THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF MONSTERS: "THE PRIORESS'S TALE"
AND SONG OF ROLAND IN ANALYSIS AND INSTRUCTION

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This project begins by examining current trends in the study of medieval literature, particularly in the area of medieval literature dealing with religious conflict. Literary review demonstrates that since the late 20th century, critical examination of medieval literature has been dominated by postcolonial analyses. A dedication to postcolonial analyses, in effect, has stagnated the field of medieval literary analysis, particularly in regard to those texts representing religious differences. By focusing examination on two seminal medieval texts, "The Prioress's Tale" from Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and the anonymous *Song of Roland*, this dissertation argues that traditional, postcolonially-inspired analyses are ineffective and inconsequential for modern, post-9/11 audiences, particularly high school students. More substantial and authentic readings are revealed through an application of Jeffrey Jerome
Cohen's monster theory, a hypothesis articulated in his essay "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" (1996) which, when coupled with conventionally psychoanalytic concepts of psychical reality and jouissance, reveals that the cultural creation of monsters is unchanging across time and culture. By illustrating this phenomenon through the Christian creation of Jewish and Muslim monsters, through literary examinations of "The Prioress's Tale" and Song of Roland respectively, this project hints that the same cultural forces feeding monster creation in the Middle Ages are alive in our modern age in the creation of terrorist monsters. The project culminates by arguing that the most effective way to teach literature of the Middle Ages to post-9/11 students is to focus on literature ripe with religious conflict in order to tap into affective connections to be found between modern students and the people of the Middle Ages. This is a bond best forged through a discussion-driven approach to literary instruction.
Chapter One: A Future for Medieval Studies

In 1992 John Van Engen reached out to fellow medievalists, calling for a reevaluation of the future of medieval studies. Driven by his concerns that Medieval Studies no longer held a respected place in the Academy, Van Engen incited colleagues to prove that Medieval Studies was not dead and that the role of the medievalist extended beyond examinations of philology, manuscript editing, and translations of Old English and Latin. The most renowned medievalists of the past 50 years responded in force. The result was a conference at the University of Notre Dame where the likes of Jeremy Cohen, Kathleen Biddick, Roberta Frank, Derek Pearsall, Lee Patterson, Judith Bennett, and others organized to, not only validate, but to enliven Medieval Studies.¹ Fundamental to the conference were the following ideas:

- The Middle Ages could no longer be studied in "a cultural vacuum," but rather must be approached through interdisciplinary study (Sheehan 10).
- Scholars of the Middle Ages must remember to focus on how history was made *then* by the people living it (Jeremy Cohen 89).

¹ While Professor Van Engen no longer maintains precise numbers of conference attendees and session participants, in an email dated 29 August 2011 he informed me that the 1992 conference was "reasonably [well attended] for that kind of thing" and that individual sessions were attended by "over 50 in every session," with some sessions bringing upwards of 75. I include this information from Professor Van Engen to support my claim that the conference engendered a dramatic influence on the future of Medieval Studies; the publication of his book two years later makes the influence even more significant.
• Medieval study must be a dedicated pursuit to avoid stasis in the field; texts should not be regarded as a canon of "authoritative statement and assertion" (MacCormack 106), but should be open to interpretation as time and culture changes.

I will address each of these in turn, but to contextualize my position, I focus first on Sabine MacCormack's assertion. Stemming from the longtime resistance medieval studies had to using theoretical approaches in literary analysis, MacCormack encouraged scholars at the conference to recognize that, without progressing alongside other literary concentrations, advancement, reevaluation and rearticulation could not occur and the past medievalists study truly would be dead. With her presentation "How the Past Is Remembered: From Antiquity to Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Beyond," Sabine MacCormack encouraged her colleagues to challenge "authoritative statement and assertion" (106) in order to inspire new readings and invigorate medieval canonical texts. Other conference presenters echoed MacCormack's sentiments. In "Saving Medieval History; Or, The New Crusade," William Chester Jordan addressed what he perceived to be fears felt by medieval scholars concerning academic "mood swings" (259) that employed hip theoretical "jargon" in a "fundamentally unnecessary way" (262). Jordan encouraged his colleagues to move forward from "the analytic and descriptive studies" (264) with which medieval literary scholars primarily concerned themselves.

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2 This point is discussed in depth in the following pages. For reference, see Bruce Holsinger, Allen Frantzen, Catherine Brown, John Dagenais and Margaret Greer.

3 As an interesting side note, in making this point, Jordan references an article from a 1935 edition of *Speculum*, by C.W. David, that warns medievalists that "much remains to do" and further, that the vision of medievalists has been "unfortunately limited by tradition" (David in Jordan 264). Jordan sets David's article in contrast with an article by Alexander Haggerty Krappe appearing in the same issue of *Speculum*. Of Krappe's article Jordan comments: "Pompous in
Recognizing limitless interpretive opportunities ahead, Jordan reasoned "how valuable it can be to employ a range of critical theory to explicate" and enliven text blunted by traditional textually limited analysis (262), and further, he challenged his peers to "take seriously the opportunities offered by the liveliness of current debate and the assertive call for new theories, new methods, new contexts, and new subjects of inquiry" (261). Of particular interest for my project, which examines relationships between Christians and medieval religious others, is that Jordan fortified his point by offering an example illustrating how theory could be exercised to examine relationships between Christians and other marginal groups, such as Jews (261). Similarly, Jeremy Cohen's presentation "On Medieval Judaism and Medieval Studies" hinted at postcolonial leanings by exploring how, in the Middle Ages, Jews consistently lived under Christian or Muslim rule in communities that simultaneously stifled and defined Jewish medieval culture (74). At the conference, Jeremy Cohen called for "openness to the 'other'" (89) in medieval study, to develop a more valuable understanding of cross-religious relationships of the Middle Ages. And, with "Orientalism and Medieval Islamic Studies" Richard W. Bulliet formally united medievalism and postcolonial theory, supporting a direction for medieval studies only previously approached by Allen Frantzen.  

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4 In addition to his call for an increased use of theory in textual analysis, Jordan's presentation also offered comment on why he believes education in Medieval Studies fails at the high school level; he further extends his thoughts as to how it could succeed. I return to Jordan's presentation in my final chapter to address his views on Medieval Studies and education.  

5 While the following discussion focuses on numerous medieval scholars who embrace postcolonial analyses of medieval literature, it is important to recognize that a limited number of medieval scholars have consistently opposed the application of postcolonial theory to medieval
Later I explore further the contributions of Van Engen's conference to Medieval Studies, but because I seek to demonstrate a recent scholarly commitment to postcolonial analysis to read and understand religious conflict in the Middle Ages, it is first necessary to introduce Allen Frantzen's *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (1990), a text essential to medieval critical study of the recent 20 years. With his text, Frantzen sought to reveal the Anglo Saxon age as elemental to literary study, rather than as the specialized topic he perceived it was held to be. Though Frantzen claims his text will not be a product of critical theory, his chapter "Origins, Orientalism, Anglo-Saxonism in the Sixteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" offers perhaps the first formal analysis of medieval text through a postcolonial theoretical lens. Through his analysis, Frantzen draws an ideological union between the Orient and the Early text.

