COX, SARAH NOEL, M.A. Scientific Sympathy and Understanding in *Mary Barton*. (2020)
Directed by Dr. Anne Wallace. 23 pp.

In Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton,* readers are introduced to a society that operates on strict gender expectations that any given person needs to play within their social status. It is through the characters of Job Legh and Alice Wilson that a naturalist mindset is examined to be key in breaking social bias and building a bridge to overcome the social divide. Furthermore, Job Legh is hypothesized to be the key factor in accessing places of power that neither rich nor poor can get to because of their limited worldview. Through Job's evolving role as a naturalist, as caretaker to his granddaughter, as mediator, and as an activist for the dissolution of the class divide, Gaskell highlights the importance of scientific sympathy as an alternative worldview.

COX, SARAH NOEL, M.A. Antifraternalism and Biblical Allusions in *The Summoner's Tale*. (2020)
Directed by Dr. Amy Vines. 20 pp.

Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* presents readers with an assortment of stories that deal with moral issues. Within *The Summoner's Tale,* Chaucer subvertly examines what would lead someone in the fourteenth century to have antifraternalist thoughts. Thomas's loss of his child, his poverty, and his multiple visits to various friars all cause him to become a site of antifraternalism. Friar John's hypocrisy, his greed, and his own refusal to acknowledge Thomas's and his wife's grief shows how he has become negligent in his duties as a leader of his religious community. Through the use of subversive themes, biblical allusions, and scatological gifts, I conclude that the corrupt friars created their own ruin by neglecting their congregation and being blinded by greed.

SCIENTIFIC SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING IN *MARY BARTON*

AND

ANTIFRATERNALISM AND BIBLICAL ALLUSIONS IN *THE SUMMONER'S TALE*

by

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SCIENTIFIC SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING IN *MARY BARTON*

In Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton,* readers are introduced to a society that operates on strict expectations of the role that any given person needs to play within their social status. The novel sets up a world where it is determined that the workers will work without question, the masters/rich will profit from the labor of underpaid workers, and the rest of society will function to support this cycle. Within *Mary Barton* we see characters that upset the natural or comfortable order. John Barton, the Chartist who dreams of equality, serves to represent the political unrest of underpaid workers. Job Legh's naturalist mindset allows an opportunity for change to be seen within this community through his mediation acts. Alice Wilson, the female herbalist, causes conflict with Job's character in that she sheds a light on how the study of botany was gendered, by society and social norms, to be more successful for men than women. Her character's naturalist vocation and motherly disposition added to the disruption; Gaskell uses the stereotypes of these two characters to examine exactly how gender allowed for mobilization across the social hierarchy. However, the novel theorizes that self-taught naturalist Job Legh is the catalyst for lasting change within this society because of his mediation skills, his fluidity between the supposed roles of society, and his ability to look beyond labels and see that all humans, at their core, are the same. Gaskell's creation of Job's unique abilities, through his naturalist worldview and taking on the role of caretaker

to his granddaughter Margaret, is built to bridge the social divide and access places of power within the classes that neither rich nor poor can get to because of their limited worldview.

In various ways Elizabeth Gaskell's handling of Job's character shows how a study of natural history broadens one's understanding of how the world operates in relation to those in it, which lends itself to a more intimate perception of what connects all beings in the world. Job's naturalist worldview offers him the ability to recognize the shared instincts that are present within all of society. Consequently, he is able to eloquently convey this rationale to Jem Wilson and Mr. Carson in the pivotal scene that changes the common misconceptions that the two warring classes have of each other. Gaskell, and the novel, show how Job's knowledge and naturalist perception are the crucial elements that make him capable of bridging the social divide. His mastery of scientific names is shown to give him an advantage in seeing how society is divided. The novel's plot proposes that Job's understanding and knowledge of the Linnaean system helps him see distinctions and commonalities more easily than the other characters. His scientific understanding enables him to keep personal bias out of his mediation, so he is able to examine things on a case by case basis. That is to say, the novel shows Job's character arc as a shift from an argumentative old man to an accepting, rational mediator. Gaskell effectively uses Job's naturalist viewpoint to display how an accepted understanding of hierarchies allows for one to see through the the common misconceptions associated with class. The novel's plot proposes Job's understanding and

knowledge of the Linnaean system helps him see distinctions and commonalities more easily than other characters.

Mary Barton's characterization of Job Legh as a Linnaean scholar is what sets him apart from the other naturalist character Alice Wilson. It is with Job's understanding of the Linnaean classification system, his ability to transfer this knowledge to his society's problems, and his caretaking of his granddaughter Margaret that allows him to be the connection that Gaskell uses to explore a solution to social divide. Through Job's naturalist studies the novel identifies sympathy as the necessary tool to bridge the social divide and connect the warring classes. While this revelation happens at the end of the novel and after many terrible things have occurred, it is my argument that if it were not for the character of Job Legh and his naturalist, Linnaean worldview then the classes within the present society would never have begun to see their similarities and understand the only way for change to happen is to work together to make their town a better place.

Section 1- Linnaeus and the Scientific View

Gaskell portrays Job to be familiar with the Linnaean system of naming and identifying specimens, which brings him pride from having superior knowledge, and therefore authority, of the discipline. Job is a character who, because of his Linnaean way of thinking about natural science in relation to human class, is able to discern meaning and help foster understanding in others because of his self-taught understanding of the world.

In *Mary Barton's* initial meeting between Job and Mary Barton, his use of scientific language baffles Mary. Mary, when asking about the "weird-looking creatures that sprawled around the room" is "not prepared for the technical names which Job Legh patterned down on her ear… the strange language only bewildered her more than ever" (Gaskell 74). The description of Job's words, upon Mary's hearing of them, is the novel's portrayal of the miscommunication that occurs. The words Job uses, specifically Latin names, do not further Mary's understanding of the specimens; they confuse her more than she already was. While his knowledge of natural history eventually begins to work in his favor and helps him to understand others around him, during this encounter it only works to show how Job is alienated from other working-class characters because of the scientific nomenclature that is part of his self-education.

In *Bloom: The Botanical Vernacular in the English Novel* Amy King aptly explains the reasoning behind the Linnaean system of taxonomic names. According to King:

> Linnaeus is most famous for having invented the system of binomial nomenclature, based on a Latinate conjunction of genera and species that still has currency today. ...Under the Linnaean system the "phrase name" is transposed into a biverbial, reducing a plant's name from a polysyllabic mouthful into a simpler and more easily obtained two-word formula. For instance, the plant *Physalis annua ramosissima ramis angulosis glabris foliis dentato-serratis* becomes simply *Physalis angulata.* (18).

King goes on to assert that the popularization of botanical nomenclature among working-class men and women can be credited to the simplified system that Linnaeus invented.

