artless. Such sweet natural song has an obvious model in the song of birds, but it is necessary to read slightly against the grain of certain texts in order to find the living and natural qualities of the human voice compared positively to birdsong, and its singers approvingly to birds.

40. Bower, "Natural and Artificial Music," 32–33.

41. White does not mention Eustache Deschamps, and it might seem that in his defense of the natural and his emphasis on oral and vocal performance from memory, Deschamps is out of line with the idea of an increasingly bookish literary culture. The importance of nature in poetic composition, however, promotes precisely the same kind of author-centeredness and the personal authenticity of the *je*. He speaks of poetic subjects arising from the amorous desire of the poet—composing "selonc mon sentement," as Machaut terms it; see Elizabeth Eva Leach, "Singing More about Singing Less: Machaut's *Pour ce que tous* (B12)," in *Machaut's Music: New Interpretations*, ed. Elizabeth Eva Leach (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2003), 111–24.

Guido and Augustine

I have explored the opening verses of Guido of Arezzo's *Regulae* to elucidate concepts central to a theoretical tradition that implores singers not to sing from habit (*usus*) alone but to learn the dignified art of *musica*. Addressing the monastic practitioner, Guido claims that the habitual singer might prefer the indiscretely pitched, loud voice of the she-ass to the quieter, discretely pitched voice of the nightingale. Guido places the listener's capacity for recognizing discrete pitches centrally within his pedagogy; in the body of his treatise, the monochord serves much the same purpose—as sounding demonstration—as the nightingale, though with the additional virtue of being under human control. Guido's opening verses do not, however, make a direct comparison between the nightingale and human singing as was seen in Augustine, for whom the nightingale is the negative side of the example, the bestial *cantor* to the human *musicus*. Nevertheless, Guido's exemplary statement of the need for rational knowledge in singing can be read as an implicit acceptance of the musicality of the nightingale. In its vocal quality the nightingale's song displays several of the properties that a human *musicus* should recognize, understand, and reproduce. Even Augustine's negative use of the nightingale figure works only by virtue of the bird *seeming*—that is, to the sense of hearing—to sing a well-measured sweet song in tune with the season.

For Augustine, the nightingale is the negative side of a contrast between knowledge of the liberal art and uninformed practice. In Guido's example it is the positive side of an illustration of the difference between *cantor* and *musicus*. Strictly, it is the human judge of its song's discrete pitches, not the nightingale itself, who is a *musicus*. But lurking in the logic, and by analogy if nothing else, is the suggestion that the ass and the nightingale respectively but obliquely symbolize *cantor* and *musicus*. The nightingale becomes an affirmative image of the naturally gifted musician in contrast to the unmusical braying of the jenny. It implies that the informed *musicus*, far from being the non-practitioner of Boethius or even Augustine, might in the end produce a sweeter song than the uninformed *cantor*; theoretical knowledge, Guido hints, can yield practical advantages.

Augustine and Guido both wish to stimulate in their readers a desire for knowledge of music's rational basis; both detect the same seeming musicality in the nightingale. Augustine's treatise has the pupil reject the bird as an artless, thoughtless, irrational practitioner. By constrast, Guido does not condemn the nightingale as a mere *cantor*; indeed, his exemplum intimates the opposite. Between them, then, Augustine and Guido use the figure of the nightingale in opposite ways; and its two roles here—one positive, one negative—mirror its twofold signification in the literary and devotional discourses discussed later in this chapter.

From Avian Singers to Human Birds: Aegidius of Zamora

The mention of birds in music treatises is a frequent feature of opening chapters treating the definition, discovery or invention, use, and effects of music.[42] With the exception of a theorist such as Regino, who credits birds with a musical *practice* of their own, birds usually feature only passively as being subject to the workings of music's *effects*. One theorist, however, the Paris-trained Spanish Franciscan Johannes Aegidius of Zamora, writing around 1270 as tutor to the son of Alfonso X ("The Wise"), uses birds in the context of music's invention, mentioning the theory that an unnamed philosopher discovered music by listening to the song of the nightingale. Despite being credited with the earliest use of this "commonplace of post-Renaissance music history,"[43] Aegidius' framing comments are in line with the orthodoxies of music theory, in which birdsong is a nonrational, natural phenomenon.[44] He remarks that if indeed it is the case that music was discovered, as some philosophers claim, by listening to the nightingale ("philomela"), "the nightingale knows from natural instinct [*instinctu naturae*] alone the various notes."[45] But when Aegidius returns, as promised, to the nightingale in the next chapter of his treatise—on music's effects—his use of natural instinct seems to be an approving one, despite its context as part of a treatise on the art of music. He resourcefully includes a passage from Pliny's *Natural History*, which describes the variety of the nightingale's singing, presenting the process of its musical education and practice in distinctly anthropomorphized terms:

> We know from observation that *birds swiftly descend to hear a melody, and learn it gladly, and teach their pupils generously*. . . . It is worthy of admiration that in so slight a body there thrives so tenacious a spirit. And it is admirable, too, that from one music of such perfection there flows such a *variety of song*, which is now drawn out, now varied in its inflection, now clear and concise. It issues forth and it returns; it becomes faint, sometimes murmuring to itself; it is full, low, high, focused, repeated, and prolonged. In so little a throat there is as *much variation of song* as in all the refined instruments that the art of man has invented. The song of each nightingale is like that of no other; it is her own unique song. Nightingales compete among themselves in a lively public contest. . . . The younger birds study the sweetness of the nightingale's song, taking in songs which they imitate. The student listens with rapt attention and repeats the corrections, now by singing, now by listening in silence, and now by beginning the song again. *The nightingale wastes little time in eating so that she can enjoy the beauty of her own song. Thus she dies sometimes from singing, and in dying sings.* Occasionally she is observed to exchange the sweetness of her song with that of a musical instrument, *and in order to sing more vigorously she frequently closes her eyes.* But this exquisite music gradually begins to leave off after fifteen days, and the color of the nightingale, just like her song, is altered little by little. There is not to be seen in the winter what existed in the spring, as both song and coloring have changed. *But when reared in the refined surroundings of the palace, she renders her melodies not only in spring, but also in winter, and not just by day but also by night, as she is instructed equally by artifice and by nature.*[46]

The nightingale appears here as a consummate practitioner, able to learn from and in her turn teach others by imitation. Such application through practice is not textual (notated) but nevertheless uses the kind of variety that characterizes the best human singing.

Aegidius names Pliny and Ambrose as authorities for this description. Ambrose's *Hexameron* tells of the nightingale as the perfect mother, warming her eggs with her body and her song, but Pliny seems to have been Aegidius' primary source. Comparing the two passages on the nightingale in these two authors (see appendix 2) allows the identification of Aegidius' own additions, shown in the translation just quoted in italics. Some of these, such as the idea of the nightingale learning and teaching her song, and her death from/while singing, elaborate on rhetorical commonplaces within the Latin poetic tradition.[47] In two of these added ideas, however, Aegidius stresses the positive qualities of naturally inspired singing in phrases with no obvious earlier source.[48] First is the image of the bird singing with closed eyes, which may come from Aegidius' own experience of expert human singers, clearly singing from memory, eliminating visual distraction to concentrate on their song. Second is the implication that the human nurturing of nature allows its manipulation and control, shown in his report of the human use for nightingales as a commodity. Where Pliny goes on to talk about the value of nightingales at market, Aegidius comments that captive nightingales can be made to sing all year round, day and

42. See chapter 1.

43. See McKinnon, "*Jubal vel Pythagoras*," 5. On the later use of birdsong in theories about origins, see Head, "Birdsong and the Origins of Music"; and Alexander Rehding, "The Quest for the Origins of Music in Germany circa 1900," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* (2000): 345–86.

44. Although Andrew Hughes ("Egidius [Johannes Aegidius; Juan Gil] de Zamora," in *TNG*) calls this treatise "very conservative," it is broadly orthodox in its aims and context and clearly is written by a thoughtful and widely educated man. The incorporation of Pliny (see my discussion in the text) is innovative, as is the positive view of nature in general.

45. Johannes Aegidius de Zamora, *Ars musica*, 40. Translation from *The Early Christian Period*, 137.

46. *The Early Christian Period*, 139; my emphasis. See appendix 2 for a comparison of Johannes Aegidius de Zamora, *Ars musica*, 46, 48, and Pliny, *Natural History* (ed. and trans. Rackman), 3:344–47.

47. See the discussion of *Aurea personet lira* later in this chapter, especially the references in note 73.

48. It is always possible that the copy of Pliny's book known to Aegidius contained these as medieval additions to the text (variants or glosses). If Aegidius did not author them, however, he saw fit to use them.

night. This, too, may draw on personal observation: Aegidius had been educated in Paris, where the commercial bird trade was centered in the later Middle Ages.[49] Although published sources give reports only from the fourteenth century, which show a strong interest in bird keeping among the nobility and merchant classes, this situation probably also pertained in the later thirteenth century. Charles V (r. 1364–80) maintained a large aviary at the Louvre, and had caged nightingales both indoors at the royal residence of Vincennes and outside in the garden of his Manoir de Beauté on the banks of the Marne.[50] In the fifteenth century, Guillebert of Metz mentions a tinsmith dwelling in front of the palace whose captive nightingales sing in winter.[51]

Although much of the anthropomorphizing of Aegidius' nightingale is already found in Pliny, the mere fact that Aegidius includes a natural history text about a bird in the context of a music treatise represents a significant innovation.[52] Hugh White proposes that the new interest in nature, expressed first of all in literal natural exegeses of sacred texts that had been more accustomed to symbolic readings, was timely. The friars emerged out of an apostolic movement that had a new, positive engagement with the present world of humanity (rather than withdrawing to the cloister and contemplating symbols).[53] One may speculate similarly that in a treatise addressed to John, minister-general of the Franciscan order in Spain, the work of Aegidius, another Franciscan—one who himself had begun writing a natural history encyclopedia—might derive inspiration from the natural world and in particular from the birds to whom the founder of his order had famously preached (see figure 2.2).[54] Yet the idea that the Franciscans were an order of proto-ecologists or proto-Romantic nature worshipers has been countered in recent scholarship by an examination of the highly traditional symbolism that underlies their engagement with, and interpretation of, the natural world.[55] Saint Bonaventure (minister-general of the

49. Gustave Loisel, *Histoire des ménageries: de l'antiquité à nos jours*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1912), 1:181.

50. Ibid., 1:170–71. Further evidence regarding caged birds in this period may be found in Yapp, "Birds in Captivity in the Middle Ages," 482, who reports the gift of a nightingale to Charles VI in 1390.

51. "Et devant le palais demeure ung pottier d'estain, bon ouvrier de merveilleux vaisseaux d'estain, et tenoit des rossignols qui chantoient en yver." Guillebert de Metz, *Description de la ville de Paris* (ed. Le Roux de Lincy), 54; mentioned again on 82.

52. McKinnon, "*Jubal vel Pythagoras*," 5, comments on Aegidius' innovation in seeing human music discovered from the observation of nature.

53. White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, 79.

54. The alphabetically organized text is unfinished, ceasing after a prologue and description of the headings for the letter B; see Johannes Aegidius Zamorensis, *Historia naturalis*. A general entry for birds (3:1482, 1484) gives a typical *voces animantium*, beginning with the birds.

55. According to a text that has become "almost . . . sacred . . . for modern ecologists," Saint Francis "tried to substitute the idea of the equality of all creatures, including man, for the idea of man's limitless rule of creation." Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967), 1205, cited in David Salter, *Holy and Noble Beasts: Encounters with Animals in Medieval Literature* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2001), 25.