Among the most vocal are John Dagenais and Margaret Greer who, in "Decolonizing the Middle Ages: Introduction" (2000) assert that such readings "risk reimporting the very hegemonies we are working to overthrow, making 'postcolonial theory,' for example, into yet one more tool of Modern and postmodern colonization of The Middle Ages" (437). With her 2000 "In the Middle," Catherine Brown expressed disdain over all applications of theory to medieval text being "troubled by the modernizing agenda implicit in the application of theory." In regards to postcolonial theory specifically, she continues, "the knowledge / power activities of the two disciplines in the world of the living are incommensurable in ethically crucial ways; medievalism will never affect the lives of medieval people as Orientalism has affected and continues to affect the lives of living people" (550). While Brown, Dagenais and Greer are in the minority, it is valuable to recognize dissention within medieval studies in regards to the application of postcolonial theory.

The direct reference reads: "Although this book addresses neither critical theory nor the verbal skills of students directly, it connects both subjects to the study of Old English" (x). While clearly Frantzen intended to *use* theory, I make the point here only because of its ironic sentiment. Frantzen was wary of the new wave of applying theory to text flourishing in the climate in which he was writing; his contention at the time, as indicated in his Preface, was that literary theory was making literary study more foreign, less appealing and increasingly obscure (ix). His remarks regarding theory are particularly interesting now because a review of medieval theoretical essays places his *Desire for Origins* as a forerunner in the application of postcolonial theory to the Middle Ages; and, his work has been cited by numerous later scholars (Evans, Jeffrey Cohen, Sylvia Tomasch, Ananya Kabir and Deanne Williams, Kathleen Davis and Nadia Altschul, and Lisa Lampert-Weissig to name a few) who use his comments as defense for their applications of postcolonial theory to the study of religious conflict in the Middle Ages.
Middle Ages, arguing that much in the way the Orient "served as a foil for the development of ideas about the maturity of the West," (29) Anglo-Saxon England exists as a foil for the more stereotypically civilized High Middle Ages and, particularly, for the historically touted cultured Renaissance and the socially proper Victorian Age whose leading men of letters were able to master the period in English history through "a discourse of power" (29). In other words, once later English generations began to study their Anglo-Saxon ancestral culture, they (subconsciously or not) imposed their post-Norman sensibilities to craft an earlier age that was distinctly – in language, in politics, in the most basic social systems – different from their own, thereby becoming Occident to an Orientalized heritage. The term Frantzen fashions to signify this cultural meaning-making process is Anglo-Saxonism, but his chapter's title and his consistent direct references to Edward Said's Orientalism make an unintentional point: Even though the period known as the Middle Ages is years before the effects of widespread Western Colonization were felt, and centuries before Said ascribed a name to the phenomenon, the people of the Middle Ages are defined by Orientalism.

Whether by coincidence or dissemination across the field of Medieval Studies, Frantzen's examination, from the retrospection afforded by literary review, seems to have incited widespread scholarly interest in and pursuit of the application of postcolonial theory to the literature of the Middle Ages. In this regard, the overwhelming majority of scholarly pursuit exists as a means through which to understand Christian and non-Christian medieval relationships. While the Early Middle Ages was comparatively spared from the excessive religious conflict suffered by the High and Late Middle Ages, Frantzen's analysis of Anglo Saxonism reveals that in crafting the accepted history of
Early England, 19th century authors regarded the Middle Ages as a mere prelude to later, more culturally significant eras, namely the Renaissance (Frantzen 30). In particular, Frantzen references Thomas Babington Macaulay's five volume *History of England*, published in 1848. "In the [few] medieval pages of Macaulay's *History,*" writes Frantzen, "the East is conceived not as a geographical entity but as an undifferentiated other [. . .] threatening to overwhelm the Christian West" (30). Further, writes Frantzen, "Macaulay commended the Church for rescuing Western Europe from the barbarians and thereby preserving classical culture" (30). What Frantzen's point illustrates is that not only did later English cultures Orientalize their past, but that even before there was a documented lexicon for dealing with the Orientalizing Macaulay attributes to the Middle Ages, scholars regarded the Middle Ages as a period which exercised power over cultural others. So, while by his own declaration, Frantzen sought not to employ critical theoretical analysis, his definition of Anglo Saxonism and his explication of 19th century

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7 In reviewing Macaulay's text, I found that Frantzen does not exaggerate. The whole of the Middle Ages in Macaulay's four volume *History* occupies just 12 pages. The portion to which Frantzen refers reads, "At length the darkness begins to break; and the country which had been lost to view as Britain reappears as England. […] Christianity was the first of a long series of salutary revolutions" (5). Macaulay continues, "A society sunk in ignorance, and ruled by mere physical force, has great reason to rejoice when a class, of which the influence is intellectual and moral, rises to ascendancy. Such a class will doubtless abuse its power: but mental power, even when abused, is still a nobler and better power than that which consists merely in corporeal strength" (5). And further, "Yet surely a system which, however deformed by superstition, introduced strong moral restraints into communities previously governed only by vigour of muscle and by audacity of spirit, a system which taught the fiercest and mightiest ruler that he was, like his meanest bondman, a responsible being, might have seemed to deserve a more respectful mention from philosophers and philanthropists" (5 – 6). And finally, "The Church has many times been compared by divines to the ark of which we read in the Book of Genesis: but never was the resemblance more perfect than during that evil time when she alone road, amidst darkness and tempest, on the deluge beneath which all the great works of ancient power and wisdom lay entombed, bearing within her that feeble germ from which a second and more glorious civilisation was to spring" (6 – 7).
renderings of the Middle Ages, welcomed postcolonial analysis into the study of medieval text.