Furthermore, Philippe Selosse describes the Linnaean naming system to be acting as a "go-between" that is, "an epistemic frame" (158). What makes Selosse's argument interesting is his claim that "the arbitrary human idea carried by the name [of a plant] is a substitute for the natural idea that is suggested by the plant" (159). In this argument, Selosse is asserting that the names given to plants by botanists represent our perception of the plant, which makes the name an artificial or arbitrary placeholder. This viewpoint can be seen in the beliefs of Will Wilson, a sailor and storyteller, who refutes Job Legh's claims of validity based on scientific nomenclature, and believes in folktales told by his fellow sailors.

In this conversation between Job and Will Wilson, we can see prime examples of how classic hierarchies, be they social, scientific, or even academic, limit interaction and understanding that creates misunderstanding and anger, from which no authentic dialogue of trust can emerge. These two characters work together to represent the class divide and lack of communication that exists primarily because the two classes speak different languages and accept or reject a hierarchical system that limits their perceptions of one another, which demonstrates the larger problem between the classes of clarification and misperception. In Job and Will's conversation, and in the social conflicts of worker and master, it is not until both parties find common ground that interpretation and understanding can begin.

During his conversation with Will, Job makes a pointed remark on Will's flying fish story. Job provides the scientific name of the fish, "the Exocetus; one of the

Malacopterygg Abdominales" thus showing his belief and appreciation of the creature (Gaskell 206). Due to Job's self-proclamation of being a naturalist, he rejects the mermaid on account of Will's second-hand tale and because of his understanding of the classification of species. This disbelief in one oddity over another baffles Will. Upon hearing Job's recognition of the flying fish, he points out the double-standard that Job has exhibited. "You'll credit me when I say I've seen a critter half fish, half bird but you won't credit me when I say there are such beasts as mermaids, half fish, half woman. To me, one's just as strange as t'other" (Gaskell 205). Will sees all as equal. He believes that if a strange thing like a flying fish can be accepted in a naturalist's point of view, then something equally fantastic as a mermaid has no reason to be doubted.

This scene implies that a naturalist worldview is changeable and influential. This scene exemplifies what Roland Végső calls a "sympathetic dialogue" because it argues for mutual understanding through open dialogue (180). In *Mary Barton,* open dialogue allows classes to understand each other's plight in a way that gives agency to the under-privileged and this self-representation allows political representation.

While a scientific viewpoint is obvious within the characteristics of Job, the novel's opening sequence highlights the significance that a scientific worldview will play throughout the novel. In Chapter 1, we are told of "fields near Manchester, well known to the inhabitants as "Green Heys Fields" (33). We are made aware of the striking "contrast in these common-place but thoroughly rural fields, with the busy, bustling manufacturing

town" (33). The initial focus on contrasts within the novel, here regarding physical landscapes, highlights the struggle between working class men and the mill owners, the class struggles, as well as the supposed gender roles that arise. However, in this opening scene it is important to note that the contrast is between rural and industrial as it foregrounds the shift that is in Manchester. As Lisa Surridge notes, "The industrial revolution caused massive shifts in the organization and control of work and family life, resulting in adjustments of class and gender relations across large sections of English society" (331). Britain itself is changing, and within the novel we see how gender roles change with it given the similarities and differences of the two naturalists within the novel.

After the narrator continues observing the landscape, we see a farmhouse with a garden out front, which is described in detail.

> The porch of this farm-house is covered by a rose-tree; and the little garden surrounding it is crowded with a medley of old-fashioned herbs and flowers, planted long ago, when the garden was the only druggist's shop within reach, and allowed to grow in scrambling and wild luxuriance-roses, lavender, sage, balm (for tea), rosemary, pinks and wallflowers, onions and jessamine, in most republican and indiscriminate order (34).

By describing the herbs as "old-fashioned" the narrator is highlighting the societal shift to modern medicine. No longer is the garden the first stop for remedies. Even in the farms out by the fields, which the narrator later admits take city-dwellers a bit of a walk to get to, the druggist's shop is the preferred and perhaps more trusted means of relief for the

sick. This is even more apparent by the garden's disarray, its “scrambling and wild luxuriance” signaling the lack of care given by the grower. Furthermore, its “indiscriminate order” portrays the lack of planning in the grower’s mind to the importance of how the plants are ordered. The apparent lack of order within the garden could then signify to readers herbalist Alice Wilson’s take on naturalist medicine. She comes to represent the (not classic but) commonplace, home remedy, maternal figure with concerns to naturalist study. Her scientific background is lacking, in it that she seems to be in a sense self-made and taught in her practice, which is not unlike Job; however the novel portrays his as having a more scientifically inclined mindset. The difference between her and Job Legh is their naturalist studies and purpose of practice. However, the garden’s disregard to hierarchy is our first clue that it will take thinking that is outside of the box, yet within the garden, that ultimately changes the common perceptions of Manchester’s citizens.

Looking onward, the first glimpse of the citizens of Manchester comes from a stolen holiday. The narrator grapples with the idea of it being “a holiday granted by the masters, or a holiday seized in right of Nature and her beautiful springtime by the workmen” (34). From this line we see how working-class citizens were at the hands of their masters in reference to how they spend their time. Their holidays needed to be granted, which most likely this day was, but perhaps the notion of a holiday seized from Nature herself fueled these workers to press on despite their hard conditions.

The novel stages the introduction of the citizens in an almost scientific grouping, as if initially zooming in on individual groups then slowly pulling back to settle on people as a whole. Groups of "merry and somewhat loud-talking girls...", "a number of boys, or rather young men… Here and there a sober quiet couple… or husband and wife… seldom unencumbered by an infant, carried for the most past by the father" (35). First, you have the young men and women, those who are not attached to anyone, then come the whispering couples, attached yet not legally bound to one another, followed finally by the married couple, often followed by little ones. The swift progression from individuals to couples portrays the booming population that the city was facing. Michel Foucault echoes Gaskell's emphasis on this zooming out of society, and he argues that the use of this structure "shows how class structure and scientific vernacular are important to the novel" (133). The narrator stops the examination at the father figure, metaphorically zooming in on a "fine specimen" (Gaskell 36). The array of bodies present displays the society in an almost scientific ordering which reinforces the novel's careful attention to the scientific point of view and the study of a specimen, in this example John Barton, that is to follow.

From the beginning of *Mary Barton*, we are invited to view this society through a scientific perspective. We first see the society in pieces by picturing the individual boys and girls, then zoom in on couples, and finally examine families, the group as it be, before viewing a singular specimen. This scientific approach or categorization is

important to keep in mind when reading the novel and by placing emphasis on it in the initial chapters Gaskell is highlighting the importance of science, or a scientific view/eye, will play within this society, and notes the importance of hierarchy and the scientific approach as a viewpoint for this novel.