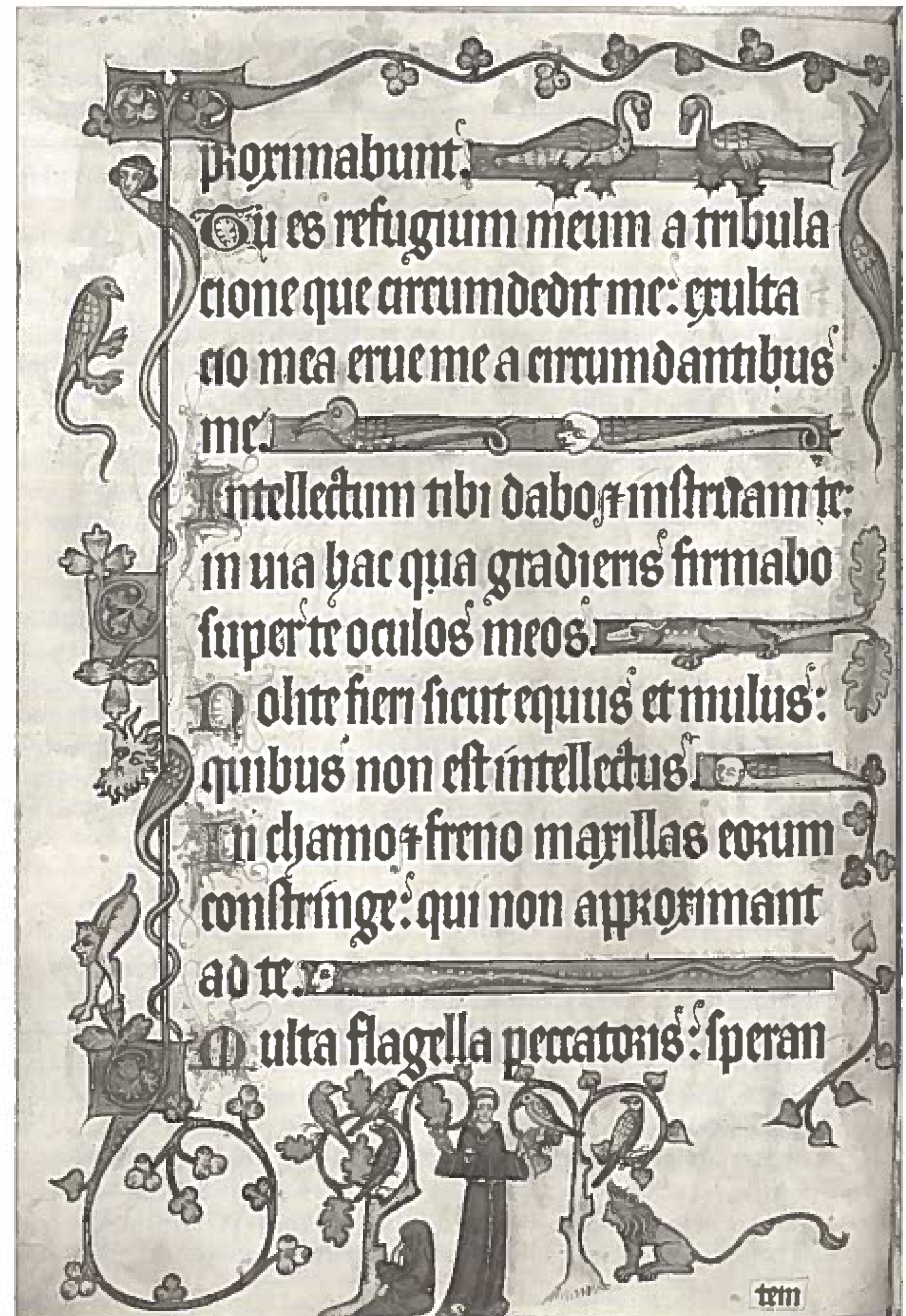
proximabunt.
Tu es refugium meum a tribula
tione que circumdedit me: exulta
tio mea erue me a circumdantibus
me.
Intellectum tibi dabo et instruam te:
in via hac qua gradieris firmabo
super te oculos meos.
Nolite fieri sicut equus et mulus:
quibus non est intellectus.
In chamo et freno maxillas eorum
constringe: qui non approximant
ad te.
Multa flagella peccatoris: speran
tem

Figure 2.2. Saint Francis preaches to the birds in the Luttrell Psalter, ca. 1340, *GB-Lbl* Add 42130, f.60v. By permission of the British Library.

Franciscan order, 1257–73) writes that increasing love for God's other creatures is a sign of one's incipient return to the state of innocence in Eden; that animals were calmed by and obeyed Saint Francis was a sign of his sanctity in restoring prelapsarian peace.[56] As in the moralized bestiaries produced by the scriptoria of monastic orders in the preceding centuries, nature is loved, respected, and studied only as a symbolic reflection of God and his relationship with the world's creatures, most notably its human creatures.

Despite the length of the passage from Aegidius and its obvious praise for the nightingale's song, it remains for the most part firmly within the tradition that limits musical art and knowledge to humans. In the section that describes the variety of the nightingale's song, which is otherwise one of those verbally closest to Pliny, Aegidius omits the word "scientia." For Pliny, there is the "perfect knowledge of music" (*una perfecta musicae scientia*) in the nightingale; Aegidius reports only the bird's "music of such perfection" (*una musica perfecta*). When describing the falling-off of the bird's song after fifteen days, Aegidius eschews Pliny's reference to artful trills ("artifices argutiae") and writes only of the exquisite sounds of the song ("exquisitae modulationes"). And while the nightingale's song is deemed superior to the sounds of wind instruments fashioned by human artistry (a claim we shall see again shortly in the discussion of *Aurea personet lira*), despite having anthropomorphized it, neither Pliny nor Aegidius compares it directly to human singing. By focusing on the song, Aegidius manages almost completely to avoid ascribing anything that might be construed as rational agency directly to the bird. In only one place does Aegidius' nightingale appear to take on human traits: in captivity, where she is instructed by art as well as by nature. The nightingale's transformation into a human commodity—a pet—has lent her the human ability to go beyond nature.

Arnulf of St. Ghislain: The Irony of the Birdlike?

In complement to Aegidius' anthropomorphized picture of a nightingale as a singer, another theorist, in a treatise entirely dedicated to a fourfold grouping of singers, likens the most praiseworthy among them to nightingales. The short treatise of Arnulf of St. Ghislain, probably written in the fourteenth century, is cast in the form of a grammatical exposition of an adjective, using antonym, comparative, and superlative forms. In short, it starts by condemning bad singers and then depicts the good, the better, and the best.[57] In the very lowest position—excluded from the court of a personified Musica—are bad singers who are ignorant of the art and do not even know plainchant (the *cantus* that is considered the basis for all practical study of music). Such musicians

56. See Salter, *Holy and Noble Beasts*, 25–32.

57. Arnulf of St. Ghislain, *Tractatulus de differentiis et gradibus cantorum* (ed. and trans. Page).

are like various animals; they sing things all wrong and yet presume to tell others how to sing, perpetuating their own errors. In the second rank are good singers who, though also ignorant of the art of music, love music's sweetness. They thus associate with fine musicians, to whom they are attracted as all animals are attracted to the sweet smell of the panther. They learn through hard work to imitate these "panthers," performing with them and under their guidance. Thus Arnulf's first two groups contain good singers who lack knowledge of the art of music, and outcasts who lack both art and any natural ability or self-reflective judgment.

The other two groups in Arnulf's hierarchy both refer to singers who do have rational knowledge of the art of music, and similarly the difference between the members of these two groups is their lack or possession of naturally endowed performing ability. In the third rank are those whom nature has not endowed with particularly fine voices: "the vigorous knowledge of art compensates in them for their natural inability," and they serve a respected function as teachers.[58] In Arnulf's top group, the best singers, worthy of greatest honor, are served by art and nature alike. These best singers are those "whom natural instinct, aided by a sweet voice, turns into very nightingales as it were (although better than nightingales in their natural gift) who yield nothing in praiseworthiness to the lark." They give "a more delightful form to anything inelegant and imperfectly performed when it is brought to the anvil of the throat—minting it anew, as it were."[59]

Arnulf's stated purpose is to allow his readers to work out where they stand in this fourfold hierarchy, in the closing hope that the "bellowing fool may learn to control his bestial noise" and everyone might defer "to those to whom obedience is owed."[60] Arnulf does not entirely reconfigure the Guidonian divide between the *cantor* and the *musicus*, but he subdivides each according to whether or not the singers are also accomplished performers. (Guido's treatise does not address the quality of performance, merely its correctness and whether that correctness is conscious or simply habitual). Whereas Guido's use of the voices of the jenny and the nightingale implies a comparison between singers and these animals, Arnulf explicitly likens the two extremes of his classification to beasts and birds, respectively, including the same two animal species found in Guido. The barbarous bad singers in the first group gnaw and bark like beasts, and like the ass they perform things back to front. Arnulf's best singers are rational nightingales—literate, knowledgeable, but natural singers. Although they understand the art of music, natural talent is what places them above the teachers in group three.

58. Ibid., 19, translating "verumptamen vivax artis scientia supplet in ipsis impotentiam naturalem," 5. The idea of "natural inability" is also discussed in Boethius' commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*.

59. Arnulf, *Tractatulus*, 19–20, translating 16. For selected parts of the Latin text, see appendix 5.

60. Ibid., 21, translating "ululansque ferinum discat ydiota suum continere tumultum," 17.

The animal metaphors in the first and fourth of Arnulf's groups may have been suggested by the grammatical tradition of the *voces animantium*, in which the discretely pitched voices of birds are contrasted with the noises of quadrupeds' *voces confusae*. Arnulf's treatise not only builds on a grammatical scheme for its exposition but also draws extensively on a text by Alan of Lille in which the grammatical metaphor runs deep.[61] But a particular influence is the opening verses of Guido's *Regulae*, cited in chapter 1. Arnulf clearly reads the contrasting songs of the jenny and the nightingale as representing, respectively, irredeemably unmusical noise and musical voice, which is how he uses them in his own treatise. Arnulf's ass metaphor differentiates bad singers, excluded from Musica's realm, from the ignorant, unlettered, but good singers in group two. The nightingale comparison underscores the natural vocal talent that elevates the best *musici* in group four above those *musici* not gifted with beautiful voices in group three.

Like most recipes for performances—whether oratorical, lectional, or musical—the treatise asserts that art and nature should be joined in the consummate musician: the "very nightingales" in group four must understand *modus*, *mensura*, *numerus*, and *color*. Unlike most authorities, Arnulf appears to consider art necessary but not sufficient, allowing nature to perfect it. Those who have both are the best not by virtue of their learning but on account of the beauty of their voices.[62] That Arnulf is placing nature above art by ranking the naturally talented birdlike *musici* of the fourth group above those of poorer voice seems to find corroboration in the statement that follows his description of all four categories. Arnulf comments that "although it is fitting that Nature take pride of place with honour and precedence, Nature evidently honours Music in this matter because in music-making such as [that of the best singers] art precedes Nature in a certain marvellous way because what Nature pretends to have no wish to do Music accomplishes by the subministrations of art."[63] As the end of this quotation begins to suggest, however, nature's pride of place is not real. In effect, Arnulf's four categories have done to Guido's two principal musicians much the same as Priscian's four species of *vox* did to Donatus' two principal voices, but using the binaries *ars* and *natura* rather than "articulate" and "literate" (see table 2.1). Just as the meaningful nonverbal groans of men were placed above the writeable but meaningless nonsense of crows in Priscian, the perfect knowledge possessed by the inadequate singers in group three outranks the sweet sounds made by those in group two. In orthodox

61. See chapter 5.

62. Christopher Page is circumspect but concludes that "in [Arnulf's] judgment the glory of the supreme musician is the practical aptitude which is freely given by Nature, not the theoretical learning which is arduously acquired by study. This natural gift, as Arnulf understands it, comprises inherent musicality (*naturalis instinctus*) and a beautiful voice. The finest kind of musician is therefore a performer, not a theorist, and without denying the importance of the theorists as judges of music and musicians the *Tractatulus* sets the musically gifted and learned performer above the merely learned theorist." Arnulf, *Tractatulus*, 11.