I need to take a moment to make clear why I credit Frantzen with what I perceive to be a dramatic interpretive shift in the field of medieval literary analysis. First, before postcolonial precepts entered the field, the majority of textual analyses of medieval literature were formal in nature, relying most heavily on the text and on the interplay of text and author and stringently avoiding theoretical analysis. Looking back on the late 20th century, Bruce Holsinger attributes this "hesitant" and "reluctant encounter with theory in Anglo-American medievalism" to what he perceives as a struggle by medievalists in grappling "with the consequences of translating twentieth-century analytical vocabularies into the distant past" (1199). Holsinger goes on to state that, while U.S. English departments were quicker to make the shift to using theory in medieval literary analysis, British university departments continued to publish "books that [bore] no traces of the profound epistemological transformations that the advent of theory" brought about (1199). Holsinger's points are certainly echoed in the body of work analyzing medieval religious conflict during the late twentieth century. Even in his 1990 *Desire for Origins*, Frantzen is reluctant to draw too heavily on theory. But, through his reluctance, he manages to make a bold statement prescribing an Occidental mindset on medieval people through his reference to Macaulay's text. Clearly the occasion for application exists in Macaulay's text (i.e. his references to othering), but Frantzen is the

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8 Later in the same article and in reference to the scholarly climate in 2002, Holsinger comments: "Medievalists have been struggling for decades with the historical appropriateness of various theoretical discourses – feminists, psychoanalytic, poststructuralist, and so on – to their period; and as even the most recent contributions to such debates suggest, the status of theory in medieval studies remains by any measure contested and problematic" (1201).
first I have found in my extensive research of the subject to use the *History* as an example of Orientalizing practices in regard to the Middle Ages.\(^9\)

A second reason I identify Frantzen with the beginnings of the use of postcolonialism in medieval literary analysis is the fact that in the decade buttressed by Said's first publication of *Orientalism* and Frantzen's publication of *Desire for Origins*, I uncovered no scholarly literary examinations offering postcolonial readings of western medieval literature.\(^{10}\) However, in the ten years following Frantzen's text, at least nine articles and seven books were published that explore elements of the postcolonial in Medieval Studies. While over half of these were published in the late 90s and were (likely) largely inspired by the 20\(^{th}\) anniversary of Said's *Orientalism* (a point discussed

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\(^9\) Before continuing further, it's important to clarify how I use the terms postcolonial, Orientalism, and othering throughout. Theoretically speaking, these terms are subsumed by the three-fold definition Said crafts of Orientalism. Said's base level defines Orientalism as the academic study of eastern regions known as the Orient, hence Orientalism (68). This practice of orientalizing results in a "style of thought" whereby the West (or Occident) defines itself against an imaginative difference it has to the East through Orient study (69). This makes Said's second level of orientalism theoretically interchangeable with the process of othering. Lastly, as Said identifies, these first two processes join, creating a third in which the West uses its study of and crafted truths about the Orientalized other as tools for domination and support for colonizing efforts (69–70). At times then, I use the phrases virtually interchangeably, remaining true to the spirit of Said, and keeping consistent with the scholarship I've examined regarding literary analysis of religious conflict in the Middle Ages.

\(^{10}\) In addition to devouring the bibliographies and indices of seminal postcolonial examinations, my research process included MLA and WorldCat database searches with all possible combinations of the terms postcolonial, post-colonial, postcolonialism, post-colonialism, Orientalism, Orientalizing, other, othering with medieval and Middle Ages. Additionally, I examined the *International Medieval Bibliography*, looking for articles referencing the aforementioned terms, as well as any possible references in the *Bibliography*'s area divisions of "Philosophy," "Political," "Social," and "Theological." Even though earlier scholars did not identify postcolonial theory specifically, as Holsinger recognizes, medievalists have use postcolonial precepts since long before the theory was formalized: "With little or no help from postcolonial theory [ . . . ] more than a few medievalists have addressed the very constellation of critical imperatives now at the center of postcolonial critique, demonstrating what I would call the mutually clarifying capacities of medieval and postcolonial studies" (1200). Holsinger further comments "postcolonial studies has had an explicit and self-acknowledged presence in medieval studies for nearly a decade now" (1207).
further below), many source Frantzen, clearly indicating his influence in the growing use of postcolonial theory in examinations of medieval religious conflict. Frantzen's innovation, coupled with Van Engen's conference two years later calling for a dedication to current academic explorations in the application of theory to medieval text, ripened the field for postcolonial analyses. Now again, it must be reminded that I am making these connections through hindsight, but when all components are considered, my contention seems fair. Regardless, by the 20th anniversary of the first publication of Orientalism, postcolonial theoretical analysis was so popular in medieval literary explorations that, in 1998, the International Congress on Medieval Studies, held annually at Western Michigan University at Kalamazoo, devoted a series of sessions to exploring the impact of Orientalism on Medieval Studies. Many session papers were later collated in Medieval Encounters under the special topic title "Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Culture in Confluence and Dialogue." The introduction to the collection, authored by session organizer Lucy Pick, asserts that the primary goal of the conference was to "offer a critique of Said's work by considering how Latin Christian Europe constructed images of the 'outside' world during the medieval period and by asking through what intellectual filters did real knowledge about peoples and lands beyond its borders pass" (265). Pick offers specific analysis of Said's use of medieval scholars to demonstrate the beginnings of academic Orientalism. And, while ultimately she concludes that "Said's understanding of the worldview of medieval Christian is, in the end, as much or more the product of a

11 See Footnote 6, page 4.
12 Earlier I introduced Van Engen's The Past and Future of Medieval Studies, briefly referencing articles by Jeremy Cohen and Richard W. Bulliet, presented in 1992 and published in 1994. Because their postcolonial examinations are specific to medieval Judaism and Islam, the Cohen and Bulliet articles are examined with more depth in chapters 2 and 3, respectively.
stereotype as medieval Christian knowledge" of the Orient, Pick insists that the influence Said's work has had on analyzing medieval relationships is unrivaled by any other contemporary theory (267).13

Another significant work published in the decade following Frantzen's is Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*. Jeffrey Cohen's text, a collection of interdisciplinary articles from medieval scholars, is one of the earliest critical treatments to spend considerable text in legitimizing a postcolonial theoretical approach to medieval literary study. Drawing upon the work of Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge who identify the postcolonial as "a splinter in the side of the colonial itself" (411), Jeffrey Cohen distinguishes "Post-colonial" from "postcolonial" by asserting that the Post-colonial references a historical time, while the postcolonial (with, as he writes, "the hyphen digested but its constituent elements bumping against each other without synthesis") is a mindset and theoretical basis (3) which comes to represent, as Michelle Warren states, "any time or place where one social group dominates another" (115). It is for this reason that, while an application of post-colonial precepts to the Middle Ages may seem anachronistic, the use of postcolonial theory in exploring the past is sound: The condition feeding postcolonialism is a human condition that exists both within and without historical moment. Drawing upon Said directly, Hayden White's popular articulation of

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13 Before moving further, it is important to recognize that Said has come under personal attack, particularly in regards to his memoir. The accusations are that he misrepresented his past. Personal criticisms Said may have suffered do not reflect upon the significance of his theoretical work with *Orientalism*. Also, there have been criticisms of specific arguments made in *Orientalism* (see Ali Behdad's *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, 1994); but even studies critical of Said, writes Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "accept both the ambiguous origin of Orientalism and the mirroring binary of Orient and Occident that he posits" ("Due East"19). I address this here to avoid question as to the legitimacy of Orientalism as crafted by Said. Ultimately, it does not really matter whether or not one agrees with what he argues since his influence is shown time and time again.
postcolonial theory examines the role of the culturally conceptualized "Other" through a process of self-definition by negation. White argues that all cultures define the Other in an effort to better understand the self (White 150). What this does is to create an us / them binary through which the us always holds the power in creating (for Said, Orientalizing) the them, as well as the us (for Said, the Occident).