Section 2 - Naturalist Practices and Gendered Sympathies

In *Mary Barton* the characters of Alice Wilson, an herbalist, and Job Legh are portrayed to represent both aspects of the study of natural history. Alice Wilson is known for having cures to common illnesses, and she becomes a maternal figure within the novel. People come to her for remedies when they can't afford to call the doctor, or when they know the doctor would only prescribe them medicine they simply can't justify spending their hard earned money on given their other expenses. Thus, Alice becomes the best option to modern medicine. She is not known as eccentric; she is accepted as the maternal figure who wants to help all. In Alice's first mention in the novel, her brother praises her kind and selfless spirit: "I will say there's none more ready to help with heart or hand than she is. Though she may have done a hard day's wash, there's not a child ill within the street but Alice goes to offer to sit up, though maybe she's to be at her work by six next morning." (41) In this aspect, her study as a naturalist is feminized and predetermined to be for the good of all and not for monetary gain. When Alice herself makes her first appearance she is arriving home after having

> been out all day in the fields, gathering wild herbs for drinks and medicine, for in addition to her invaluable qualities as a sick nurse and her worldly occupations as a washerwoman, she added a considerable knowledge of hedge and field simples;

> and on fine days, when no more profitable occupation offered itself, she used to ramble off into the lanes and meadows as far as her legs could carry her (46-47).

When studying the language associated with Alice's herb gathering one must note the nonchalant way Gaskell describes it. The narrator posits that Alice collects her herbs when there is nothing else to do; however, according to her brother, she is the first to give up her time when someone is in need. Gaskell's downplaying of Alice's natural studies coincides with the feminization of botany and how for women of a certain class it was a reputable hobby, not a matter for serious inquiry. In this instance the bias associated with a naturalist study is apparent in the narrator's description of Alice's practice. While it could be further argued that her naturalist practices weaken her as a character, she is justified in her practice by her respect that she receives within her community.

Alice dotes on Mary, who she describes as a "motherless girl", and even invites her over to tea with the intent of introducing her to Margaret; the two girls eventually become best friends (61). Alice's affinity with those in need is apparent in her caring for these two girls, neither of whom have mothers. Alice's sympathetic spirit is in part due to her nature but is immensely heightened thanks to her naturalist knowledge. She is able to do more for the sick than simply comfort them. With her practice she can try to alleviate their pain or help them get through their suffering. In this way she uses her naturalist perspective with sympathy for those who are suffering. Her intent is to help, not to profit or raise her station, nor to take personal pleasure in a hobby. She is not portrayed as being unusual for having her practice, and while she may not be taken as seriously as her male

counterpart, her knowledge is accepted and appreciated by her community for the good that she does with no gain to herself.

While Alice is known for her medicinal practices, it is the other naturalist within the novel, Job Legh, who is the focal point of my examination. Upon their initial encounter, Job is described by Mary Barton as a "wizard" (74). Job is pedantic in his learning, and, at first, he is so set in his own beliefs and practices that he nearly misses his opportunity to become the kind of man who can enact change within his own community. Although Job is not as respected throughout the community as his female counterpart, he eventually earns respect because of his ability to mediate and see past inherent bias.

While the aforementioned scene between Job and Will is often used to debate the authority that scientific language implies, a valid and timely argument, I'd like to view this scene as a pathway to sympathy, and what one researcher calls the necessary tool in the naturalist's kit. Sympathy allows Job to combat social bias because it opens his worldview to the notion that all humans are deserving of respect. Job has the ability to conduct scientific observations and insightfulness that lends to being sympathetic. The argument is that these qualities function together to make the model naturalist. According to Jim Endersby, "Sympathy was a scientific skill, partly innate and partly acquired, that Victorian naturalists regarded as necessary to fully understand the living world; considered as a skill it relates to an older sense of sympathy that referred to grasping the

"affinities" between living things" (300). The argument here is not dealing with the common "Christian sympathy", as it were. Instead, the model naturalist would possess a sympathy that was grounded in empathy, and that is related to all living organisms; which can be seen in Job's careful handling of a scorpion that scares his granddaughter Margaret (75-76).

Job's sympathy can also be seen in his assuming the role of caretaker to his granddaughter Margaret. We learn that he came to care for her when she was but an infant. On his first sight of baby Margaret laying in her basket his "heart gave a leap, and th' tears comed rushing into [his] eyes" (150). He assumes care for Margaret and raises her as his child. At one point his adoration for Margaret is described as a "caress as a mother caresses her first-born; stroking her with tenderness and almost altering his voice as he spoke to her " (74). In this instance, we can see Gaskell bending the supposed gender roles and likening Job's actions to that of a woman. Therefore, it is implied that Job is not embarrassed to portray his emotions plainly, he has no qualms with recognizing the emotional depth that Margaret adds to his life. Job's sympathetic characteristics are examined by Clare Pettit, who suggests that Gaskell argues that men could benefit by acquiring supposedly feminine characteristics: "by displacing such characteristics as attention to detail, sympathy and patience, usually ascribed to women, onto the privileged 'male' domain of science, [Gaskell] finds an unobtrusive way of demonstrating their importance to civilization" (327). As well, I assert that by placing these characteristics onto two characters with naturalists' affiliations: Gaskell is

examining how the naturalists mind is more readily open to embrace these characteristics as ungendered and vital to a human understanding of the world.

Gaskell handles Job as a character who is grappling with multiple gendered expectations. Alice was respected in her practice because she helped others, but the way in which her naturalist activity was described inherently brought down her credibility. Job was respected for his knowledge on various subjects but was pushed into a domestic sphere that limited his mobility. And while yes, they both used their practices for the good of their communities, Alice was only seen as a maternal figure while Job becomes a working-class hero. During the time period of *Mary Barton* Ann Shteir argues that "the professionalization of botany meant the masculinization as well" which therefore, "confined women to domestic contexts, primarily as educators of and writers for children" and that women are eventually pushed out of the study of natural science (156-57). In this way Alice is the one who is limited, even though Job carries out feminine responsibilities within his household and in his care for Margaret.

Job's learned sympathy allows him to view all as equal and to see past superficial class and gender distinctions. Job assumes Margaret's household duties and, at one point, becomes both host and hostess, which can be examined as Gaskell playing with supposed gender stereotypes to show how naturalists are caring and sympathetic. In fact, Gaskell writes his domestic skills in terms that make him implicitly feminine. "Job was in the full glory of host and hostess too, for by a tacit agreement he had roused himself from his

habitual abstraction, and had assumed many of Margaret's little household duties" (202). By assuming Margaret's duties Job is portraying qualities usually reserved to one sex or the other. More specifically, he is taking on the work and/or roles that are usually assigned to women.

In 1855, just six years after the publication of *Mary Barton,* Charles Kingsley published *Glauces, or the Wonders of the Shore*, which asserts that the quality most valuable to any naturalist is gentleness. Not simply gentle as in gentlemanly but more so a gentle spirit, "'"which make our scientific men, as a class, the wholesomest and pleasantest of companions," adding that naturalists are "the most blameless, simple, and cheerful, in all domestic relations; men for the most part of manful heads, and yet of childlike hearts" (47–48). Charles Kingsley was a naturalist with sympathies for labor workers. He was an important figure during the Victorian age. His published works had much influence on those who read them. Kingsley view can be considered essentially contemporary with the novel; and therefore he verifies how relevant Gaskell was in creating the character of Job Legh.