63. Ibid., 20, translating 16.

Table 2.1. Art and Nature in Arnulf's *Tractatulus*

ars?	*natura?*	Description
0	0	1. Bad • Not yet acquainted with plainchant • Brawling BARK louder than the ASS • Harsh sounding like the clamor of a WILD ANIMAL • Sing their parts back-to-front [like the ASS in *DPN*] • Disregard excellent singers and correct others, perpetuating error • Weeds among corn • Cannot be silenced • Trample the pearls of music under their feet [like PIGS] • Anathematized [like sexual deviants in *DPN*]
0	1	2. Good i) LAYPEOPLE • pleasure-seeking ears have a zeal for sweetness • like ALL ANIMALS to the PANTHER or BEES to honey, they are drawn to trained musicians • harvest musical flowers by study and conversation with musicians • natural industry makes up for lack of art ii) CLERICS • compose and perform instrumental music that is too hard for singing • perform such music previously composed and performed by others
1	0	3. Better • Keep music's treasure in their breasts' sanctuaries • Teach pupils the rules • Share music's pearls and riches, revealing its secrets • Ear and eye are well trained • Explanation redeems their displeasing singing • Presiding in Music's court they judge group 4 to be the best singers
1	1	4. Best i) MEN (or, IN GENERAL?) • are like NIGHTINGALES but with better voices • mint imperfect song anew on the anvil of their throats [like the PARROT in *DPN*] • more laudable than LARKS • Understand *modus*, measure, number, and *color* ii) WOMEN • are like SIRENS, goddesses, with voices of angels • sing sub-tonal and sub-semitonal intervals [like the LARKS in *DPN*]

terms, and in Arnulf's own categories, *ars* is superior to *natura*: if the musician has only *one* of these, the better singer is the one *without* a fine voice. Arnulf notes as a point of comparison that someone naturally beautiful but lacking virtue is less attractive than someone of less pleasing appearance adorned with acquired virtue.[64]

Again this fourfold division seems to downplay the musical element of per-

64. Ibid., 20.

formance, and just as the second term in the grammatical classification of *vox*—literate—was problematic in its application to musical performance, so too is *natura* in this grammaticalized classification of the *musicus*. Challenging in this regard is Arnulf's use of bird comparisons in subdividing the *musici*. In terms of a fourfold model of *vox*, birds' voices belong in category two—naturally sweet but lacking rational meaning. In fact, the occupants of the second group of singers have many features which imply that they are birdlike. Here we have not only musical patrons but also clerics who perform on instruments; both learn from others merely by imitation. This resembles in particular the string players criticized by Augustine as being no more learned in the art than magpies, parrots, and crows—but Arnulf includes these people in the domain of Lady Music. In allowing such performance the status of music, even if its performers are mere *cantores*, Arnulf implies that birdsong is, for him at least, music. In this sense his use of actual bird comparisons for the fourth rather than the second group of singers applies solely to the element of natural gift in the best singers: that is, they are better than nightingales in their *natural* gift, and of course they are better than any bird in their knowledge of art, because art requires a rationality that only humans possess.[65] In this reading the positive valuation of nature and birdsong pertains to the sonic element of practice alone; all other elements privilege the rational art of the agent, even if this has no directly perceptible effect on that sonic element.

The evidence for a positive valuation of birdsong in music theory writings is certainly slender. Augustine recognizes birdsong as possessing some of the praiseworthy characteristics of musical sound but uses this to prove that judgment of a musician (and his music) cannot be made on aural data alone. Guido similarly suggests that the sound of the nightingale is worthy of some appreciation by the trained listener, at least in its discrete pitches and its controlled dynamics. Arnulf comes closest to considering birdsong music: he includes the unlettered *cantor* within Music's realm as long as he sounds good, and he elevates birdlike *musici* above their less vocally gifted fellows. When his treatise is read against one of its key sources, however, even this may prove to be illusory (as I argue in chapter 5).

Songs Comparing Birdsong and Human Music

Unsurprisingly, the appreciation of birdsong as music is more frequently found outside the texts that teach the art, especially in imaginative literature. Before turning to examples from literary texts that were never set to music, I examine

65. Page does not list this as a variant between his edition and the earlier one by Gerbert, who reads *vocal* gift (*vocis*), not natural gift. Although the word is abbreviated, it clearly should be read, as Page does, "nature."

the productive aesthetic tension created when poetic texts in praise of the nightingale are themselves set to music for human singers.

Between Human Voice and Musical Instruments

The widely copied Latin song *Aurea personet lira clara modulamina* praises the nightingale and compares its song to human music making of various kinds. The song is copied with neumes in lyric collections and also in a number of music treatises. Most famously it appears in the so-called Cambridge Songbook, a section of more than eighty songs integrally copied within a large Latin poetry anthology probably designed for classroom use sometime early in the second millennium.[66] The collection was copied in England, but many of its songs originated in German lands, and it arguably contains all four of the songs described as being played by a minstrel in Sextus Amarcius of Speyer's satire "On the Various Enticements of Luxury." The fourth song mentioned, described as telling "how pure the voice of a nightingale is," is probably song ten of the collection, *Aurea personet lira*.[67]

The text of *Aurea personet lira* combines the same two principal themes found centuries later in Aegidius' treatise: a natural-historical description of the nightingale and technical music theory. As mentioned earlier, part of the didactic grammatical tradition was the *voces animantium*, a list of birds and quadrupeds that paired their names with the correct Latin verbs for their *voces*.[68] These lists served to hone the pupils' memories, while the metrical use of such unusual words provided a further pedagogical test. A verse tradition for the *voces animantium* runs from Ausonius in the fourth century, via the seventh-century poems of Eugenius of Toledo, to those of Paulus Albarus in the ninth. Most influential is the anonymous *Carmen de Philomela* of uncertain date, in which a long *voces animantium* follows a short poem lauding the nightingale.[69]

Aurea personet lira specifically uses Isidore's chapters on music theory in the *Etymologies* and, like Aegidius, employs Pliny's description of the nightingale to situate birdsong with respect to various types of human music making.[70] The text opens by bidding the listener praise the bird both with the

66. See *The Cambridge Songs (Carmina Cantabrigiensia)* (ed. and trans. Ziolkowski), 45–47, 190–94.

67. Ibid., xlv.

68. Ibid., 89, 240; Miroslav Marcovich, "Voces animantium and Suetonius," *Živa Antika / Antiquité vivante* 21 (1971): 399–416.

69. *Carmen de Philomela* (ed. Klopsch).

70. The nightingale's song in *Aurea personet lira* gives relief from toil, as music does in Isidore. The smallness of the nightingale's body compared with its surprisingly large song, which it sings both day and night, although only for a short time in the spring, are facts related by Pliny. The God-given nature of its song is implicit in Ambrose. It is tempting to speculate that Aegidius knew this song, which continues to be copied, at least in part, into the fourteenth century. It would offer him not only the combination of Pliny, music theory, and the nightingale, but also the *fistula*

fifteen-note lyre and *in voce organica*. Influenced by Sarah Fuller's translation of this phrase as "rendered with well-tuned voice, the pitches regulated by exact mathematical proportions as demanded by *musica*,"[71] Jan Ziolkowski translates this manner of praise as "with well-tuned voice." But because the poem lyricizes Isidore's chapters on music, which make a threefold division of *musica instrumentalis* into *harmonica*, *organica*, and *ritmica*, it is possible to read this phrase more strictly as "with the notes of wind instruments."[72] Further support for this translation may be found in the model for *Aurea personet lira*, one of the nightingale poems of Eugenius of Toledo (d. 658), *Vox, philomela, tua cantus edicere cogit*, whose opening declares the voice of the nightingale better than both the cithara (a stringed instrument) and *musica flabra* (music effected by blowing)—a similar instrumental pairing.[73] Later in *Aurea personet lira*, the nightingale's voice is deemed inimitable by both the lyre and the *fistula*—a further pairing of plucked and blown instruments.

In the central section of the poem, the narrator apostrophizes the bird: all must yield to her song—the bird catcher, the swan, the drummer, and the flute. This birdsong is superior to the sounds of other birds or their imitators (the bird catcher, though human, is imitating birds with a bird whistle, or his own voice), and to instruments played by striking or by blowing. The nightingale's song is deemed finer than what we would consider human instrumental music. Only the diatonic monochord, says the narrator, can match its notes.

The books into which *Aurea personet lira* is copied, the Cambridge manuscript chief among them, are often those that served as repositories of texts used in teaching boys grammar and singing—the two fundamental types of medieval literacy. The notes of music would have been demonstrated by means of the monochord, which the early-eleventh-century alphabeticizers of musical

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and bird catcher, although these last two have a common source in the basic medieval school text Ps.-Cato, *Distichs* 1.27 (ed. and trans. Marchand)—"Do not believe smooth-tongued men / The *fistula* sings sweetly as the fowler deceives the bird" (*Noli hominess blano nimium semone probare / Fistula dulce canit, volucrem dum decipit auceps*)—which Aegidius cites. See also chapter 5.

71. Sarah Fuller, "Early Polyphony," in *The New Oxford History Of Music: The Early Middle Ages to 1300*, ed. Richard Crocker and David Hiley (Oxford, 1990), 491.

72. The poet probably refrains from using the term *(musica) ritmica* because he wishes to reserve this adjective for stanza 14, l. 2, where it describes the fitting combination of words in poetry. This use is also present in Isidore (who borrows it from Cassiodorus) in a separate trio with *musica metrica* and *musica harmonica*. The reuse of the adjectives *harmonica* and *ritmica* in these two different contexts within the same text (Isidore's) resulted in a number of slightly different classification systems in later music theory texts. By the fourteenth century, a total conflation of the two trios into their four adjectives—*harmonica, ritmica, metrica, organica*—is found, as in Jacques of Liège, *Speculum musicae*, 1:17 (on the second division of *musica instrumentalis*).

73. See ll. 3–4: "Vox, philomela, tua citheras in carmine vincit / et superas miris musica flabra modis" (Your voice is an instrument finer than a zither; more hauntingly than wind-music it plays); see Fleur Adcock, *The Virgin and the Nightingale* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1983), 18–19. Eugenius' song may have served as a general model for teaching; the ninth-century nightingale poem of Paulus Albarus, *Vox, filomela, tua metrorum carmina vincit*, is also based on it.

notes, Hucbald and Guido, recommend as better than the voice for demonstrating the rational principles of *musica*. The monochord teaches the lettered pitches that the boys would be singing as they sang this song; the song effectively praises the very means by which one is to achieve its correct singing. Equating the worth of the nightingale and monochord makes sense of Guido's near-contemporary imprecation that a *musicus* should be able to recognize the discrete pitches of the nightingale next to the confused voice of the jenny.

At the end of the song, the singers refer directly to themselves and their performance: "Now we have praised you in rhythmic words and merry *voces*, proper to young scholars, it is time to end our *vox harmonica* so as not to tire the tongue's plectrum"; a doxology follows.[74] This ending implies the supremacy of the boys' human voices even over that of the nightingale, which, as they claim in their praise of it, excels *musica ritmica* and *musica organica* and is the equal and mirror of the monochord; *musica harmonica*, however, is better. The boys can sing the nightingale's praises, having learned the discrete notes of the diatonic scale present in the nightingale's song from that song's fitting peer, the monochord. Singing praise requires words, and of all the kinds of music named in this song, the joining of "rhythmic" words and "merry" notes is proper only to the "young scholars." These young scholars may not be better than nightingales in their vocal gift, but they understand the rational principles of the art that the nightingale (irrationally and unintentionally) and the monochord (inanimately) together exemplify. Although the nightingale's musical singing serves to elevate the rational art above nature, birdsong is nevertheless praised in terms that make it greater than wordless instrumental music produced by humans. At this time instruments were not welcome in liturgical music, and the insinuation is that *musica ritmica* and *musica organica* were secular, unwritten musics, played by those who did not understand the rational principles or their sound. Perhaps the traditional clerical suspicion of instrumental music's relation to dancing and drunken revelry is also in play.[75] The division between birdsong and human singing on the one hand and wind, percussion, and string music on the other also replicates that between *musica naturalis* (including Latin *cantus* and birdsong) and *musica artificialis*, discussed earlier.