The articles included in Jeffrey Cohen's text adhere to this view of postcolonialism and further regard postcolonial study as fundamental to studies of medieval religious alterity because of a Christian us and a Jewish / Muslim them syndrome. Though her article is discussed in depth in my third chapter, it is valuable at this point to recognize Suzanne Conklin Akbari's assertion in "From Due East to True North: Orientalism and Orientation." Here, Akbari asserts that "Orientalism has been the foundation of virtually every effort to characterize literary descriptions of the Near and Middle East" since its publication (19), including literary examination of the interactions between medieval Christians and Muslims. Additional articles referenced for my third chapter – specifically "Time Behind the Veil: The Media, the Middle Ages, and Orientalism Now" and "Native Studies: Orientalism and Medievalism" – illustrate Akbari's point as Kathleen Davis and John M. Ganim, respectively, use postcolonialism

14 In the same year as the publication of the second edition of White' Tropics of Discourse (1986), nationalism and ethnicity professor Anthony D. Smith published The Ethnic Origins of Nations. Smith's stated purpose for his text is to examine "the origins and genealogy of nations, in particular their ethnic roots" (ix). Specifically, he identifies religion as "the pivotal [factor] in crystallizing and maintaining ethnic identity" (124). Because religion is so fundamental in national identity formation, argues Smith, it becomes the most powerful element in creating conflict with other nations. Smith calls this conflict "ethnic antagonism" (226) and argues that, in a manner similar to what White deems "self-definition by negation" (150), these ethnic antagonisms help nations identify themselves through recognizing their differences from their national enemies. Smith's text is only further evidence of the (interdisciplinary) popularity of postcolonial theoretical frames in the late 20th century.
to understand the relationships between medieval Christianity and Islam. Finally, also from Jeffrey Cohen's collection, is Sylvia Tomasch's "Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew." Discussed further in my second chapter, Tomasch's essay directly challenges critics who balk at the use of postcolonial theory to study the Middle Ages, theorizing that if one considers the role of the Jew in medieval England, the concept of postcolonialism is no longer an issue of European imperialism, but rather a means by which "to explore certain very troubling aspects of late medieval culture" (244) when Jews, having been physically expelled centuries earlier, existed only virtually in English culture with their history and very nature having been orientalized in their absence.

Earlier I mentioned that in the decade following Frantzen's *Desire for Origins*, postcolonial readings of medieval religious conflict flourished. In the most recent decade, similar postcolonial scholarly analyses have exploded with over 100 independent publications exploring aspects of Orientalism, othering, and postcolonialism in the literature of the Middle Ages, with the majority of these texts examining cross-religious interactions. The onslaught was recognized by Simon Gaunt as "a period of sustained reflection on intersections between medieval studies and postcolonial theory" (160). The first most significant text to appear during this period of sustained application of postcolonial theory to medieval text was *Postcolonial Moves: Medieval Through Modern* (2003), edited by Patricia Ingham and Michelle Warren. Similar to Van Engen's text published a decade earlier, Ingham and Warren offer a compendium of essays presented

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15 Here I emphasize the physical expulsion of Jews to highlight the fact that while Jews were not physically present in England for a full century before Chaucer's work, Jews still existed in the collective consciousness of medieval English culture.

16 Providing a complete list here would be exhaustive, but the seminal texts among these are addressed through this project and include journal articles as well as monographs.
at a conference, though their conference was "engaged in thinking through what it might mean to speak and write pre- and early modern histories in postcolonial terms" (Editors' Acknowledgments). As the majority of scholarship in years prior, Ingham and Warren offer the essays in the collection to challenge "conventional limits by questioning prevailing assumptions about periodization" (1), championing a use of postcolonial theory without the temporal limits of modernity (2). Additionally, the essays offered by Ingham and Warren only further labor to illustrate their point. In "Post-Philology," Warren argues that, as postmodernism, the postcolonial signifies a "double relationship to history," whereby its effects are recognized through both "legacies and renewals" (21). In other words, once the condition of postcolonialism exists, it can be attributed just as persuasively to past histories as it can to present and anticipated future circumstances. It is for this reason, Warren argues, the postcolonial is an effective lens through which to understand religious alterity in the Middle Ages. In "Contrapuntal Histories," Ingham supplements this point by expanding Said's "emphasis upon the 'intertwined histories' and 'overlapping territories' of colonial rule" beyond the geographical and into the temporal to illustrate how periods of histories overlap as later scholars reflect back to construct meaning of earlier cultures (48). In this way, postcolonialism is not just a valid way to explore medieval relationships; it becomes, for Ingham, one of the most significant systems by which modern society can understand the Middle Ages.

In 2009, noted medievalists Kathleen Davis and Nadia Altschul explored this position further with *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World*, a collection of essays exploring the implications of applying postcolonial theory to the Middle Ages and answering critics who believe it anachronistic to construct medieval meaning through
postcolonial knowledge. In their introduction to the collection, Davis and Altschul argue that the Middle Ages and the idea of what it means for something to be "medieval" are twentieth century constructions. In other words, Davis and Altschul argue that the Middle Ages, for modern audiences, is removed from its own definition. They recognize that, while time itself exists linearly, concepts and perceptions of a time are constructed by subsequent ages. Existing as construction rather than an established point in time, the entire field of medieval studies becomes about creating the Middle Ages, rather than studying a fixed truth of a distant society. For contemporary western culture, colonialism helps to define the idea of medievalism: "To an important degree the idea of the Middle Ages issued from the same colonial imaginary that subsumed territory and time to the sphere of its real and desired control" (2). Ultimately, as many medievalists using postcolonial theory justified before, the contemporary idea of the Middle Ages, and of the medieval, did not exist before colonization. It is for this reason, explain Davis and Altschul, since the 1990s medievalists have effectively drawn upon postcolonialism in the study of religious conflict in the Middle Ages.