As we have seen in Job's character, having discernment and gentleness indicates that he possesses a spirit that tempers the naturalist worldview with sympathy. These qualities all allow Job to see through bias that obstructs how we relate to those around us. Gaskell's conceptualization of the naturalist Job, with his ability to conduct scientific observations and possessing insightfulness that lends to being sympathetic, demonstrate how these qualities function together to make him the model naturalist.

Within *Mary Barton* we see Job's naturalist study, as well as his caretaking of granddaughter Margaret, as a necessary factor in his ability to bridge social divides. Sympathy gives Job discernment that allows him to not only help himself become the caretaker that Margaret needs, but also the mediator that the society needs. If not for his understanding of the naturalist worldview, which lends itself to his knowledge of hierarchies not superimposing themselves into his acceptance of all creatures as equal, which we see during his discussion with Will, Job would not be able to later on mediate a conversation, metaphorically, between the two warring classes, that ultimately brings about change to his industrialized city. While this change does not happen quickly, Job's intercession acts as the spark that starts the fire.

Section 3 - Mediation and Understanding

As we turn towards the closing scenes of the novel, a conversation occurs between Mr. Carson, Job Legh, and Jem Wilson. The characters within the meeting represent wealth, natural science, and the working class, respectively. While Job is technically also a worker, and Jem has considerable technical knowledge, I refer to the characters representations based on how they are perceived. Job is a natural scientist first and foremost, so he brings that understanding to the meeting. Jem, even though he has an abundant knowledge of machines and is able to use that knowledge to build one himself, approaches the meeting as a kind of representative of the mill workers who have been displaced because there is no work to be had. Of course, for Jem there is no work to be

had because his reputation has been tainted because of the murder trial. However he still identifies as a mill worker, so that is his contribution to the larger conversation of miscommunication. Furthermore, it is through this meeting, these three archetypes working together, that social change can begin to occur. Within the conversation we see the same tactics that Mary and Margaret used, reworked by Job, albeit less subversively, to allow the parties present to come to a mutual understanding of one another's plight, and see each other as human beings instead of master and worker.

Job Legh acts as a mediator in the conversation between Mr. Carson and Jem Wilson because of his worldview that has been influenced by natural history. His lack of common perceptions and his understanding of commonalities allows him to bridge the social divide and access places of power that neither rich nor poor can get to because of their limited worldview. Danielle Coriale argues that

> The pursuit of scientific knowledge only becomes a form of self-help when it is fully dissociated from professional aspirations and material ambitions. According to this logic, working-class naturalists could use their knowledge symbolically to bridge class divisions and participate in a larger scientific community without actually improving their material conditions. In doing so, they represented a necessarily provisional form of social mobility that left prevailing hierarchies intact (351).

Job's naturalist worldview is portrayed as being for the benefit of both classes, not with the intention of moving himself up in the world, in this way his act is selfless. He is mediating with sympathy for both parties. Charles Kingsley argues that, thanks to their particular combination of rational and emotional virtues, naturalists "stand out most

honourably in the midst of a self-seeking and mammonite generation, inclined to value everything by its money price, its private utility" (46). In this way Job is once again associated with a female tendency to do only for the benefit of others, much like Alice Wilson. And as noted by Noah Heringman, "Job Legh… pursues knowledge without any productive or economic value and, hence, more fully represents [a] kind of educational enlightenment" (272).

If Job were able to bridge a previously insurmountable divide, and be a mediator to the two warring classes without disrupting the hierarchy, then Job's character is revealing that a natural history viewpoint enables a mutual understanding to be achievable between the rich and poor. Danielle Coriale draws the same conclusion as she argues that Job is included in the novel "to parse (as much as to posit) natural history as a solution to a class-based antagonism" (361). Furthermore, Amy Mae King argues that, "Job Legh's natural history avocation is thus not only a detail about working-class life but a structural model for reform: it offers a cure for the *ills of perception*. In seeing the affinity between the working-class man and himself, the industrialist rights the wrongs of misclassification that had set in motion the violence" (266, emphasis mine).

Section 4 - Conclusion: Science and Politics

In the eighteenth century it was common for local botanists to meet to share books or new specimens that had been found in the local area. Amy Secord notes that, "Local botanical societies met once a month for the inspection of specimens and the borrowing and return of books. At the end of each meeting, specimens were selected to add to the

society's herbarium which, together with the library, was kept in the pub" (278). It is a fact that botanist society meetings became so popular that they often were held with the intent and purpose to hide political meetings during times of unrest. As Amy Secord writes, "It is extremely difficult to recover political or religious sympathies from the sources available and we do not know how many botanical meetings turned into political ones" (278). However, not once in the novel is Job seen in a pub. He does attend a Chartist meeting; however, it takes place in John Barton's house. What then could Gaskell's purpose be in separating Job from the pub, the noted scene of naturalist meetings? Gaskell's decision to focus solely on Job within the domestic sphere evens out his correlations with Alice Wilson. He exists not only as a political figure, though he certainly could be construed as one given his advocacy for John Barton during his conversation with Mr. Carson, but as a way to grapple with gendered expectations and class boundaries.

If removing Job from the pub scene makes him more pliable in terms of gendered roles, does it thus remove him from the politics so often discussed during said naturalist meetings? I assert that it does not: instead Gaskell is working the politics within the plot subversively by removing Job from the very scene; yet by involving him in the chartist meeting and conversation with Mr. Carson, Job is in the very thick of the political plot. My reasoning for his connections with the political movement and domestic sphere are further tied together through the pairings of husband and wife. Within these domestic relationships the spouses often become sounding boards for each other. Job acts in this

way to John Barton, who at that point had lost his wife. Job becomes a listening ear to which Barton can air his thoughts. Indeed, when he travels with Mary to the trial, he uses his connections within the naturalist community to find her lodging and a lawyer for Jem. If not for these things, it is easy to assume a drastically different ending for characters.

Job looms as a large factor for working class reform but the call for change is apparent in more than just this character. Marjorie Stone points out that "Gaskell weaves into her text a "plentitude of working-class discourse" by including passages from Chartist poems, working-class ballads, proverbs, maxims and nursery rhymes, as well as John Barton's radical discourse, Ben Davenport's deathbed curses, and Job Legh's language of Christian submission" (180, 186–87). *Mary Barton* is a call for action in more than just factory reform but in societal expectations as well. Thomas Carlyle, in his 1831 essay *Characteristics* wrote, "The old ideal of manhood has grown obsolete and the new is still invisible to us, and we grope after it in darkness, one clutching this phantom, another that" (29). Gaskell wrote this novel as much to shed light on the working man's plight as she did to examine the ways in which the industrial revolution caused the need for revision in the roles of men and women. We have seen this through the naturalist characters of Alice Wilson and Job Legh. Alice represents what the study of botany was growing into for woman, a hobby that earned them respect but that they weren't respected for. Job has the classic qualities of a seasoned naturalist with the modern additions of sympathy, which make him the perfect mouthpiece through which reform can occur.