74. The tongue as a plectrum is an image found in Regino, for whom the nine "muses" signal the nine parts of the human voice: four front teeth, two lips, tongue's plectrum, the throat and the lungs (the pair presumably counted as a single part). This precedes directly the part of Regino's treatise that urges singers to take full rational responsibility for learning about music properly. This phrase is also found in a number of fifteenth-century compilations in the tradition of the fourteenth-century Johannes Hollandrinus, three of which also make a reference to *Aurea personet lira*; see Michael Bernhard, "Parallelüberliefungen zu vier Cambridger Liedern," in *Tradition und Wertung: Festschrift für Franz Brunhölzl zum 65. Gerburtstag*, ed. Günter Bernt, Fidel Rädle, and Gabriel Silagi (Sigmaringen, 1989), 141–45.

75. James McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge, 1987), 1–3.

A Human Song about the Superiority of Birdsong?

One poem set to polyphonic music in the fourteenth century upholds the idea that the sound of the nightingale may be preferable to certain kinds of human music making. Jacopo da Bologna's *Oselletto selvaggio per stagione* compares the songs of a wild bird in its season to the perennial upstarts who presume to compose ballate, madrigals, and motets. Although the identity of the wild bird is not specified, its placement at the beginning of the verse, its wildness, seasonality, and small size, in combination with the sweetness of its song, make it clearly a nightingale.[76]

Oselletto selvaggio per stagione
Dolci versetti canta con bel modo
Tal e tal grida forte chi non lodo

Per gridar forte non si canta bene
Ma con soave e dolce melodia
Si fa bel canto e cio vuel maestria

Pochi lanno e tutti si fan maestry
Fan madriali ballate e motetti
Fan si fioran filippotti e marchetti

Si e piena la terra di magistroly
Che loco piu non trovano discepoly

1. A wood bird in season sings sweet verses in elegant style: But *this* shout is so loud that I cannot hear it![77] 2. To shout so loudly is not to sing well; instead, one does beautiful singing with sweet and charming melody—and that is what the master wishes. 3. Few have it, yet they all make (out they are) masters. They do balades, madrigals, and motets; they all flower as Philippuses and Marchettos. Ritornello: So full is the land with little masters that they find no more room for disciples.[78]

76. It could be the cuckoo, were its song not described as sweet. Coyness in identifying the nightingale is also found in the *Lai de l'oiselet*; see Barr, *Socioliterary Practice*, 196, and my discussion later in this chapter.

77. The idea that sensation is impaired by excess (in either direction) is present in Boethius, *De institutione musica*, 1:9, on the unreliability of the senses. For Aristotelian and Platonic uses in arguments about celestial harmony, see Ilnitchi, "*Musica Mundana*, Aristotelian Natural Philosophy, and Ptolomaic Astronomy," 48–49.

78. Text based on that in *FP*, 68v. Translation loosely based on that by Giovanni Carsaniga in the booklet to the audio CD MD3091, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Music of the Fourteenth Century, vol. 1, adapted to take account of Di Bacco's suggested reading of the text. The ritornello probably draws on Ambrose of Milan's *Sermon against Auxentius*, in which Ambrose defends criticism of hymn singing. In accepting the power of the strains of singing in verse, he comments

Jacopo sets this text, perhaps his own, twice—once as a two-part madrigal and once as three-part *caccia*. The *caccia* version will be dealt with in chapter 4; here I refer solely to the madrigal setting, found in five fourteenth-century Italian sources.[79] Although, unlike *Aurea personet lira*, the text is in a vernacular language and the music is polyphonic, like *Aurea personet lira* the text resonates with music theory, and not only in its closing reference to the two most famous early-fourteenth-century theorists, Marchetto of Padua and Philippe de Vitry. Giuliano Di Bacco has noted that the second stanza's phrase "Ma con soave e dolce melodia / Se fa bel canto e cio vuol maistria" translates the second sentence of the treatise *Cum notum sit*, which forms part of the *Ars discanti* ascribed to Johannes de Muris: "non in clamore nec in tumultu cantus fit placibilis, sed in suavi et dulci melodia" (song is not made pleasing through shouting or tumult but by sweet and dulcet melody).[80] This treatise was widely copied in Italian manuscripts of the fifteenth century but probably dates from sometime before.

This song lyricizes a topos common in earlier monastic *regulae*, a famous near-contemporary papal decretal of the early fourteenth century, and mirror-of-princes advice literature: the lament that these days music is going to the dogs.[81] The fourteenth-century Italian poet Franco Sachetti also sees a thousand untalented Marchettos all over the place and laments that just as contemporary poets cannot even spell, singers cannot sing.[82] Prohibitions on loud cries, which are associated with irrational bestiality, are a theoretical commonplace, most riding textually on Guido's she-ass.[83] Guido's opening verses probably also inspire the poem here: the bad singers performing motets, bal-

that "all then are rendered masters, who had scarcely managed to be disciples." See no. 298 in McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 133.

79. *FP*, 68v–69r; *PR*, 7r; *Lo*, 16r–v; *Sq*, 12v–13r, and the palimpsest *SL*. See Oliver Huck, *Die Musik des frühen Trecento* (Hildesheim, 2005), 129–229.

80. Di Bacco, *De Muris et gli altri*, 298, and personal communication.

81. We shall encounter this sentiment more literally in the hunting music of chapter 4. More attention has been paid to this trope in the French tradition, especially in the songs of the Chantilly manuscript (Matheus de Sancto Johanne's *Science ne a nul anemie*, Senleches's *Je me merveil*, and Guido's *Or voit tout*). See Anne Stone, "Self-reflexive Songs and Their Readers in the Late Fourteenth Century," *Early Music* 31 (2003): 180–95, and "The Composer's Voice in the Late-Medieval Song: Four Case Studies," in *Johannes Ciconia: musicien de la transition*, ed. Philippe Vendrix (Turnhout, 2003), 169–94.

82. Franco Sachetti, *Il libro delle rime* (ed. Ageno), 179–80, no. 147. This alludes to Isidore's widely known statement that it is as bad not to know singing as to be ignorant of the letters of the alphabet; see chapter 1, note 11.

83. Hermannus writes that not only are unlearned singers beasts, but also they exhibit the lust of screaming by their over-loud singing; see Reimer, "Musicus und Cantor," 18. Loud singing is permitted in some sources, but is reserved for feast days, when singers are fully rested, as in the *Instituta*; see McGee, *The Sound of Medieval Song*, 39–40. Richard de Fournival talks of a time when he sang more frequently but says that now he must simply sing louder, like the ass, before he just resolves to speak loudly, in prose; see *Li Bestiaires d'amours*, 9. The siren in the Latin *Physiologus* has a loud voice; see Leofranc Holford-Strevens, "Sirens in Antiquity and the Middle

late, and madrigals as if they were masters are the jennies; anyone who prefers them to the wild nightingale of the wood cannot be a real musician.

Although it is hardly surprising given that the main thrust of the text is to condemn the unskilled presumption of a profusion of jumped-up singers, the nightingale here represents sweet and melodious singing. The two singers performing the madrigal version of the song become identified with the nightingale as the melodic decoration in the opening melisma gives way to the homorhythmic declamation of the sententious, authoritative first line of each stanza. The effect of the whole is that two expert singers agree together, exchanging the same text in imitation in the second and third lines of each stanza as if it were a dialogue, but, because their texts are the same, one that sounds like two like-minded sages nodding in agreement at the parlous state of the world. The closing melisma of the second line in each verse is particularly delightful in its rhythmic reprocessing and extension of similar pitch sequences and fittingly exemplifies "bel modo," "melodia," and "motetti" (example 2.1a). The words "Tal e tal," which introduce the shout of the bad singers, are declaimed to note values that represent the basic level of the beat, thus making an aural difference from the smaller values that have dominated the turning figures of the nightingale-like singing in the first two lines (example 2.1b). In one source (*Lo*) these are notated in a way that suggests that these notes could have been articulated rather emphatically, even comically, in an almost staccato fashion, as if gathering strength and breath for the following high note. The "grida" (shout) itself leaps up to the high note, offering the opportunity to exemplify such shouting in exactly the manner associated with poor singers who can reach top notes only in this uncontrolled way. The second stanza then offers the singers of this madrigal the opportunity for one-upmanship: as they describe the sweet singing that the master wishes, they can contrast their own skills directly with the shout of the bad singers that they had mimicked in the first stanza. The last stanza has the word "fioran" on this leap, showing the flowering of the epigones of Marchetto and Philippe. "Flower" also has a technical meaning in terms of musical rhetoric, since it signifies the kinds of ornamentation of an underlying contrapuntal structure, of which the descent from the top note in measure 22 is a prime example. Again, the text and the musical setting offer further opportunity to parody the overly ornate and excessively loud singing of everyone ("tutti")—by implication, everyone *else*.

The ritornello reprises the nodding assent between the two voices as they sententiously declare the world full of such little masters. Their conclusion gains added emphasis from a contrapuntal join across the two text lines, the musical rhetoric projecting the linking nature of the causative "Che" that starts the final line (example 2.1c). The ritornello's melodic figuration picks up numerous musical resonances from the verse, including a move into the cantus

Ages," in *Music and the Sirens*, ed. Linda P. Austern and Inna Naroditskaya (Bloomington, forthcoming).

Example 2.1. Jacopo da Bologna, *Oselletto salvaggio per stagione*, transcribed from the Panciatichi Codex.

a

17

do
a.
ti.

T.

do
a.
ti.

b

22 Lo

Tal e gri - da for -

3.Tal e tal gri - da for - te qui non lo
6.Si fa bel can - to e ciò vuel mae - stri
9.Fan - si fio - ran fi - lip - pot - ti e mar - chet

T.

3.Tal e tal gri - da for - te qui non lo
6.Si fa bel can - to e ciò vuel mae - stri
9.Fan si fio - ran - Fi - lip - pot - ti e mar - chet

26

do.
a.
i.

T.

do.
a.
ti.

Example 2.1 (continued)

RITORNELLO

30

c

10.Si si e pie-na la ter - ra di ma - gi-stro-ly 11.Che

T.

10.Si si e pie-na la ter-ra di ma - gi-stro-ly 11.Che

36

d

lo - co piu non tro - va - no di -

T.

T rhythm from *Lo*

lo - co pui non tro - van - no di -

40

sce - po - ly.

T.

sce - po - ly.

Example 2.1 (continued)

line of the emphatic tenor line that had set "Tal e tal" (for "loco piu"; compare examples 2.1b and d).

Philippe (de Vitry) and Marchetto (of Padua) are cited not as we best know them, that is, not as composers or as theorists but as singers. The verb used here—like its French cognate, *faire*—could mean "to make" in the sense of either "to compose" or "to perform." Indeed, these activities are less clearly distinguished in this period because composers are merely a subgroup of singers engaged in a literate version of an activity whose flowers might equally be unnotated. And it is in the latter sense of unnotated "composition" (what we might call improvisation) that the nightingale can function, since in terms of sound alone, as we saw, its musicality could be recognized readily.[84]

Although widely separated in time, both of these songs praise the nightingale as a means of approving melodious, discretely pitched vocal performance. In both cases such birdsong is situated somewhere in a sonorous orbit at whose zenith is the texted, rationally understood song of humans, and at whose nadir are the indiscretely pitched voices of animals or unlearned human "singers." Between these extremes, birdsong and instrumental music jostle for position, much as we saw them doing in the grammatical tradition outlined in chapter 1. Yet in these two songs, which emanate from the world of rationally engaged lettered singing, birdsong is placed closer to excellent human song than to mere meaningless noise; in *Aurea personet lira* it is explicitly ranked above instruments and on a par with a key pedagogical tool of *musica*, the monochord.