What I find particularly interesting (or perhaps disturbing) is that in 2009, medievalists were still arguing for the legitimacy of using postcolonial theory in the analysis of medieval texts. Because of this, I am reminded of a 2002 article in which

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17 The suggestion by Davis and Altschul is that, for modern (particularly American) society, "the medieval" is an idea more than a reality. This idea – informed by Disney, by Monte Python, by cartoons of frogs and princesses, and by children's toys of knights and dragons – has been wholly crafted by a post-colonial, modern world. Because, in our time and for the average American, this socially constructed (by a post-colonial world) "medieval" is more "true" than a real medieval, postcolonialism becomes a valid means by which to evaluate the age. For further discussion of modern culture's definition of the Middle Ages see T.A. Shippey's *Appropriating the Middle Ages: Scholarship, Politics, Fraud* (2001) and Robin Fleming's "Picturesque History as the Medieval in 19th Century America" (1995).
Bruce W. Holsinger raised awareness of the new (at the time) tendency in medieval studies to "borrow heavily from postcolonial studies" (1197). In and of itself, he did not see that as negative; the problem with this new theoretical devotion, for Holsinger, arose when medievalists failed "to make a significant impact on the methods, historical purview, and theoretical lexicon of postcolonialism" (1197). Ultimately Holsinger's fear was that his field would stagnate, settling into the comfortable usage of a lexicon that was outside the realm of the field. With their 2005 collection, *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages*, Ananya Kabir and Deanne Williams hoped to answer Holsigner's challenge by prompting their "postcolonialist readers to reexamine the historical boundaries of their discipline, and challenge medievalists from all quarters to reformulate and redefine this growing field" (19). But the essays in the collection do little to achieve those aims, reading primarily as applications of traditional postcolonial precepts to medieval texts (e.g. *Beowulf*, *Confessio Amantis*) previously unexamined from postcolonial perspectives. In short, the collection does nothing to "make a significant impact on the methods, historical purview, and theoretical lexicon of postcolonialism" (1197) that Holsinger called for and that Kabir and Williams claim to address with their collection.

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18 Holsinger envisioned postcolonial medievalism "as a revisionary agent within the futures of postcolonial theory, forcing it [postcolonialism] to ask self-critical questions about the histories it uncovers and about the means by which it accounts for its own institutional development and privilege" (1198). But he laments, "postcolonial medieval studies has missed the forest for the trees. Even while we have been preoccupied with uncovering colonialist practices in the Middle Ages, revealing the role of medievalism in orientalist discourses of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and demonstrating the persistence of medievalist fantasies in the languages of postcolonial theory and global capitalism, we have overlooked the vital role that medieval studies performed in the emergence and shaping of postcolonial studies as a field of critical inquiry" (1207).
It appears now, ten years after Holsinger expressed concern over the stagnation of the field that his fear has come to pass. In July 2011, the Department of English Studies at Durham University extended an invitation for paper submissions for a session planned for the 47th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in 2012. The panel topic? Postcolonial England. As the call for papers asserts, "this session will aim for papers which apply postcolonial theory to English texts in an attempt to better understand English concepts of national identity, specifically looking at less obvious, rather than canonical, texts as many of these have already been explored" (CFP July 25, 2011). Interestingly, and apparently unacknowledged by the "Postcolonial England" session organizers, in his 2009 review of the seminal texts addressing postcolonialism in the Middle Ages, Gaunt reveals an inherent danger in the application of postcolonial theory to medieval text when he asserts that such a perspective "gives the unfortunate impression that the main thing a medievalist can learn [from medieval literature becomes] Englishness" (164). It seems this is precisely the aim of the 2012-planned session on Postcolonial England.

Months ago when I began this project, my objective was to offer postcolonial analyses of medieval texts fundamental to high school literary study. In preparation of said endeavor, I began a comprehensive review of all applications of postcolonial theory to the literature of the Middle Ages, particularly in regard to the way postcolonial theory reveals the Englishness inherent in non-Christian medieval interactions. But, what I have come to realize is that postcolonial theory has, in many ways, stifled the progress of medieval literary study, particularly in regard to examinations of religious Others, which is my primary interest. As Holsinger feared at the beginning of the 21st century, and as
Gaunt recognized to be true within the most recent two years, the excessive application of postcolonial theory to medieval text, frankly, is producing nothing new. For these reasons, and with a nod to William Chester Jordan's admonition in 1992 – "we ought to take seriously the possibilities of new discoveries and new insights that arise out of the cacophony of academic culture presently besetting us" (265) – I seek now to demonstrate the inadequacies of postcolonial analyses of medieval text for modern, post-9/11 audiences and students. But, moreover, I forge forward to reveal how these gaps can be filled by offering readings that, psychoanalytic at the core, uncover truths not just about medieval people, but about humanity as a whole. I need to make it very clear that the readings I propose are not traditional psychoanalytic readings. Rather, I argue for readings that use familiar elements of psychoanalysis but are, ultimately, affectively driven in that they promote emotional engagement and personal connections for student audiences in an effort to make distant medieval texts relevant in the lives of modern, post-9/11 students. In my fourth chapter, I explain that these connections are revealed to students through a discussion-driven pedagogical approach. Because this methodology evolves from attitudes familiar in the field of literary psychoanalysis, before I can demonstrate the effectiveness of my approach, it is necessary to understand how psychoanalysis has been traditionally applied to medieval literature, in general, and in later chapters, to specific texts. Additionally, this explication is necessary in order to understand the elements of psychoanalysis that I repurpose in my own theoretical approach to medieval textual analysis.

In comparison to postcolonialism, initially it seems psychoanalysis has had only limited critical influence in Medieval Studies. But, we must recognize that the same
"traditional commitment to empiricist methodologies and [ . . . ] mistrust of explicitly nonhistoricist interpretive paradigms" (Patterson 643) that discouraged the early application of postcolonial theory, inhibited widespread acceptance of psychoanalysis as well. Additionally, Lee Patterson points out, with the exception of a handful of psychology-specific terms, psychoanalytical readings don't carry the clear lexicon of other theories. So, while some analysis may very explicitly deal with psychoanalysis, there are many more through which "psychoanalytic categories remain implicit" (642). The explicit and central examinations are easy to discern. For example, scholarship abounds making meaning of the red hot iron Absolon uses as a phallic tool of penetration in Chaucer's "The Miller's Tale." Ample discussion also surrounds the similarities between courtly love and familial affections. Database and bibliography searches revealing such explicit and central psychoanalytical examinations suggest that the vast majority of these types of analyses explore aspects of romance, gender, and / or sexuality.

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19 In addition to those mentioned previously who are wary of the application of theory to the literature of the Middle Ages, there are medievalists, such as H.A. Kelly and Anne Middleton, who are particularly suspicious of psychoanalysis (see Chaucerian Tragedy 1997 (Kelly) and "Medieval Studies" 1992 (Middleton)).
20 Louise O. Fradenburg makes a similar claim when she writes, "It is no easy matter to decide which medievalist works are 'psychoanalytic' and which are not. The terms and figures of psychoanalysis have profoundly penetrated contemporary thought and practice" ("Analytical Survey 2" 249).
21 Patterson remarks that in the field of Medieval Studies, there is an emphasis on "Freud's beliefs about human sexuality and its dominance as a force in character formation and pathology" (643).
in the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{24} The more subtle analyses that Patterson recognizes as the most difficult to identify are those that deal with the role of the self in negotiating identity in the Middle Ages. Because religion was so fundamental in forming medieval identity, these are the explorations with which I am most concerned and these are the analyses most beneficial to the topic at hand.