Job Legh's ability to transcend social planes and become a metaphorical bridge through which understanding occurs is the novel's demonstration of how sympathy really is a necessary item in the naturalist's toolkit. Lisa Surridge asserts that Gaskell wrote her novel about a working-class hero when the very nature of working-class manhood was perceived to be under threat (332). This is evidenced with the various men we see throughout the novel. All have their struggles, but it is Job who finds ways to bring his community together. The world had been reformed by industrialization, and with that the identities shifted. The inhabitants of Manchester were living in a new world where the supposed gender roles of before did not stick as they once had. Through Job's evolving roles as naturalist, as Margaret's caretaker and only paternal figure, as mediator, and eventually as an activist for the dissolution of class divide, Job Legh highlights the importance of scientific sympathy as an alternative worldview.

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ANTIFRATERNALISM AND BIBLICAL ALLUSIONS IN *THE SUMMONER'S TALE*

Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, written between 1387-1400, is a collection of stories famous for its humorous and witty depictions of people during medieval times. These tales, told by various pilgrims on a voyage, deal with moral issues and corruptions that are still apparent within our present society. *The Summoner's Tale,* which serves as the main focal point of this paper, subvertly aims to uncover what drives a person to reject religion. The narrator of this tale is a summoner, which is someone who, as part of the judicial system, gave orders to people that they needed to appear in court. It is important to note that the Summoner's story directly follows that of the friar, who is argued to be the mortal enemy of summoners and serves as a rebuttal of sorts. While reading through *The Summoner's Tale* it is vital to remember one of the purposes we can derive from the tale is that the summoner is trying to convince us of the corruption of the mendicant order during these times.

Within the tale, Thomas's and his wife's loss of their child, his visits to multiple friars in order to find spiritual comfort, all of which leave him penniless, and his invocation of Saint Simon[1] are all precursors to his scatological gift to Friar John. These elements all work together to act as Thomas's rejection of confession; as well as religion

[1] Saint Simon, a recognizable saint of the fourteenth century, is closely associated with the belief of the remission of sins, and also sacraments such as baptism and confession.

itself. The biblical allusions within the tale point to Chaucer's use of Thomas as a doubting figure, like Jesus's apostle of the same name, to examine the corruption and the hypocrisy of the mendicant orders. It is my argument that this figure is mirrored within the tale to examine how friars of the medieval times were unsatisfactory in offering their parishioners hope or reaffirming their faith. Therefore, it could be argued that the doubting figure implies a direct link to God, i.e. no middle man, is needed to understand Christ's truth and gain spiritual clarity. Furthermore, a close reading of the interactions between Friar John, Thomas, and his wife will examine how friars painted themselves as victims suffering for their religious affiliations, when in fact they were the antagonizers of the antifraternalist movement because of their greedy ways.

Thomas's invocation of Saint Simon acts as a refusal to confess to Friar John.

> "Nay", quod the sike man, "by Seint Symoun!
> I have by shryven this day at my curat.
> I have hym toold hoolly al myn estat;
> Nedeth namoore to speketh of it", seith he,
> "But if me list, of myn humylitee" (2094-2098).

By invoking this particular saint, Thomas is showing his doubt in confessional. As Glending Olson points out, Saint Simon is "most closely associated with confession and remission of sin in order to affirm the validity of his previous confession to a member of the secular clergy rather than to his psuedo-apolistic visitor" (63). Given Thomas's windy and insulting gift to Friar John, it is obvious that Thomas sees all friars as greedy and working for the devil. The corruption of the friar causes Thomas's anger to grow and is ultimately released as a stream of wind that causes no actual harm to Friar John, besides

insulting him. Friar John's interactions with Thomas and his wife, his reprimanding the couple for their apparent lack of faith after the death of their child, and his thoughtless lack of recognizing their grief are all elements that prove John has become careless in his duties as a friar. Friar John's actions lead to Thomas's refusal to confess to him, which in turn leads to his scatological gift to Friar John that ultimately shows how the resistance to mendicant orders and antifraternal thoughts arose during this time period. In conclusion, these components all evidence the impending implosion of the mendicant orders that comes about due to corruption and greed, as represented by Chaucer's hypocritical Friar John.

In *The Summoner's Tale* the corruptness of the mendicant orders is evident to the audience when we see Friar John going from house to house, begging for money in exchange for prayers. He promises to pray for his parishioners if they donate to his building fund and gives an outward showing that he will remember them by writing their names on a wax tablet:

> A peyre of tables al of yvory,
> And a poyntel polysshed fetisly,
> And wroot the names alwey, as he stood,
> Of alle folk that yaf hym any good,
> Ascuances that he wolde for hem preye. (1741-45).

However, further on in the text we see that after Friar John leaves each house, money in hand, his errand boy erases the names from the tablet:

> A sturdy harlot wente ay hem bihynde,
> That was hir hostes man, and bar a sak,

> And what men yaf hem, leyde it on his bak.
> And whan that he was out at dore, anon
> He planed away the names everichon
> That he biforn had written in his tables;
> He served hem with nyfles and with fables. (1754-60).

This deceitful ploy is set up early on in the text to alert readers to be wary of Friar John. His manipulation of his illiterate parishioners by overtly writing their name in a holy book and then scraping it away after receiving a donation shows his greedy intentions have begun to overshadow any spiritual help he could offer his people. Our first introduction to him shows his cunning. Immediately after preaching to his faithful parishioners in the church, he goes house to house, with the guise of visiting the sick and shut-in, those who are not well enough to travel from their homes to be a part of their religious community. As seen by his talk with Thomas, John claims to be gathering money "to make oure cloystre" (Chaucer 2099) He is preying on the weak in hopes of shaming them into giving him money or food because they did not attend his sermon, under the guise that he will pray for them. The trickery of the wax tablet shows his evil intentions. Friar John does not want to help his people; he simply wants their money and food.

This scene displays the trope of the corrupt friar and signals to readers that evil abounds within the church. According to Guy Geltner, this early set up of a deceiving friar is one that was common in the literature of this time, and the harassment, rejection, and violence in opposition to friars was a major preoccupation of mendicant authors and became an expectation of their intended audiences (105). However, it is important to note

that the friars did not see themselves as being deceitful. Instead, they viewed their labors as suffering for the cause of Christ, and the 'hardships' they endured as proof of their suffering. The berating's they received because of their trickery, their claim to abstinence and modest living are all laid bare within *The Summoner's Tale.* Henceforth, we will examine the friars' own perception of their abuses and how they constructed their identity as sufferers for Christ with their own narrative of hardships.