The use of the nightingale in poetic literature bears out this emphasis on oral performance. Later thirteenth- and fourteenth-century poetic literature appears to reflect in its use of the nightingale the fact that this period saw an increase in a more textualized type of composing activity, in addition to the continued "composition" of music through the regulated improvisation of singers. Inevitably the greater descriptive power of musical notation in this period could also embody a greater prescriptive power, which to a certain extent begins to elide the creativity of singers. The devaluation of singing in the new textual economy of the later Middle Ages is problematic for nightingales of all kinds—real and metaphorical. In the final part of this chapter, therefore, more directly literary and poetic uses of the nightingale figure are explored.

Rugged Rossignol, Pious Philomel

In contradistinction to the music-theoretical tradition, the musicality of the nightingale and its song together with its song's value may seem clearly appreciated in literary writings. As will be seen, however, literature is rarely univo-

84. Improvisation should be understood in Treitler's sense as involving active putting together of material in performance in line with internalized rules; see, for example, Leo Treitler, "Medieval Improvisation," *The World of Music: Journal of the International Institute for Traditional Music* 33 (1991): 66–91, and the other essays collected in *With Voice and Pen*.

cal where the nightingale is concerned, and the creature occupies a number of sharply contrasting spaces, with starkly different avian and human opponents. The evaluation of its song in particular is far from straightforward.

Positive Secular Contexts

The choice of the nightingale to emphasize the talent of praiseworthy human singing is hardly casual. It is, arguably, a "natural" choice, especially if that singer performs a song whose verbal text is a short lyric in the "natural language" of the Romance vernaculars.[85] The traditional "season" topos, which opens many high-style lyrics in the related traditions of the troubadours and trouvères, frequently includes reference to birds. Foremost among them is the nightingale, to the extent that it develops a close symbolic association with the *je* of the courtly love poet, the singer of the song, the expresser of the communal courtly loving male subject.[86] Many such lyrics open with the lyric "I" recounting how the song of the nightingale prompted him to find the language of poetry and thereby produce the very same sung poetic performance that the audience is already hearing and that describes the birdsong which prompted it. In this positive secular context the nightingale is the bird of love, spring, the poet, his messenger, and so on, and birdsong signals beauty, poetry, natural inspiration, and the desire that precedes and generates the poetic language.

This vigorous nightingale is served by a masculine noun in all the Romance languages, despite the feminine of its Latin equivalent (*luscinia*) and its functional synonym Philomela. Its song is symbolized by the French word "oci" (kill), which is interpreted as threatening death to love's enemies.[87] Where the sexual titillation of the birdsong's tintinnabulations occurs in early Latin verse, there may be, as here, a telling macaronic step into the vernacular for the song itself:

Iuvenilis lascivia	The courting of a girl and boy
et amoris suspiria	who love and sigh and touch and toy
tam sunt delectabilia	inflames the nightingale with joy
qu'En Rosseinos en cante	it has to trill and coo it.
. . .	
Hec est avis Cupindinis,	The nightingale takes Cupid's part:
que post ictum harundinis	when he's installed the teasing dart
movet estus libidinis	it makes the inflammation start
"oci! oci!" dum cante.	by wanton warblings to it.[88]

85. As opposed to the artificial language governed by rule (Latin); see Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*, 2–3.

86. See Hensel, *Die Vögel*; Bichon, "L'animal dans la litterature française au XIIème et au XIIème siècles," chap. 13; Pfeffer, *The Change of Philomel*, chaps. 5–6.

87. As the oral nightingale and the literary nightingale fuse, the potential for this also to dignify the death of the nightingale herself, dying for love, becomes possible; see the discussion later in this chapter.

88. Adcock, *The Virgin and the Nightingale*, 28–29. Translation adapted because Adcock uses the feminine pronoun for this lusty male French nightingale.

The song of the nightingale increases the libidinousness of those who hear it if they are already in love. The movement of air in this song fans the flames of desire so that a death (promised, real, metaphorical) is presaged by the words of the birdsong.

The nightingale ranks as the most frequently named bird in the poetry of Marcabru (fl. ca. 1129–50) and Arnaut de Mareuil (fl. ca. 1170–1200), where it is associated with other markers of the spring topos. In poems by Jaufre Rudel (fl. 1120–47), Giraut de Bornelh (ca. 1140–ca. 1200), and Bernart de Ventadorn (lived between ca. 1130–40 and ca. 1190–1200), the birdsong embodies the *joie* that is central to the aesthetic of *fin'amor*.[89] The narrator may take birdsong as a sign of being loved or, more often, is prompted to make his own song in response to it. The consoling power of birdsong is such that it may ameliorate the narrator's long-term sorrow and end his silence. In a poem by Elias Cairel, the narrator claims to have written nothing for two years until now, when he hears the sweet song of the nightingale; a poem by Colin Muset has the nightingale move the narrator to play his flute.[90] The joyful birdsong and newly re-greened nature can serve instead as a contrast with the sorrow of the poet, or even provoke an aversion to the nightingale as it becomes associated with the pain of love.[91] In other poems the bird acts as a messenger, relaying the poet's own song to the lady, sometimes returning with a reply.[92]

Bernart de Ventadorn has been called "the nightingale poet" because the nightingale accounts for nine of the fourteen bird references that he makes.[93] Most of these make brief and conventional use of the nightingale to evoke the spring topos, but he specifically emphasizes the song of the bird, which may wake him in the night to inspire joy and compel him to sing even if he has no love in his heart. Even Bernart's contemporaries identified him with the nightingale: in a *tenso* between Piere D'Alvernhe (fl. 1149–70) and Bernart de Ventadorn, Piere asks Bernart why he is not prompted to sing now that one hears the nightingale night and day. Is it perhaps that the nightingale understands love better than the poet? Bernart answers that he would rather sleep in peace than hear the nightingale. This *tenso* presents a parodic reversal of *fin'amor* in which the famous love poet claims that he is already over such foolishness and advises others not to waste time on love. Nevertheless, the way the nightingale is used makes it explicit that the bird is a conventional representative of youthful sexual desire.

The *rossignol* also appears in a related way in the context of narrative poetry, notably in Marie de France's *Laüstic*, a poem probably from the second half of the twelfth century.[94] This lai concerns a woman, conversing at her bedroom window with her lover, who tells her enquiring husband that the beauty of the nightingale's song is keeping her joyfully awake. Her husband, seeking to end her nightly vigil, kills the bird and throws its bloody carcass at his wife. She in turn sends it to her lover wrapped in samite with gold embroidery telling their story. The lover enshrines the gift in a jewel-encrusted casket. The song of the nightingale figures the wife's sexual desire for that which is "outside," specifically for sexual interaction that is outside her marriage.[95] Not only does the tale continue to be copied and told in the following centuries, but also the excuse of "listening to the nightingale" for meeting with one's lover crops up in later texts, to the extent that the bird becomes a specific metaphor for the male genitals in one of the stories in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (ca. 1351).[96]

Interestingly, the *Physiologus* tradition and the Latin bestiaries that rely on it do not include the nightingale; only the French bestiary by Pierre of Beauvais introduces it, possibly on the strength of its pervasiveness in the vernacular poetic tradition.[97] Encyclopedias usually follow Isidore, who just derives its name—*luscinia*—from the fact that it sings at dawn as if it were the light-bringer (*quasi lucinia*).[98]

Lyric poets in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries writing in Old French, the trouvères, inherited the high-style tradition of the nightingale from their Occitan models, the troubadours. In addition, nightingales feature in more *popularisant* genres of trouvère song, such as the pastorelle, and their symbolism is augmented by the incorporation of natural history information,

89. Vincent Pollina posits an imitation of the nightingale's song through a musical motif in songs by Marcabru and Gaucelm Faudit. See Vincent Pollina, "Les Mélodies du troubadour Marcabru: questions de style et de genre," in *Atti del Secondo Congresso Internazionale della Association Internationale d'Études Occitanes (Torino, 31 agosto–5 settembre 1987)*, ed. Giuliano Gasca Queirazza (Turin, 1993), 289–306. Although *Bel m'es quan son li fruich madur* is more florid than Marcabru's other extant settings, and it is not impossible that the singer would have used the text as an excuse to indulge in virtuoso vocalizations, I find it difficult to accept an unequivocal mimetic, naturalistic depiction given the underprescriptive nature of this notation.

90. Hensel, *Die Vögel*, 16.

91. Ibid., 13–31.

92. Pfeffer, *The Change of Philomel*, chap. 5.

93. Only two of the others are to specific birds at all: one lark and one swallow; see Bichon, "L'animal dans la litterature française," 502.

94. See Sylvia Huot, "Troubadour Lyric and Old French Narrative," in *The Troubadours: An Introduction*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge, 1999), 69–74.

95. Eugene Vance's analysis of this as the conflict between the husband's rigid aristocratic control using violence and the wife's mercantile exchange and interiority is cited by Jeni Williams to explain the tale's continuing popularity during the economic and social change of the long thirteenth century. Ideological conflict is neatly pictured as being "symbolically devolved onto the site of the marital debate and its relation to the external natural world." Williams, *Interpreting Nightingales*, 64–65.

96. Hensel, *Die Vögel*, sections 13 and 8. In Philostrato's story in Boccaccio, *Decameron* 5.4, Caterina asks to sleep out on the balcony to listen to the nightingale. When her father discovers her there in post-coital slumber with her lover, her mother excuses her on the grounds that she has caught her "nightingale" in a "cage." Allowed to wed, the lovers are then at liberty to pursue and capture the nightingale both night and day.

97. See MacCulloch, *Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries*, 144.

98. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 12.7.37. "Luscinia avis inde nomen sumpsit quia cantu suo significare solet diei surgentis exortum, quasi lucinia."

as, for example, when Thibaut de Champagne tells of the nightingale dying from singing too much (in the fervor of love), a detail that probably has its ultimate source in Pliny. As, according to the exoteric aesthetic of courtly love, the poet's song is generated by love, the idea of the nightingale's dying from love-inspired song equates to the lover's own happiness to die for (love of) his lady. Richard de Fournival's literary hybrid the *Bestiaire d'amours* (Bestiary of Love), which combines the prose form of a bestiary with the lyric appeal to the lady, plays at the outset with the idea of the nightingale-poet love-singing himself to death. In transmuting the moralizing glosses of the bestiary format into commentaries on his state as an unrequited lover, Richard is particularly keen to emphasize that he has abandoned "song" (poetry) in favor of "speech" (prose) because he sees from the example of the nightingale and the swan that song brings death, particularly if done well.[99] The nightingale, he claims, forgets to eat and "so delights in singing that it dies in song. And I took heed of that because singing has served me so little that to trust myself to song might mean even my self-destruction and song would never rescue me; more particularly, I discovered that at the hour when I sang my best and executed my best lyrics, things were at their worst for me, as with the swan."[100]

Richard's privileging of prose over poetry taps into a widespread suspicion of the veracity of poetry, a debate engaged in throughout the medieval period. His scientific bestiary exempla can be seen as a further attempt to lend truth-value to his work. As well as having associations of trustworthiness, prose is also more textual in nature, less designed for memorization, and thus more "writerly." The inference is that in not singing, Richard is not speaking aloud, he is writing. The *Bestiary of Love* is thus symptomatic of a growing emphasis on writing and (silent) reading of written texts within a still largely oral vernacular reading culture.[101] Before the fourteenth century, the books of the secular nobility of France were usually read aloud to them, and possibly to a small audience, by clerical court functionaries. These same university-trained administrators, however, whose numbers increased markedly in the fourteenth

99. See Huot, *From Song to Book*, 140–41. In allowing him to record a text external to himself, writing is for Richard an "escape from the lyrical death of nightingale and swan, a death of self-absorption that is ultimately equivalent to the death of Narcissus" (141). The written text can exist without the author, and he need not sing himself to death to bring it into being.