A medievalist who has devoted a significant part of his career to exploring the role of self in medieval literature is Michael Uebel. In his 2007 article, "Opening Time: Psychoanalysis and Medieval Culture," Uebel reminds readers that the "primary mission of psychoanalysis" is "to understand, and optimally to fine-tune, the rhythm of a subject's response to internal (pleasure – unpleasure) and external (reality) demands" (271). In fact, he asserts, examinations that tend towards an overemphasis on romance and fetishism "often ignore the richest insights of psychoanalytic thought" (270). These richest insights which are lost, for Uebel, are not truths about individual texts, but rather insights into the people who produced the literature analyzed: "The foundational insights of psychoanalysis amount to claims about the format dimensions of biopsychosocial existence before they are claims about content" (270).\textsuperscript{25} The ultimate point Uebel makes with his article is that, when applied to medieval literature, psychoanalysis must commit itself to understanding the reality of the people of the period, rather than creating truths about a given text. This is one of the elements of psychoanalysis I borrow for chapters 2 and 3 when I examine how Christian literary characterization of Jews and Muslims helps

\textsuperscript{24} As Michael Uebel writes, "the critical tendency is toward isolating and fixing the content value of specific analytic concepts (e.g. family romance, the Other, the fetish, and so on)" (270).

\textsuperscript{25} Later Uebel makes the same point when he writes, "Analysis must content itself with historicizing not the truth but the subject's conviction of the truth" (272).
modern audiences understand the reality of being Christian in the Middle Ages. It is also a key concept supporting the discussion-driven pedagogical approach I champion in chapter 4.

In agreement with Uebel's position is Louise O. Fradenburg, another medievalist who has devoted the bulk of her career to the use of psychoanalysis in explorations of the medieval self. Of particular interest to me, is the extensive work Fradenburg has done in the area of psychoanalytical readings of religion in the Middle Ages, for as she claims, "I think psychoanalysis offers a powerful means of analysing the fantastic consolations of religion" ("Analytical" 265). Fradenburg, in fact, draws a baseline connection between psychoanalysis and religion, stating that both pursuits strive to fulfill, through desire, a lack of the self, whether that lack be based in pleasure or pain ("Be not far" 43 and 52). Fradenburg places heavy significance on Sigmund Freud's concept of the psychic reality as an effective means through which to understand the drives of medieval people. As Fradenburg describes, Freud's position is that the human mind is comprised of an inner and an outer reality. Both realities blend to construct the full reality humans live out on a daily basis. Fradenburg argues that the medieval Christian inner reality was fully comprised of belief in the existence and influence of God ("Analytical" 258), but where she diverges from Freud is in her claim that this inner reality was so strong, that for medieval Christians, God (His power, His significance, etc.) became more real than the outer reality, or the lived reality (257). From this point, Fradenburg employs Jacques Lacan to argue that the psychic reality (and with it the promise of jouissance at the hands of God in the afterlife), becomes the primary drive for earthly decisions, because the imaginary (God) blends with the real (the human) and emerges as having already existed
before it was imagined: God exists at once as signifier and signified. What this does is it
puts humans and God into a condition of being "always already mutually intricated"
(Fradenburg, *Sacrifice* 352). By extension, then, for medieval Christians,
psychoanalytically, there is no discernable distinction between themselves and their God.
Because they have signified Him, after He first signified them, their thoughts are His
thoughts, and His thoughts are their thoughts; their actions become His will, and His will
dictates their actions. For these reasons, it would be impossible for medieval Christians to
recognize their actions as immoral because they imagine their actions are God's actions.
In discussions of relationships between medieval Christians and non-Christians, this is a
valuable point to remember because, while it does not excuse tortures or genocides
executed in the name of religion, this inability to separate the self from God's will
certainly helps to explain the existence of such massacres undertaken in the name of
God.26

I mentioned above that Fradenburg draws heavily on Freud and Lacan to
psychoanalytically *read* the Middle Ages. As I move forward with this project, I would
like to bring forth the theoretical elements of the forefathers of psychoanalysis that I find
most significant to examinations of religious relationships in medieval literature and
eventually, in my fourth chapter, to the success of a discussion-driven pedagogical
approach. The first of these is the afore mentioned idea of the psychic reality. The term
itself is actually a modern signifier for a phenomenon Freud called the "psychical

26 On this point, Freud writes "one is reminded of this feature of neuroses when one remembers
how commonly all the acts which religion forbids – the expressions of the instincts it has
suppressed – are committed precisely in the name of, and ostensibly for the sake of, religion"
realism, so coined because he set it in opposition to physical reality with the two parts making up the reality principle ("Formulations" 302–303). For Freud, the psychical reality – which includes all unconscious desires, fantasies, and drives – dominates the physical reality because it is built on primal instincts and is, ultimately, the most knowable reality a self can experience: "What was presented in the mind was no longer what was agreeable but what was real, even if it happened to be disagreeable" ("Formulations" 302). Conversely, the physical – or material – reality, which is built upon the self's body, environment, and social position is unknowable because its recognition is never fully built on the self's understanding of self, but rather on the self's physical negotiations and perceptions through comparisons to an external world ("Formulations" 301–302). It was Freud's work with the reality principle that led Lacan to explore the nature of the Real. For Lacan, the Real is that which is "impossible to subjectivize" ("Postion" 260). Once things are named (subjectivized) they exist only in relation to other named objects making them no longer Real unto themselves. So in essence, objects come into being in a signified and signifying world at the precise moment they lose independent reality. Further, once things have been stripped of their "thing-ness" and brought into "dumb reality" (Lacan, The Seminar 55) through naming, their original Thing or Real existence becomes an object of desire, forever attached to – yet out of the reach of – their namer, because once named, it is impossible to conceive of the Thing (Lacan "The Seminar" 125). In Lacan's Medievalism, Erin F. Labbie explains, "If there is a prearticulate, or preverbal, sensation that must be 'deverbalized' in order to

27 Anyone who has spent significant time in the company and / or instruction of teenagers can certainly appreciate this point!
uncover what is at the heart of the feeling, then emotion is excessive and beyond the world of words that creates the world of things" (24). In other words, the signifier (or named word) can only ever be a distant metaphor for the signified (or Thing). This relationship creates an unrequited desire for the Thing.