Friars were responsible for their reputation as corrupt because of the detailed records they kept of their abuses; however, the friars attempted to paint themselves as the ones being abused in an attempt to cover up their wrong doings. Geltner demonstrates that people from all walks of life lambasted and occasionally assaulted the brethren, orchestrating detailed scenes of urban violence in the process. Geltner argues that Friars saw themselves as victimized protagonists in an eschatological struggle, and claims that Friar John, and other friars in texts of the late fourteenth century, are working to make the "friars seen through the eye of an evolving mendicant identity and are driven, among other motivations, by a desire to enhance a particular aspect of this identity—namely, Christological or, more broadly put, eschatological suffering" (103-4). The assaults, and the myriad of motivations and diverse goals behind them, preclude us from associating antifraternalism with any one ideology or agenda, let alone allow us to brand many of its proponents as religious reformers. At the same time, Geltner demonstrates the friars' active role in forging a medieval antifraternal tradition, not only by deviating from their founders' paths to varying degrees, but also by chronicling their suffering *inter fideles* and thus incorporating it into the orders' identity as the vanguard of Christianity.

Suffering was not a figment of mendicant propagandists' imagination, but rather the "lachrymose mode of remembrance they fostered regarding their own history which became a major, albeit unintentional, vehicle for shaping and transmitting an antifraternal tradition" (105). Through Geltner's work we can begin to see antifraternalism as a resistance to friars or members of the medieval mendicant orders, and in this case, begin to comprehend how this tradition continued in part because of the friar's records of their own misdeeds and the punishments that arose from them.

In more ways than we can examine, *The Summoner's Tale* is an example of what leads an individual to turn their back on certain religious orders and to begin to hold antifraternalist sentiments. The character Thomas loses his child, his money, and is angry at the church because he has visited numerous friars in a fruitless search for peace.

> As help me Crist, as I in fewe yeres,
> Have spent upon diverse manere freres
> Ful many a pound; yet fare I never the bet.
> Certeyn, my good have I almoost biset.
> Farewl, my gold, for it is al ago! (1948-1953).

This search is what led him to lose all his money, and he is beginning to realize the corruption that is present within that religious community. Friar John's visit to Thomas's house is what ultimately pushes the grieving man over the edge and leads him to reject begging friars, as he says his gift must be split and "every frere have also muche as oother" (2134).

When Friar John comes to Thomas's house, he begins their conversation by retelling Thomas the sermon he had preached. This was Friar John's usual tactic when

guilting his sick parishioners into giving him money. His first mistake, in this case, was asking Thomas about his wife. When Friar John finds her, he "ariseth up ful curteisly, / and hire embraceth in his armes narwe, / and kiste hire sweete, and chirketh as a sparwe" (1802-4). He proceeds to flatter her, but subtly chides her for not being in church by saying "Yet saugh I nat this day so fair a wyf / In al the chirche" (1808-9). She immediately asks God to forgive her, then welcomes Friar John into her house. The subtle reprimand he gives her demonstrated the guilting technique that is used on naive parishioners to get donations. In this case, Friar John asks, "Have I nat of a capon but the lyvere, / And of your softe breed nat but a shyvere, / And after that a rosted pigges heed" (1839-41). The kinds of food he requests are decadent and in opposition to the pious lifestyle he is supposed to live, which shows his abuse of his position of power.

Thomas and his wife are not lavishly rich. They are living in poverty, and Thomas, assuming he is the breadwinner of the family, is too sick to even go to church and claims to have spent all their money visiting various friars. Friar John's requests could potentially get the family in more financial trouble, yet John shows no true regard for their plight and his role in worsening it. Instead, he thinks only with his stomach. Thomas's wife, being guilted by Friar John, would be demonstrating a lack of faith if she was not to comply with his requests, so therefore, if she does not serve him the food he wants she opens herself up to be reprimanded again.

Friars seeking out the women of the household was apparently a common tactic among the mendicant friars of the late fourteenth century. According to Arnold Williams,

"A great deal of the succeeding literature abounds in charges that friars particularly seek out women and *spiritually* seduce them. Women are often pictured as being most receptive to friars" (512). This ploy is seen within *The Summoner's Tale.* Friar John also manipulates the wife into doing his bidding by claiming to have seen her child. After John places his outlanding dinner request, the wife starts to object, which John quells by saying, "His deeth saugh I by revelacioun…/ I saugh hym born to blisse / In my avision, so God me wisse!" (1854, 1857-58). Williams goes on to say that "sometimes one sees statements that friars give cause for scandal by their frequent and close association with women as confessors and councillors" (512). Purposely seeking out women and wives causes friars once again to paint their own history as the aggressors. These clerics prey on the weaker and more vulverable members of the household to exploit their guilt. It could also be asserted that friars sought out wives because of the power they had in their marital relationships. Wives could certainly be useful in helping a friar to get the household's money; though the financial decisions typically fell under the husband's jurisdiction, wives often had some sway over their husband's decisions.

The trick of seeking out women as objects of prey has its roots in the biblical story of the serpent seducing Eve in the garden. Friar John comes into Thomas's and his wife's household, their safe space, exactly mirroring how the devil in the form of the serpent approaches Eve while she is in the garden, a space where no harm had ever befallen her. Likewise, the serpent and Friar John seek out the women when they are alone, and not being influenced by their husbands. If *The Summoner's Tale* were to follow the same trajectory as the biblical story of the fall, the flirtation of Friar John with

Thomas's wife would lead to her succumbing, one way or another, to Friar John's wishes. Then, in turn, she would bring Thomas to follow his wishes as well. However, while Thomas's wife does seemingly comply with Friar John's requests, she does not bring Thomas along with her, and she even displays a form of opposition to submitting to Friar John's every wish. Thomas's wife's opposition to the friar's manipulation of the death of her child is another glimpse that Friar John's usual system of coercion is losing its efficacy.

When Friar John's tells her to leave the men alone and prepare the food, Thomas's wife offers the friar a critique that will be the catalyst for Thomas's later act of antifraternalism: "Now, sire," quod she, "but o word er I go. / My child is deed withinne thise wykes two, / Soone after that ye wente out of this toun" (1851-1853). Friar John responds by claiming, "His deeth saugh I by revelacioun" (1854). He then goes on to preach a mini-sermon on the importance of prayer, and recounts for her the stories of Moses and Aaron, two men who fasted and prayed when they were going through hardships. The death of their child a mere two weeks after Friar John's previous visit, and his lack of sympathy for their loss is another example of the friar's corruption. Instead of comforting the family in their bereavement, he berates them for their lack of faith in God's will while simultaneously underscoring his own hypocrisy.

> Lo, Moyses fourty dayes and fourty nyght
> Fasted, er that the heighe God of myght
> Spak with hym in the mountayne of Synay.
> With empty wombe, fastynge many a day…
> He fasted longe and was in contemplaunce. (1885-88, 1893).

And then when discussing Aaron, Friar John brings up abstaining from strong drink.

> To preye for the peple and do servyse,
> They nolden drynken in no maner wyse
> No drynke which that myghte hem dronke make,
> But there in abstinence preye and wake,
> Lest that they deyden. Taak heede what I seye! (1896-1901)

When discussing Moses and Aaron, he claims that friars are pure and live in fasting which is in direct opposition to the order he just placed of liver, soft bread, and a pig's head (1883, 1839-41). Friar John's lack of sympathy for this grieving family is yet another way that Chaucer is displaying a system of corruption that is breaking down within the text.