100. Richard de Fournival, *Bestiary of Love*, 5–6; *Li Bestiaires d'amours*, 12–13: "Car sa nature si est ke li kaitis aime tant sen canter k'il se muert en cantant, tant en pert sen mangier et tant s'en laie a pourcachier. Et pour che me sui jou pris garde ke li chanters m'a si pau valu ke je m'i puisse tant fier ke j'en perdisse nis moi, si ke ja li chanters me m'i socourust nomeement a chou ke je esprovai bien ke a l'eure ke je miex cantai et ke je miex dis en cantant, adont me fu il pis. Ausi comme del chine." The nightingale given here is found in Segre's MSS C and *F*, where there is a rubricated space for an illumination, which was never completed, captioned "li rossinoil qui muert en chantant."

101. See Saenger, *Space between Words*, esp. chap. 15; Huot, *From Song to Book* chap. 5; Dillon, *Medieval Music-Making*, chap. 2.

century, had an attitude toward reading that was influenced by the predominance of silent reading in the Latin sphere of scholastic texts. By the mid-fourteenth century, the silent private reading of books by the nobility became relatively widespread, although the increase of illuminations in vernacular books indicates that, on the one hand, this was the culmination of a trend that had been in train for some time, while other evidence shows that, on the other hand, reading aloud from such books continued well into the period of print.[102] Large-format illuminated vernacular anthologies from the thirteenth century probably had a dual function of providing both an oral text for the person reading aloud and a simultaneous (or subsequent) visual commentary for the listening nobles.

Paul Saenger has argued that the vernacular uptake of visual copying and silent reading occurred slightly earlier in Italy than in France.[103] This would make sense of the fact that most of the earliest manuscripts of troubadour songs are Italian or Catalan.[104] As the songs of this predominantly oral, performative tradition were assembled into retrospective manuscript anthologies in the later thirteenth century, scribes individualized the poets, turning troubadours into authors in the context of author-organized codices. They also candidly extracted *vidas* and *razos* from the lyrics themselves so that the poet's work quite literally created his life.[105] Writing and the book replaced the oral circulation of individual songs. In troubadour and trouvère songs the nightingale's symbolism of the oral, singing poetic voice, its status as the bird that embodies courtly lyricism, placed it in potential conflict with such textualization. Birdsong, birds in general, and the nightingale in particular can thus represent a sympathetic figuring of the oral in the face of textualization.

This confrontation between orality and textuality in a literary culture dominated by what Joyce Coleman has termed "aurality" did not suddenly arise in the later thirteenth century, however. The topos seems to stem from fairly near the beginning of the period that saw the first full flowering of the writing of French literature in the letters of the Latin alphabet. For example, it is possible to advance a reading of Marie de France's *Laüstic* through the lens of the challenge to song made by textuality.[106] Sylvia Huot has commented that Marie "suggests that Old French poetry might be, in part, a sort of tomb or reliquary for dying or linguistically incomprehensible oral traditions; that written narra-

102. See Saenger, *Space between Words*, 265–71; Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public*, chap. 4.

103. Saenger, *Space between Words*, 271–72.

104. See William Burgwinkle, "The *Chansonniers* as Books," and Simon Gaunt, "Orality and Writing: The Text of the Troubadour Poem," both in *The Troubadours: An Introduction*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge, 1999), 246–62 and 228–45, respectively.

105. Gregory B. Stone, introduction to *The Death of the Troubadour: The Late Medieval Resistance to the Renaissance* (Philadelphia, 1994).

106. Huot, "Troubadour Lyric and Old French Narrative," 270–74.

tive is an elaborate and ornate artifice constructed to preserve the memory of lyric voices now silent and irretrievable."[107] It is possible to combine such an interpretation with readings especially attentive to class and gender issues, such as those offered by Jeni Williams. Masculine power can be viewed as threatened by the socially disruptive power of an unseen, disembodied oral song.[108] Bringing the nightingale into the domestic environment translates it from an aural to a visual phenomenon, thereby enabling its containment and control. Although the nightingale (song) is then visible, it is also dead (silent). The silent song becomes a material commodity in an exchange that signals a new love. It memorializes the song's now dead author, wrapped in a woven (texted) fabric, embroidered with the written text of the whole story of the love that the song had itself symbolized. The husband's inability to trust oral discourse—not just the song of the nightingale but also the words of his wife—causes the death of oral, temporal song and the rise of the written, eternal author figure.[109] By implication, this is a negative outcome in which love and song become permanent, enshrined, static, but ultimately dead. Tellingly, the nightingale as a symbol is interpreted differently by the husband and wife. For the wife, the nightingale is a lyric oral bird prolonging desire in an aurally based idyll; for the husband, the nightingale evokes the violence, jealousy, and death present in the Ovidian narrative of Philomela.[110]

Narrative is typically the place where the norms of lyric are interrogated.[111] The poetic narratives of the increasingly textual centuries from the mid-twelfth to the fourteenth are no exception, and often lament the loss of a vanished golden age of a communal lyric song expressing a universal *je* (which does not mean, of course, that such a time existed). The recurrent way in which the individualization of song is thematized negatively in other thirteenth- and fourteenth-century narrative poems has been seen by Gregory B. Stone as a "resistance to the Renaissance," of whose unalloyed benefits only willful belief

107. Ibid., 273.

108. See note 95.

109. This suspicion of orality permeates lyrics of this period, particularly in respect to the topic of the *mesdisans*, the gossips whose "false jangle" spreads rumor. Earlier in the Middle Ages, orally reporting could spread a good or bad reputation. With the written inscription of the good aspect of renown, oral forms of communicating reputation become specifically and exclusively negative: the *mesdisans*, the slanderers or gossips, who spread infamy and/or falsehood. Although the slanderers are an old topos by the fourteenth century, at this time their power becomes increasingly feminized, oral, and strongly associated with the actions of Fortune. Fortune herself becomes a figure of the faithless woman. See Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, "*Fama* et les preux: nom et renom à la fin du Moyen Âge," *Médiévales* 24 (1993): 35–44.

110. Huot, "Troubadour Lyric and Old French Narrative," 273. Philomela, whose tale forms a part of the vernacular moralized Ovid believed to be by Chrétien de Troyes, makes little impact on secular vernacular *lyric* until the end of the Middle Ages.

111. See Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge, 1995), chap. 3, and his "Romance and Other Genres," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Kreuger (Cambridge, 2000).

in the humanists' own propaganda has convinced us. It is not necessary to subscribe wholesale to Stone's thesis to recognize a preoccupation with textuality and the loss of song and singers throughout this period. It chimes with Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet's analysis of the later Middle Ages as "the sadness after all has been said," when contemporaries claimed that truly creative authors were no longer among them and that all that remained was copying, collecting, and glossing—that is, textualizing—pre-extant poems.[112]

One of the most pertinent treatments of this theme—that the individualization of song is a bad thing—is found in another lai, the *Lai de l'oiselet* (Lay of the Little Bird), which uses, like *Laüstic*, the image of the ensnared songbird, here to interrogate "the entanglement of the lyric subject in a narrative world."[113] *Oiselet* dates from the late thirteenth century, but the tale it tells circulated in various forms and languages throughout the later Middle Ages.[114] The story, based on the exemplum *Rustico et avicula* of Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis*, is simple. A *villein* captures a bird in his garden so that it will sing for him alone. In exchange for freedom, the bird promises to give the man knowledge he does not already have, but when freed merely offers up three commonplaces: "do not cry for what you never had," "do not believe everything you hear," and "hold on to what you've got." In answer to the *villein*'s protest that these are all well-known maxims, the bird demonstrates that, on the contrary, in the very act of letting him go, the man has revealed his ignorance of them all. As a final taunt, the bird claims that there is a massive and valuable jewel in his body. The *villein* laments this further loss, wishing he had ripped the bird open rather than let it go. The bird merely repeats the maxim "you should not believe everything you hear." There is no hidden meaning to song that is worth destroying song to get at—a conclusion borne out by Marie de France's earlier treatment.[115]

Stone sees the human protagonist of *Oiselet* as a bourgeois author, whose desire precedes and authors his song, in contrast to the loving subject of troubadour poetry, in whom desire follows, and is prompted by, the song of the nightingale. The bird's language is common—in fact, proverbial—because song is the language of the already known: "Song is the originary set of meanings, prejudices, assumptions, and pre-conceptions that shapes the subject's

112. Cerquiglini-Toulet, *The Color of Melancholy*, 52–84.

113. *Oiselet* (ed. Wolfgang). See Huot, "Troubadour Lyric and Old French Narrative," 269; Stone, *The Death of the Troubadour*, chap. 4; and Glyn S. Burgess, *The Old French Narrative Lay: An Analytical Bibliography* (Cambridge, 1995), 100–105.

114. See the analogues listed in *Oiselet*, 7–23. *Oiselet* opens with a disclaimer that the action took place more than a hundred years ago, giving it reach right back to the time of Marie's *Laüstic*, with which it shares the figure of the trapped bird.

115. Stone comments, "Against those who, like the burgher, would readily regard song as *heavy*, *profound*, and *full*, the bird promotes a vision of song as *light*, *superficial*, and *empty*" (*The Death of the Troubadour*, 57). The implication is that song's "song-ness" is in the temporal and fleeting action of performance, not in any written text that might reflect what was, or should be, performed.

knowledge of the world."[116] But who is meant to agree that the loss of oral performance (song) to the textual, unnatural, mercantile economy of the later Middle Ages is worthy of lament? Helen Barr has read the English version of this story, *The Churl and the Bird* by John Lydgate, as a socially conservative attempt to bolster aristocratic natural (bloodline) relations in the face of ascendant rationally based mercantile power.[117] Degree, implies the bird, is ordained by nature, God-given. When the bird taunts the churl about the jewel in her belly and starts to explain its nature, she breaks off. She is wasting her time, she claims, teaching the lapidary to a churl who is unable to tell a falcon from a kite or an owl from a popinjay, that is, who does not understand natural order and distinctions.[118] Barr reads this as ironic considering that the bird herself (newly feminine in the English version) does not give away her own species. Barr interprets the courtly nightingale—especially now that she is female—as a problematic upholder of the naturalness of aristocracy, undermined by her gender and her overanxious and inappropriate appropriation of clerkly discourse.[119] In several versions of this story, however, the bird *is* identified, often as a nightingale. Such explicitness is barely warranted. The fact that she is small, eats worms, and sings "amerously" toward evening and before dawn makes her undoubtedly a nightingale, although it implies a reader less familiar with the courtly norms of the vernacular lyric nightingale (which is usually male) than with the clerkly norms of Latin devotional, bestiary, or natural history texts, in which the nightingale *is* female. The preface to Lydgate's version draws much more explicitly on the bestiary tradition in using the lordship of eagle and lion—animals that tend to head their sections in the aviary and bestiary for this reason—to stress the naturalness of social order. Although the bird seems to uphold the oral and aristocratic, her teaching is "clerkly" (axiomatic and propositional), which associates her with the very material culture that she is trying to denigrate in her ridiculing of the churl.

This very popular story is rich and varied enough to sustain many interpretations. Stone sees the commonality of vernacular song under threat from an ascendant template of authorship as individualized and written. If this is the case, this ascendancy is more of a constant flipside to a period several centuries long; it has been argued that even the troubadours employed writing from the outset, and they certainly sought to individualize their poems. Barr instead sees a court poet wanting to bolster a threatened social status quo against social

116. Ibid., 54.

117. John Lydgate, *Secular Poems* (ed. MacCracken), 468–85. See also Barr, *Socioliterary Practice*, 188; and Lenora D. Wolfgang, "'Out of the Frenssch': Lydgate's Source of *The Churl and the Bird*," *English Language Notes* 32 (1995): 10–22.

118. Both Barr (*Socioliterary Practice*, 192) and Wolfgang ("'Out of the Frenssch,'" 18) misread these lines as if the churl cannot tell falcon and kite (good) from owl and popinjay (bad). The implication is rather that the churl cannot differentiate a more noble bird (a kite) from a less noble one (a falcon), or a more skilled vocal performer (the popinjay) from a less skilled one (the owl).