The desire for the Thing introduces another significant Lacanian term also mentioned above: *jouissance*. Most closely aligned with the English word "pleasure," the French word *jouissance* connotes a union of pleasure and pain that can only easily be described as a pleasure that is so inconceivable that it creates pain through its unfamiliarity. Earlier I mentioned Fradenburg's use of the term, which defines God's promises for the afterlife as *jouissance*; in other words, believers (in this case during the Middle Ages) desire the bliss of the afterlife, but simultaneously cannot conceive of its glory – this paradox creates both a pleasure and a pain.28 There exists a desire (pleasure pursuit) for the Thing, which having been signified as God can no longer be conceived in its Real Thing existence; this results in a pain of unknowing and a manifestation of *jouissance* in the desirer, who, though he cannot conceive of it, still desires it. As Fradenburg mentioned, in the Middle Ages, this *jouissance* for God was so significant for medieval Christians that its pursuit trumped all other physical pursuits; in a sense, *jouissance* for God dominated the Freudian psychical reality for Christians of the Middle Ages making the pleasure pursuit of something they couldn't even conceive of as more powerful than physical and material beings and interactions.

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28 Freud actually comments similarly on the afterlife but doesn't make the jouissance pain connection that is implied with Lacan. In fact, for Freud only the pleasure promise comes with the notion of an afterlife: "religions have been able to effect absolute renunciation of pleasure in this life by means of the promise of compensation in a future existence" ("Formulations" 304).
While I seek not to offer direct Freudian or Lacanian analyses of medieval text, their work is foundational to understanding theorists I do employ. The first of these is Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, which is surprising given the attention I devoted to Jeffrey Cohen's postcolonial contributions earlier. In terms of his work with medieval literature, Jeffrey Cohen's CV suggests he identifies himself far more closely with postcolonialism than with psychoanalysis, but, one of his more popular contributions to theoretical circles, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)," suggests otherwise. With his article, Jeffrey Cohen argues that the best way to understand a given culture is to explore corporeal differences to examine the monsters a culture engenders. His assertion is that, at any given moment, a society is operating first and foremost from a position of fear. This fear, whatever it might be, manifests itself in the creation of a monster in order to physically legitimize the perceived threat. In explanation of his theory (aptly named "Monster Theory") Jeffrey Cohen identifies seven theses that comprise monster culture. The first of these is the assertion that monsters are always culturally constructed and, not only satisfy, but are projected by cultural fears. The monster never exists in and of itself, but rather, it signifies something more. That something is the culture that gave it life. In spite of its paternity, Jeffrey Cohen's second assertion is that "The Monster Always Escapes." His point, here, is that the idea of the monster will die with the culture that created it, only to emerge later, in a different form, for a different culture. This leads to the third of

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30 Cohen articulates this as: "Thesis I: The Monster's Body Is a Cultural Body" (4).
his theses: the monster is not easily categorized. It is not entirely human, it is not entirely mythical, but rather "a disturbing hybrid . . . suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions" (Cohen 6). Because it cannot fully be categorized, it can never be entirely identified and exists, perpetually, in the identification of this fourth thesis, "at the Gates of Difference" (7). Further, this nebulosity welcomes endless projections of cultural fear as the society of its creation deflects its moral, ethical, religious, gender, social missteps, fears, and insecurities onto the monster. Because the monster is comprised of society's greatest guilts, the monster becomes simultaneously feared and desired, standing at the border between social propriety and impropriety (theses five and six). Ultimately, the monster's very existence, for a culture, represents either the very worst that culture either could become if it let itself, or more often, what that culture has become and denies (thesis seven). In monster theory, I draw connections with elements of psychoanalysis because through Jeffrey Cohen's articulation, the fear-manifested monster is always an extension of the self that the self no longer recognizes as originating within. The monster exists as something simultaneously desired and also feared; elements of the lexicon of psychoanalysis further reveal that the monster, significant because of its place in society's collective psychical reality, can be said to create jouissance. This is why Jeffrey Cohen's monster theory makes sense as a tool for medieval literary analysis: First, it takes cultural fear and makes it into a physical monstrosity; second, that manifested monstrosity is consistently perceived as a threat to

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31 Cohen articulates this as: "Thesis III: The Monster Is the Harbinger of Category Crisis" (6).
34 Cohen's seventh and final thesis: "The Monster Stands at the Threshold . . . of Becoming" (20).
contaminate the sanctity and safety of the culture that created it; and finally, it recognizes the irony in the potential "contamination" because the fears of the monster are only extensions of the self. That is, the monster that has been created is only a projection of the fears and pleasure-pursuit inducing guilt of the self: The self is the monster.

Another contributor to the precepts of monster theory is Richard Bernheimer. Bernheimer, a medieval art historian and phenomenologist, doesn't use Jeffrey Cohen's term, monster, instead employing the phrase Wild Man. As Bernheimer describes, the Wild Man was a very real figure for people of the Middle Ages with his paternity tracing back to the earliest maps of the medieval world wherein places unknown were said to be the realm of wild men. These geographical readings, then, were reinforced through medieval travel narratives, like those of Gerald of Wales and Sir John Mandeville. Again, psychoanalytically, the physical reality of these wild men was not as significant as their existence in the medieval psychical reality. As Bernheimer writes, the prevalence of the Wild Man in the Middle Ages can be attributed to "a persistent psychological urge" that gives "external expression and symbolically valid form to the impulses of reckless physical self-assertion which are hidden in all of us, but are normally kept under control" (3). So, similar to Jeffrey Cohen's monster, Bernheimer's wild man exists as that repressed part of the self. Unlike civilized people in medieval society, the wild man acts on his desires. When medieval people fear the wild man, subconsciously they really fear that part of themselves that they are only barely keeping under control and that, in actuality, they wish could be let free.35

35 Contemporary historian Stephen T. Asma's On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears (2009) examines the presence of monsters in society from ancient Greece into the modern
Lacan would call this self as monster / wild man phenomenon a "Jouissance of the Other's body" (Seminar 4). Unlike White's articulation of the Other in postcolonial theory mentioned earlier, for Lacan the Other's purpose is to fulfill the self (Lacan, Seminar 3). The self does not use the Other through a process of "self-definition by negation" (White 150), but rather it pursues the Other with desire and need: The self needs the Other to exist (Lacan, Seminar 4). While Lacan uses the generally positive example of love to illustrate his point (i.e. if there is no Other to love, love itself cannot exist), the term desire does not have to connote positive affection and the pursuit need not be active or even conscious. If we return again to the theories of Jeffrey Cohen and Richard Bernheimer, the monster / wild man bears striking similarity to Lacan's Other because it is a figure that has been culturally signified through jouissance: it is feared, it is desired, and it is necessary so the self has a place to project its pleasure and pain.