Furthermore, not only is the system breaking down due to Friar John's vision being blinded by greed, but by the glossing or misuse of scriptural references. As pointed out by John Fleming, "Much of the friar's hypocrisy in his claim to piety and abstinence is readily apparent, and his actions hardly need collation with the fraternal Rules to be exposed. ...The friar carefully remembers to say, "*Deus hic!"* a variation of the Franciscan greeting, as he enters Thomas' house, but he clearly leaves the rest of his fraternal obligations outside" (693). Also referencing Friar John's greeting upon entering the household, Paul Szittya claims that Friar John "encourages the most lavish bequests… Instead of 'Pax huic domui', his greeting is an abbreviated 'Deus hic', with emphasis no doubt on *hic*, in view of the friar's love of fine food and drink" (243-244). Both of these critics reiterate the hypocrisy of Friar John's request for rich food when he

is supposed to be maintaining a simple diet. He is breaking multiple rules of his fraternal obligations by making extraordinary requests, and his blatant disregard for these basic rules shows how little he cares for the spiritual state of his people.

Another aspect of the friar's hypocrisy appears in the way he quotes scripture. According to Christiania Whitehead "several of the friar's quotations seen to have been culled not first-hand from scripture, but second-hand, form Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum,* where they are already being pressed into service to support a specific moral agenda" (143). The use of a second hand version shows carelessness. While it could be argued perhaps that this use is so the text is mose easily understood by parishioners who may not have had much education, it is my assertion that the use and misuse of these scriptures demonstrated a lazy, careless ethic of Friar John. By abusing scripture, Friar John is asserting his power over his parishioners, since he is the one choosing to use these scriptures and spread them. Would his congregation have had the power to question him on his wrongdoings? Thomas was confined to his couch, so even though he called him out, it was in a private place where Thomas gained power by being on his own turf. Would other members had the audacity or courage to voice concerns while in a more public setting? As Whitehead goes on to say, "When the Friar preaches in church, he refers to the gloss rather than to the Scriptures themselves… The letter kills, but the spirit (or gloss) gives life" (143). The friar's biblical glosses allows him to justify his gluttonous spirit by reaffirming his requests. He uses interpretations, not the actual scripture itself, which exposes his hypocrisy. By using Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum* he

is not only displaying his corrupt ways but also putting his parishioners one step further from their religion; and in this way, he could be driving them to antifraternalism.

During his sermon to Thomas, Friar John berates him for lack of faith and giving. He advises Thomas to confess his sins and let go of the anger he feels. "Ire is a synne, oon of the grete of sevene, / Abhomynable unto the God of hevene; / And to hymself it is destruccion" (2005-2007). In John's words, the act of being angry, whether the anger be directed towards the church or not, is a sin and displays a lack of christian faith. This choice of words by Chaucer is particularly interesting in the fact that one way to read this text is as signifying that the end or destruction of the mendicant orders is near. By close-reading these lines it could be inferred that Thomas's anger is not only a sign of antifraternalism but a sin that brings about the dissolution of friars. By not allowing anger, the friar is limiting what a parishioner can feel towards his religious leaders. Thomas responds by telling him that he has visited many friars to no avail. To which Friar John says:

> O Thomas, dostow so?
> What nedeth yow diverse freres seche?
> What nedeth hym that hath a parfit leche
>
> To sechen othere leches in the toun?
> Youre inconstance is youre confusioun.
> Holde ye thanne me, or elles oure covent,
> To praye for yow been insufficient? (1954-1960).

In a metaphor, Friar John compares his order-and himself- to a physician, which no doubt increases Thomas's doubt of the Friar's legitimacy since he has gone to so many and not

received help at any. In the same sense, Friar John asserts that none of the other friars that he visited would have been able to help him anyway, since he himself is the best. This assertion is evidence of Friar John's belief that his parishioners were too dumb to see through his tricks. He sits in Thomas's house, demanding lavish feasts, berating him and his wife for lack of faith, and not sympathizing with them over the death of their son. In my eyes, it is no wonder Thomas has begun to doubt the need for confession when someone as conceited as Friar John is the main religious authority to be found. Friar John is careless in his way of living because he does not believe, as previously suggested by Geltner, that he is doing anything wrong by asking his parishioners to give him lavish gifts, because he is doing it for the intent of getting their money for his own mendicant order. This greedy mindset blinds Friar John to witnessing the role he plays in destroying Thomas's spiritual belief and blinds him to the doubt that is vividly apparent as soon as he walks in the door.

Harkening back to the spiritual allusions that are present within *The Summoner's Tale*, Thomas can be seen as a doubting figure reminiscent of the apostle of the same name. In the book of John, we learn of what is now known as the figure of "doubting Thomas." The story goes:

> Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then he saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.

> Thomas answered, and said to him: My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. (*Douay-Rheims Version,* John 20:24-29).

Like Thomas the apostle, Chaucer's Thomas begins to refuse to believe in what he cannot see. He has visited numerous friars and given them all his money, but it does not solve his problems. The only thing he can see is the hypocritical nature of Friar John. By choosing to believe in only what he can see, Thomas becomes a double of his namesake, Thomas the apostle. Coincidentally, Didymus, what Thomas the apostle is referred to as, means twin or double[2]. Chaucer, in his deliberate choice of naming the one who has antifraternal thoughts, sets up even more biblical allusions throughout this tale that work to show the impending reform of the church.

During Friar John's and Thomas's conversation in which Friar John rebukes Thomas for visiting multiple friars and then refusing to confess to him, Thomas invokes saint Simon, a recognizable saint of the late fourteenth century. Saint Simon is most frequently associated with the Creed's expression of belief in the remission of sins, and also involves sacraments, particularly baptism and confession (Olson 61-62). Thomas invokes Saint Simon after Friar John has claimed that Thomas is angry and needs to confess. By doing so, Thomas refutes Friar John's earlier claim that he is the only person who can help him and reaffirms his own, new-found belief that confession is an

[2] δίδυμο - Greek, translates - dídymo, didymus meaning twin (Pring).

unnecessary practice. Furthermore, as argued by Glending Olson, Thomas's refusal to confess also works to show his disbelief in the validity of Friar John's holiness.

Digging further into the invocation of Saint Simon, we find that Thomas's appeal works on a broader level to invite others to join his resistance. Olson argues that "Chaucer imputes to Thomas a piece of popular doctrinal knowledge that circulated at all social levels in word, text, and pictures, and embeds his oath tightly in its dramatic context" (63). Thomas's invocation of Saint Simon is his outward showing of his belief that confessional is useless because he has been to many and it hasn't helped him; it also shows his rejection of Friar John's 'holiness'. Because Saint Simon was recognizable as the saint most closely associated with confession, it is not wrong to assume that Thomas's particular exclamation would heighten the reader's belief in the man's plight. He has lost his child, his money, and now his faith. The utterance of Saint Simon underscores the problems posed by the mendicant orders and reminds the reader how big a part that faith and religion play in the lives of people. By calling out St. Simon, Thomas displays his understanding that the religious intermediary standing before him is woefully incapable of providing the spiritual support he is seeking.