119. Barr, *Socioliterary Practice*, 196.

forces beyond his control. But I prefer to read it as a poet's admonition to his audience to remain teachable, to listen and read, maintaining a nobility of spirit that allows for mental change and respects the poet's right to free speech. The aspect that makes this most clear is an example that echoes Guido of Arezzo's pairing of the nightingale and the ass. Lydgate seems to have known his source for this story in a version called the *Trois Savoirs* (although he probably also knew that version's self-confessed source, Petrus Anfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis*).[120] Lydgate's *Churl*, the *Trois Savoirs*, and another Anglo-French version of the tale contained in *Le donnei des amants* all share a passage that clarifies the churl's inability to learn from the bird's teaching by comparing him to an ass being taught to play the harp.[121] The *Trois Savoirs* elaborates further, with the bird comparing the churl to a cuckoo:

> E si despent mout enke e peel
> Qe livre escrit au cocuel;
> Kar, quant l'avera tot apris,
> Grant peine e grant travaille mis
> Por faire le bien organer,
> Chaunter desouz e deschaunter,
> Si le cocuel ai bien conu,
> Ja ne dirra plus de "cocku."

> And he who writes a book for a little cuckoo expends so much ink and skin, because, when he has taught him everything, having taken great pain and effort to teach him how to do organum well, how to sing below [the chant] and [how to] discant, if I know the cuckoo well, he will still never sing more than "cuckoo."[122]

The bird of the poem is a performance poet—a singer—whose patrons are churlish if they do not give him freedom to sing as he wishes. This reads like a plea not to censor court poets, who can teach those noble enough to learn from them rather than restrain them. But the little bird's refusal to sing in captivity for the churl implies that intransigence in the face of changing social contexts will silence song. As neither protagonist has a straightforwardly happy ending—the bird flies off, the "world" of the garden desiccates and decays, and the churl is left with nothing—the poem also invites its audience to find a golden mean between these two extreme positions. As I will argue in chapter 3,

120. Wolfgang, "'Out of the Frenssch,'" 19.

121. *Trois Savoirs*, ll. 215–66: "Son travaille piert saunz recoverir / Qe aprent asne a harper" (He loses his labor without reward, / Who teaches an ass to harp); cf. *Donnei*, ll. 1149–50. "I hold hym mad that bryngith foorth an harpe, / Ther-on to teche a rude, for-dullis asse" (ll. 329–40; see also ll. 274–75). Wolfgang, "'Out of the Frenssch,'" 14.

122. Cited in Wolfgang, "'Out of the Frenssch,'" 17; my translation is based on hers but reflects my understanding of the musical training denoted. The complete text of *Trois Savoirs* is split between the editions of Meyer and Wolfgang.

songs that imitate birdsong perhaps offer just such an alternative, and more sonorous, response to the new textuality of singing.

Devotional Nightingales

The vernacular lyric nightingale is a type that has been called the oral nightingale, as opposed to the literary nightingale more readily deriving from the classical myth of Philomela.[123] The literary nightingale, however, is often female, and in Christianized medieval contexts becomes a cognate of the soul, singing the Hours, praising God in song, and ultimately dying for Divine Love.[124] The devotional context for this is the popular piety of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in which a more direct personal access to God became, progressively, and often on the margins of orthodoxy, acceptable. The new place of solitary silent reading within lay contemplative life led to the writing of meditative works in the vernacular. As with the "oral nightingale," the written nightingale may exemplify the communal subject, the singer, and the devoted self. Within this silent context, far from symbolizing the orality of song, however, Philomela sings voicelessly directly from the heart.[125]

Some modern critics have detected a convergence of the vernacular oral lovebird and the Christian Latin tradition after the twelfth century.[126] Certainly this is the case by the late thirteenth century, which sees two *Philomela* poems, one by John of Howden (d. 1278) and the other by the Franciscan John Peckham (d. 1292), in which the nightingale is used "primarily as a metaphor for the devout poet or meditative soul, a parallel to the poet himself."[127] Peckham's poem was particularly popular. As with the troubadour nightingale, the bird and the poet share performative subjectivity, although the content of their performances is different. Rather than the vengeful cry of the vernacular male

123. Sylvia Huot's interpretation of these two nightingales—which she sees instead as lyric and narrative—animates her discussion of *Laüstic*. See Huot, "Troubadour Lyric and Old French Narrative."

124. This may seem paradoxical given that the *Ovide moralisé* (6.2217–3840) interprets Philomela as signifying the world and its pleasures that tempted Tereus (the body) and Procne as the soul. The original Greek tradition for this story, however, has Philomela become a swallow, who, analogously to her tongueless human state, cannot even articulate discrete pitches but can make only chirps; Procne becomes the nightingale with her highly articulate song, a lament for her son Itys.

125. Saenger, *Space between Words*, 275–76.

126. Williams, *Interpreting Nightingales*, 66–70.

127. Pfeffer, *The Change of Philomel*, 39. John Peckham's poem was originally written in Latin but translated into Anglo-Norman for Henry III's wife as *Rossignol* (see Baird's introduction to the edition). The gender issue here is interesting as the nightingale in Peckham's Latin poem is clearly the feminine soul meditating on man's creation and redemption represented by the liturgical Hours. In the French translation it becomes much more associated with the male poet, thus partaking of the positive associations of male poethood from the vernacular lyric repertory. Lydgate wrote two adaptations of Peckham's poem, both of which have a female bird. See Lydgate's *Two Nightingale Poems* (ed. Glauning).

lovebird, the female nightingale of *Philomela* cries an agonized "oci" that articulates a wish to be killed by her own desire for God.[128] In one of Lydgate's English adaptations of this theme, the narrator's first interpretation of "occy" as a cry to Venus to send death to false lovers is "corrected" to this Christian devotional context by an angel in a dream vision.[129] Peckham's *Philomela* occupies a world structured by private, spiritual obligations rather than public, social relations.[130] Williams sees this reflected also in the contrast between the intimate "tu" of Peckham's *Philomela* and the second-person plural address used to the audience in *Oiselet*. I would add that this probably also reflects a difference in the *performance* of the two poems. The aristocratic audience for *Oiselet* and its cognates would have been several people hearing the poem spoken aloud; "vous" is thus grammatically correct, although it also helps to foster a group commitment to the living orality of song (poetry) whose loss the poem arguably laments. By contrast, the passionate devotional nature of *Philomela* is private and personal, manifesting an individual identification with a bodily Christ, his passion, and Mary's passion as it "articulates a fascinated mystification of the material world."[131] Its first person's use of "tu" suggests an intimate address to a single, silent lay reader.

Negative Nightingales

Within the devotional context, the *other* nightingale—the oral, lyric, Romance *rossignol*—was sometimes used as a paradigm of worldly seductions. As a negatively sexual bird, this bird too was often presented as female. The negative female nightingale symbolized the same world of courtly loving that the vigorous male bird did, but her change of gender can be seen as indicative of a negative moral judgment on this kind of behavior.[132] In addition, her song may be considered inappropriately self-preening singing that is elaborate or stagy in performance. Although never appearing together in the same text, the two female nightingales of the devotional context—the positive and negative—offer the polarized perspectives on femininity common in pre-feminist Christianity.

The seasonal song of the nightingale makes it an Easter bird, a feature exploited positively in earlier Latin writers such as Venantius Fortunatus (d. ca. 610) and Alcuin (ca. 735–804), who see it as representative of nature praising the resurrected God through its own seasonal rebirth. At the same time, spring can be associated negatively with the increased sexual activity of animals, at a period when human animals ought to differentiate themselves through a focus

128. On the musicality of the suffering body of Christ as depicted in this poem, see Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire*, 225–40.

129. See "A Sayenge of the Nyghtyngale," in Lydgate, *Two Nightingale Poems*, 16–18.

130. Williams, *Interpreting Nightingales*, 73.

131. Ibid., 75.

132. See chapter 5 for further discussion of the role of gender in bird moralizations.

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on the celebration of central truths of the Christian faith. The long and challenging poem *Ecbasis captivi* (1043–46) takes place during the Easter Eve vigil and then Easter itself, and includes the competitive vocal performance of a number of liturgical items by birds.[133] These birds include the nightingale, parrot, and blackbird, which seem to stand symbolically for the human enactors of the liturgy; any kind of negative reading is difficult to sustain. This poem, however, may have provided the model for later examples of avian liturgies that are more obviously critical or satirical. In Jean de Condé's *Messe des oiseaux* (before 1345) the devotion is pseudo-liturgical, with Venus presiding over a Mass celebrated by the birds.[134] At the moment for the Elevation of the Host, the nightingale lifts up a rose, whose secular and sexual symbolism is instantly recognizable. In praising the birds' Mass, the narrator comments on its sensual pleasures—the aural beauty of the birds' song, the scent and visual appearance of the rose, and the refined movement by which the nightingale places it on the altar of Venus—ignoring any doctrinal content. This morally dubious account brings into question the narrator's final summary, in which he compares the canonesses and nuns (who, during the course of the poem, petition Venus) unfavorably with the birds' service to the goddess. The narrator's "admiration for the preening and pirouetting singing of the nightingale" destabilizes the symbolic association of the nightingale with good singing.[135] The moral unreliability of the narrator of the *Messe* drives a wedge between musical and moral good, suggesting strongly that where the aurally pleasurable sounds of birdsong are concerned, the two may indeed be antithetical. This technique is used even more explicitly in debate poems in which one of the protagonists is the nightingale.

Debatable Nightingales

As we have seen, the relative merits of the song of nightingale and poet were the subject of the debate in a parodic *tenso* between the troubadours Piere D'Alvernhe and Bernart de Ventadorn. In other debate poems the nightingale figures as a protagonist, or even as a judge, particularly in a series of thirteenth-century French poems in which birds debate the relative merits of types of men, typically the clerk and the knight.[136] Of more direct relevance here, however, are cases in which the subject of their contention is the birds' own singing; such poems effectively depict a singing competition. With classical precedents in human singing competitions, notably a number in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Vergil's *Eclogues*, the metaphorical inference that these avian debates are about the qualities of song per se—including human song—is plain.[137] Given that the nightingale figures poetic subjectivity, the idea of a song contest—the artistic equivalent of armed combat—readily figures poetic rivalries. The description of nightingales participating in singing competitions is already found in Pliny's *Natural History* (see the previously cited quotation from Aegidius). The early-tenth-century poem *Species comice* depicts a competition between the nightingale's brood and all the other birds, some of which burst in their unsuccessful effort to surpass the nightingales' song.[138]

Myrto sedens lusciola, "vos cara," dicens, "pignora, audite matris famina dum lustrat aether sidera.	Then sitting on a myrtle branch the nightingale instructs her young: "Now while the stars are bright, my dears, take lessons in your mother-tongue:
Cantans mei similia, canora prolis germina, cantu Deo dignissima tractim refrange guttura.	copy my song; I want to hear the younger generation's notes in seemly hymns of praise to God emerging from your little throats.
Tu namque plebs laetissima, tantum Dei tu psaltria divina cantans cantica per blanda cordis viscera.	We are a joyful tribe of birds, the Lord's musicians and his choir. So let him hear your instruments: make every tiny chest a lyre.
Materna iam nunc formula ut rostra vincas plumea, futura vocis organa contempera citissima."	Tune up your growing vocal chords for instant use; adopt my skills and we'll outdo what pass for songs from other birds' inferior bills."
Hoc dixit et mox iubila secuntur subtilissima; melum fit voce tinnula soporans mentis intima.	The youngsters do as they are told; and soon their sweetly piping art is mingled with their mother's tune in melodies to stun the heart.[139]

133. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals*, chap. 6. Ziolkowski's account of this poem, which includes lines quoted and adapted from Horace, Prudentius, Vergil, Juvencus, Sedulius, and Venantius Fortunatus, plus a few from Ovid, points out the difficulty of tracing any evidence for how widely known it was.