Moving towards the end of the tale, we see that Thomas's patience for Friar John's hypocrisy runs out: "This sike man wax el ny wood for ire; / He wolde taht the frere had been on-fire / With his false dissymulacioun" (2121-2123). Thomas sees Friar John's begging for what it really is, hypocritical greed. This greed makes Thomas even more angry than he previously was. He sees the inadequacy of religion and how it drove

him to poverty. Therefore, Thomas cannot imagine why someone who is supposed to care about him would want him to suffer, and not offer to help him or show compassion for his grief. He is exasperated with the corruption that he sees within the mendicant orders and does not know how to do anything about it. To release some of his anger, he offers Friar John a gift. Friar John is so consumed by greed that he fails to recognize Thomas's anger, and does not balk at the strange instructions for receiving his gift:

> And doun his hand he launcheth to the clifte
> In hope for to fynde there a yifte.
> And whan this sike man felte this frere
> Aboute his tuwel grope there and heere,
> Amydde his hand he leet the frere a fart;
> Ther nys no capul, drawynge in a cart,
> That myghte have lete a fart of swich a soun. (2145-2151).

Thomas's release of his anger is seen by Friar John as an insult to his profession. In this instance, his eyes are briefly opened to the anger that Thomas feels towards him, but he still remains unaware of the implications of this gift. He sees it only as an insult and not as a sign of something bigger, like Thomas being a site of antifraternalism. According to David Raybin, "[Thomas's] churlish gift provides substance for an antifraternal scatological joke that figures the breaking of wind as the parodic equivalent of a friar's abuse of his professional status as a representative of the Holy Spirit" (Raybin 94). By Friar John's consequent actions, running to the Lord of the town and explaining what happened, then not realizing the joke of the situation, we can begin to understand how dense and oblivious Friar John is to his parishioners' sufferings.

Since Friar John missed the humor in the joke, can we assume that others of the time also would have? Or would they understand Thomas's scatological wit and not read anything into it? Does it really matter? In this instance, we must remember the time when Chaucer was writing this piece, and the courtly position he occupied. The lens of humor perhaps makes the antifraternal themes more palatable to the courtly circles that Chaucer was in. According to Arnold Williams, "Chaucer accepts and reflects the attitude of the secular party - and no wonder, for the secular clergy must have dominated the thinking of the upper-class, governmental circles in which Chaucer moved" (513). However, he argues that we cannot take Chaucer's portrayal of the friars as "typical of the parochial clergy. Too many vested interests are at stake, too many social attitudes are in conflict to take the word of Chaucer" (513). If keeping this in mind we could begin to question the legitimacy of the corruption within the mendicant orders but if we reference back towards the beginning of this paper, we see Geltner's assertion that this trope was evidenced throughout various texts of the time period. Therefore, while we should question to what extent Chaucer is playing up the resistance to mendicant orders because of their hypocrisy, we do not have to question whether this corruption and resistance were as widespread and important as they seem to be. The corruption of mendicant orders is something that can be easily traced, whether it be through the work of other scholars or through religious texts themselves. As evidenced by Chaucer, through Thomas's depression and rejection of religion, we see the immediate physical toll that a loss of a child and subsequent loss of faith leaves on a person.

Looking towards the biblical allusions present within *The Summoner's Tale* we can begin to see how prevalent and important these allusions are to display the corruption of the mendicant orders. According to Perm Szittya, "One of the most significant thematic patterns that unifies the tale has received little notice in criticism: the series of Biblical allusions made by the narrator, the characters, and especially by the friar himself, associating his way of life with that of the apostles." (239). The biblical allusions are included to work as more than just a series of allusions to make readers understand the powerfulness of losing faith or to add to the comedic value of the text. They are posited within the text to show and validate the hypocrisy of Friar John. Szittya goes on to argue that, "The pattern of analogy between the friar and the apostles, of course, serves an immediate comic purpose, namely, to highlight the hypocrisy of this self-important, self-indulgent representative of the religious life. That hypocrisy Chaucer has made manifest even in the most minute detail." (242). Chaucer is examining what drives a person to reject faith through a comic lens. It is important that he does this because of the aforementioned circles that he is in. He can't be seen as someone who is having doubts in their faith, so he is exploring these doubts in a subversive, comedic way. He uses Thomas to examine what would happen if one were to outright reject a friar's insistence of confessional. The gift Thomas gives to Friar John then works as an exploratory method of rejection that does not do any physical harm to the person having antifraternal thoughts or the religious official who is dealing with said person.

Thomas's gift has been read in many ways but the one I wish to briefly examine is Thomas's gift as being a sign of the impending apocalypse. Before we look at other critic's opinions it is vital that we trace the word apocalypse and its meanings. The word apocalypse comes from the Greek word apocryptein, which basically means to uncover (Pring). While the modern word apocalypse is usually associated with the book of Revelations end of times, it actually just refers to a revealing. When we think of the word as an uncovering instead of as a cataclysmic destruction of the world, we can begin to see that Thomas's gift did bring about an apocalypse of some sort. I would argue that Thomas's gift is a sign of the beginning of the end of the church, but not in an immediate destructive end. Instead, this gift is advocating for a gradual change or reform of the church and mendicant orders, because, much like the gift and the acknowledgement of the inferiority of its power to produce change, Chaucer understands that to change an infrastructure of this size would not and could not be an immediate change. John Fleming argues that it's imperative that Chaucer's Friar is "an unctuous scholar and an itinerant confessor" because it proves his argument for a reformation. Fleming goes on to claim that "At the heart of Chaucer's poem lies the very questions raised by the secular masters at Paris well over a century before. William of Saint-Amour's twin aims had been to limit (or do away with altogether) the university chairs held by the friars, and to limit the power of the confessional to the parish clergy" (690). Fleming lays out manageable, immediate steps that could be taken to initiate the beginnings of the church's reform.

When we take these steps into consideration, we see that Thomas's scatological wit could be influential in producing a change to the hypocritical friars.

Chaucer's tale, through his use of biblical allusions, shows how the church has become corrupt. The biblical allusions offer the tale a comedic guise under which Chaucer subvertly examines what leads one to have antifraternalist thoughts, which is proved by various scholars to be a concern of the time period. Thomas's loss of his child, his poverty, and his multiple visits to various friars all cause him to become a site of antifraternalism. Friar John's hypocrisy, his greed, and his own refusal to acknowledge Thomas and his wife's grief shows how he has become negligent in his duties as a leader of his religious community. Not only does *The Summoner's Tale* predict why the church would eventually collapse and need a reform, but it leads scholars and leaders of the time period to see manageable ways that this reform could begin to take place.

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