134. Jean de Condé, *La messe des oiseaux* (ed. Ribard). See further discussion of this work in chapter 5.

135. Barr, *Socioliterary Practice*, 178.

136. On *Florence et Blancheflor*, see Bichon, "L'animal dans la litterature française," 519.

137. The singing competition between the Pierides and the Muses ends with the transformation of the Pierides into magpies in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5; see chapter 1. The singing competitions are explicit in Vergil, *Eclogues* 3 and 7. An eighth-century Vergilian debate between the personified Spring and Winter, sometimes ascribed to Alcuin, revolves about the merits of the cuckoo's song; see Peter Godman, ed., *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985), 144–49.

138. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals*, 113.

139. Adcock, *The Virgin and the Nightingale*, 10–13. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals*, 246, translates the nightingale's words more literally: "Singing the same notes I sing, sweet-sounding scions of our progeny, gradually rein back for God your throats, most worthy of song. For you are

It is possible to imagine this poem, like *Aurea personet lira*, as one in which the master instructs the children in grammar and *cantus* by teaching them a song that dramatizes that learning situation and their respective roles.[140]

The Owl and the Nightingale (probably after 1272) uses these two birds to debate a number of issues, chief among them the role of song in love, both human love and love of God. The nightingale calls the owl's cry howling and yelling that is horrible to listen to and conveys nothing but woe. The owl claims that, on the contrary, she sings smoothly, with resonance, in a song that consoles those in sorrow. The merry piping of the nightingale's song is the feeble whistle of an unripe weed according to the owl, who objects, moreover, to its content and effect: it is an incitement to lechery, terminating abruptly when the deed is done. The nightingale stresses that it is quite the reverse; her singing reflects the perpetually joyful song of heaven and serves as a reminder to clerks of what awaits them, inspiring them to a godly life. The poem therefore presents both perspectives on the nightingale: Does her beautiful song relate to *caritas* or *cupiditas*? She claims the former, the owl the latter. Even her female sex maintains the ambiguity: while women were thought more naturally disposed to cupidity, both Cistercian traditions and, later, popular piety stress the femininity of the soul's proper human relationship with God, using nuptial and maternal imagery from the Song of Songs.[141] We have already seen that both negative and positive nightingales in devotional contexts tend to be presented as female.

John of Salisbury restates a worry originating in Augustine's *Confessions* that becomes a Cistercian commonplace when he stresses that those singers who corrupt their hearers with songs more melodious than those of the nightingale and parrot are more apt to move hearts to carnal pleasure than to devotion. He quickly adds, however, that "when such songs are measured in the proper old mode and decent form, without exceeding the bounds of what is good through their lightness, they redeem the heart, deliver it from anxious cares and remove the immoderate ardor of temporal things, and by a manner of participation of happiness and of repose and friendly joy, they attract the human heart to God."[142] The owl and the nightingale essentially represent two sides of the same devotional coin: one a theology of joy, which to its detractors lasciviously refuses to prepare for death by repenting of its sins; the other a theology of repentance, which to *its* detractors morbidly refuses to celebrate the gift of life and the wonders of God's creation. There is no clear moral resolution in favor of one over the other within the terms of the debate. Like the nightingale, the owl has a multivalent symbolism: bestiaries stress its filthy personal habits and equate its love of darkness with pagans, Jews, and heretics; yet it sings the Hours and looks like a priest. In fact, both birds sing at night, and both have foul habits; there is little to choose between them.

The owl's attitude toward singing accords with the sentiments found in several thirteenth-century writings, all extracted from a dictum of Jerome's that a monk's duty is weeping, not teaching.[143] Comments on singing close in date to *The Owl and the Nightingale* can also be adduced in support. David of Augsburg (ca. 1235) specifically asks that singers avoid singing in a courtly way (*vocem curaliter*), and the *Statuta antiqua* of the Carthusian order (before 1259) asks monks to use their voices to promote not delight in song but delight in the lamentation that is more proper to monks than singing.[144] The nightingale stresses a joyful creationist theology; the owl, by contrast, represents a redemptive theology, more somber and focused on death, woe for a sinful world, and desire for heaven. The nightingale is thus part of an Eriugenan picture of the relation between ecclesiastical chant and the song of the natural world, both embodiments in sound of an eternal heavenly harmony. Such music may properly be joyful, complex, even polyphonic, praising the cyclical renewal of life in a seasonal song. But these praises of all creation may be seen as the praise of unbounded *pro*creation by an owl whose redemptive theology focuses instead on the omnipresence of death. The irresolution of the debate implies that these opposed theological strands have the same possibilities for abuse and success. *The Owl and the Nightingale* thus recognizes the musicality of birdsong, together with its potential for bringing joy (if high-pitched and with a profusion of quick notes) or solemnity (if slow, sustained, and less varied melodically). The latter may be criticized as musically boring and its solemnity seen as inappropriate; the former merits both approval and opprobrium depending on the ends to which the joy produced is directed. Not at issue is the basic power of song and its deeply ethical character.

Singers as Birds

Although owls do not feature in the musical pieces that are the focus of the next chapter, the nightingale is central. The complexity of its symbolism makes available more subversive meanings while leaving an audience at liberty

the happiest people, only you are the psaltery of God, singing divine songs in the inmost parts of your heart."

140. The feminine role of the mother nightingale might suggest nuns and girls but probably refers to men and boys. In much later periods in England, the books that taught language to children were known as *feminae*; see Cerquiglini-Toulet, *The Color of Melancholy*, 6.

141. Martha G. Newman, "Real Men and Imaginary Women: Engelhard of Langheim Considers a Woman in Disguise," *Speculum* 78 (2003): 1203 and references in n88.

142. Denis Foulechat, *Le Policratique de Jean de Salisbury* (ed. Brucker), 116: "Mais, quant telz chans sont amesuréz *par droite et meure maniere et honeste fourme sanz passer bonne et mete par legiereté*, il rachent le cuer et delibrent de cures angoisseuses et ostent desmesuree ardeur des choses temporelles, et, par une maniere de participacion de leesce et de repos et d'amiable joie, actraient le cuer humain a Dieu et meuvent avec les angelz." The French "translation" expands here on the Latin considerably; the italicized passage "translates" "moderationis formula."

143. On "monachus non docentis sed plangentis habet officium," see *The Owl and the Nightingale*, 69.

144. "Nec vocem curialiter frangas in cantando." See William Dalglish, "The Origin of the Hocket," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 31 (1978), 8; and McGee, *The Sound of Medieval Song*, 25. See also chapter 4.

to understand only those that are more straightforward. The orthodox is not obscured, but the pleasure of the heterodox is also accessible. Ultimately, the nightingale as a representative of secular singing can be heard and enjoyed, its skill appreciated even if its song is not strictly considered part of *musica* and/or its meaning is ultimately rejected as immoral. Nevertheless, as a representative of an oral performative tradition in which songs formed part of essential communication, the nightingale's position becomes problematic in the context of increasingly textualized vernacular musicalized songs in the fourteenth century. To this extent, the nightingale's song mirrors the plight of sung performances by human singers. The nightingale was arguably utilized by human composer-singers as a symbolic means of promoting the dignity of orality, of shoring up the value of oral and aural musical practice within a textual culture.

If fine singing can be, for some at least, birdlike in a positive sense, later medieval composers' and singers' adoption of bird pseudonyms or nicknames might be expected, particularly that of the nightingale, much in the same way that, for example, Jenny Lind was known as "the Swedish nightingale." Although affective nicknames (Hasprois, Solage, Grimace) from the later Middle Ages are the kind that appears most widely, there is also evidence for singers styling themselves as birds.[145] Perhaps we should exclude the composer and music theorist Johannes Ciconia (ca. 1370–1412), since his seems to have been a genuine family name. The choir school for the boys of St.-Jean in Ciconia's birthplace, Liège, however, was under the sign of the stork (Latin: *ciconia*); the young singers trained there were often referred to as "pueri de Cyconia" or "duodeni in Cyconia." This bird would arguably have been just as fitting as any songbird as a sign for a choir school. The stork was said to have received its name from the sound that it made (in Latin the verb is *ciconizare*) by clacking its beak together, which perhaps gives a humorous image of young boys singing. In addition, the stork was held as a paragon of intergenerational nurture—with the young taking great care of the old in repayment for the care they themselves received as children—a moral message to send to the young *duodeni*, taught by older choir members, probably at the monetary expense of their parents.[146]

145. Yolanda Plumley, "An 'Episode in the South'? Ars Subtilior and the Patronage of French Princes," *Early Music History* 22 (2003): 128–30, notes that many Jean Soulages can be found in archival records of this period. No further evidence (indication of first name in the musical sources or indication of profession in the archival sources), however, links any of these to the composer so called in *Ch*. The possibility remains, therefore, that Solage is a sobriquet. For the composer Jean Carmen (fl. ca. 1400–1420), the surname is not a sobriquet but may derive descriptively from his work as a notator (music scribe), singer, and composer.

146. Philippe Vendrix, "Johannes Ciconia, *cantus* et *musicus*," in *Johannes Ciconia: musicien de la transition*, ed. Philippe Vendrix (Turnhout, 2003), 9n8; MacCulloch, *Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries*, 174. The *voces animantium* tradition contains the phrase "ciconias crocolare vel ciconizare." See, for example, Johannes Aegidius Zamorensis, *Historia naturalis*, 1482.

One of the papal chaplains in the second half of the fourteenth century is called Alanus Avis dictus Vogel, although this may relate to this individual's fondness for birding occupations rather than metaphorically to singing.[147] The forty-second piece in the now destroyed Strasbourg manuscript (*Str*) was labeled "Exultet mea vena / quodlibet de Phylomena" according to Johannes Wolf, and is designated "Motetus Philomena" in Edmond de Coussemaker's numerical index.[148] This cryptic labeling has been linked to a composer cited in the most famous of the so-called musician motets that exist from fourteenth-century France and England. B. de Cluni's *Apollinis eclipsatur / Zodiacum signis / In omnem terram* (also copied in *Str)* praises groups of contemporary musicians (*musicorum collegio*), among them "the eternal nightingale" (*jugis philomela*). Although Charles van den Borren admits that "philomela" could be a piece rather than a man, a more recent editor of the motet text considers it a sobriquet for one Arnaldus Martini.[149] Regardless of whether the person referenced is Arnaldus Martini, the motet text demonstrates that a fourteenth-century singer's praises could be sung (here, quite literally by the singers of the motet text) by calling him a nightingale. The label in the Strasbourg source may simply be a descriptive title, or may refer to any other singer famous for singing, improvising, or composing this piece and known by this nickname. Its context in a list of musical worthies suggests that being a human nightingale is a positive quality.

The heterodoxy of context that we have explored in music-theoretical writings and in the broader medieval cultural realm offers a diverse and problematic but promising counterweight to the orthodox grammatical definitions of *vox* in the interpretation of birdsongs and "birdwords" in the notated music of the later Middle Ages. In the next chapter, the myriad winding paths through the forest of bird symbolism will be traversed in a way that does not merely marvel at or taxonomically catalogue the existence and use of the calls but offers an analysis of their possible meanings.

147. Andrew Tomasello, *Music and Ritual at Papal Avignon, 1309–1403* (Ann Arbor, 1983), 220. Also listed as Alain Oiseau, this singer from Liège had his illegitimacy dispensed and was awarded a parsonage in 1354. He died on October 2, 1397.

148. *Str* 29b (42). See notes in Charles van den Borren, *Le manuscrit musical M. 222 C. 22 de la bibliothèque de Strasbourg (XVe siècle) brulé en 1870, et reconstitué d'après une copie partielle d'Edmond de Coussemaker* (Antwerp, 1924), 75.

149. See *Two Fourteenth-Century Motets in Praise of Music* (ed. Bent), which uses the texts and translations of A. G. Rigg. Johannes de Muris is praised for "color," Philippe de Vitry for many deeds, Henry Helene for tenors of motets, and Denis le Grant is praised with Henry. Regaudus de Tiramonte and Robertus Palatio are merely listed. Guillaume de Machaut is cited for music and poetry, Egidius de Murino mentioned, and Garinus noted for his baritone voice; the names P. de Bruges and Geoffrey of Barillium follow.