I have already mentioned through my discussion of Fradenburg's use of Freud how medieval Christians, collectively speaking, aligned their actions with the will of God. If we take a Lacanian reading of Jeffrey Cohen's monster and Bernheimer's wild man, it is logical then to cast the Devil into the position of medieval Other as a figure who carries a parallel jouissance as God for medieval Christians. Fradenburg, in fact, asserts that religious iconography and ideology are both "product and producer" of medieval reality ("Analytical" 266). Certainly art and literary reference prove the devil was as oft considered in the Middle Ages as was God. Up to the late 1300s, in fact, Robert Muchembled identifies many different descriptions of the devil – both his era. Though he does not cite them, as Cohen and Bernheimer, Asma argues that monsters serve a psychological purpose in society with implications beyond their mere existence.
characteristics and mythical abilities consistently shifted in early representation. Muchembled suggests this is because the devil himself (or itself) was nothing. Rather, it was mere "incarnation of the evil in the human heart" doing the conceiving (14). A point I return to below, these varying characteristics would be explained by Jeffrey Cohen, not through some mystical truth of the devil's power to shift, but rather through the shifting needs of the culture projecting the devil monster. Muchembled's contention is that the devil, as an entity, never held any real power over or threat to medieval Christians, but I think Freud's articulation of the simultaneous inner and outer realities of the human mind easily disproves this contention. If we accept that God existed as part of the medieval Christian psychical reality, then we must at least entertain the idea that the repressed devil too was every bit as real in the medieval world, if only in the minds of believing Christians. And, if we remember what Jeffrey Cohen teaches, that the monster (in this case, the devil) is the keeper of society's fears and desires, then it would seem the devil was imbibed with significant power by medieval Christians. Bernheimer would agree with this connection. In fact, he goes to great lengths to draw significant correlations between the medieval wild man and the devil.\footnote{Though in specifics Bernheimer's discussion is beyond the scope of this analysis, he begins his discussion of the demonic attributes of the wild man by drawing a connection between wild women (or witches) who were equated with \textit{lamia}, the "child-devouring ghou from Greek antiquity" (35). In the 13\textsuperscript{th} century, writes Bernheimer, \textit{lamiae} became united with \textit{striges}; both were from that point on often described as demons (35–36).}

Returning again to Lacan's explanation of the naming of the Thing, this point becomes clear. Recalling that a Thing loses its thingness through naming, it would be necessary for medieval Christians to enter a process of signification whereby metaphors were substituted to create the "truth" of the devil. Once named, the devil itself is forevermore beyond reach. \textit{Jouissance} would lead
medieval Christians to create earthly and physical projections for the devil. The devil's power, then, can be recognized when we examine the ways in which medieval Christians embodied the devil in their heretical enemies. This would lead to the varying characteristics of the devil and is explained by Jeffrey Cohen's point that the "monster always escapes" one form to fulfill another form needed by (desired by) society, and Bernheimer's contention that the wild man's presence in a culture is "like the running commentary with which a man's half-conscious imagery accompanies his conscious ideals and aspirations" to make physical reality out of something that exists primarily in the psychical reality (2). Ultimately, it is this process that led medieval Christians to draw associations between the devil and the challengers to their faith, primarily Jews and Muslims.

Jeffrey Burton Russell, in the third of a series of texts exploring the cultural signification of the devil, explores the ideas about the devil that were prevalent in the Middle Ages. With emphasis on Western Christian thought, Russell asserts that "diabolology was more consistent than other aspects of theology, probably because a useful means of dehumanizing one's opponents was to accuse them of being tools of Satan" (12). In supporting his position, Russell explains that the medieval existence of the devil is a direct result of Christian attempts to understand God. Though Russell doesn't make the connection through Lacanian terminology, once God (the Thing) has been named, He can no longer be known. Therefore, "any 'knowing' of God that we may have must be

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37 See Lacan discussion, pages 17 – 19 above. In an interesting theological point, Orthodox Jews refer to God as "Ha-Shem" which translates to "the Name," as evidence of their belief that God cannot be named. Another Hebrew reference for God is YHVH, (i.e. Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh), frequently referred to "as the Ineffable Name, the Unutterable Name" (JVL).
Comber 30

acquired through 'unknowing'" (Russell 31). This creates a process of negative theology whereby the goodness of God is understood through the recognition of evil, or, what God is not. The very existence of evil, however, is somewhat of a theological paradox: Evil cannot come from God because it compromises God's goodness; but, evil can't be independent of God because it compromises God's omnipotence (Russell 35). The only explanation, then, is that evil is nothing: "Evil is therefore literally nothing in itself. It is merely a deficiency, a lack [. . .] Evil is a lack of good: it has no substantial being but only a shadow of being" (Russell 35). Russell discusses, at length, the Christian demonization of Jews and Muslims, and I will return to this again in my second and third chapters. But for now, it is sufficient to recognize Russell's contention that uniting their religious enemies with demonic imagery and lore was a way for medieval Christians to ascribe a something to evil's nothingness.

In chapter 2, I discuss this at length to explore how the medieval Christian mind manifests the devil as Jews by examining Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Prioress's Tale" from *The Canterbury Tales* in the context of the Hugh of Lincoln Ballads. Similarly, in chapter 3, I discuss how the same psychical reality signifies the devil as Muslims, as shown through the anonymous medieval heroic epic, the *Song of Roland*. In doing so I begin, as I have here, by showing the limits of the more popular postcolonial readings of these texts, and offering, through illustration, monster theory coupled with the traditionally psychoanalytic notions of psychical reality and *jouissance*, as a more effective means by which to read and understand religious conflict in the Middle Ages. Ultimately, these analyses in chapters 2 and 3 serve as the basis for the discussion-driven pedagogical approach to teaching medieval literature that I petition in chapter 4. But here, it is
valuable to return to a point referenced on my first page and made by Jeremy Cohen at
the 1992 conference organized by Professor Van Engen. In "On Medieval Judaism and
Medieval Studies," Jeremy Cohen asserted that study of the Middle Ages must dedicate
itself to understanding the people within their time period, the implication being that we
do a disservice to culture when we try to interpret the historical product as anything other
than a record of its creators (89). This is a reason Uebel favors analyses that seek not to
uncover universal literary truths, but rather "the subject's conviction of the truth" (272).
Uebel believes the most effective literary experiences come when readers are led to a
more authentic understanding of the way medieval Christians viewed themselves and
religious conflict during their age. Ultimately, argues Uebel, what positions
psychoanalysis as an effective means for understanding Christian / non-Christian
relationships in the Middle Ages is that it tends to produce readings that remain focused
on the self and the drives – the basic, human drives – which lead the self to decisions
made in the name of God and nation. These, then, are the elements of psychoanalysis I
bring forward over the next two chapters as I apply monster theory to analysis of specific
medieval texts. In comparison to postcolonial theory, which has dominated (even
stagnated) medieval literary analysis, readings that remain focused on the collective
consciousness of medieval society help modern students appreciate medieval literature
because these readings begin to reveal human truths that are not historically based but
rather, are relatable across generations. Therefore, we never have to fear we are imposing
modern understandings upon previous ages, as Jeremy Cohen warned against in 1992,
because humans are still humans, regardless of whether or not we find ourselves in a
postcolonial world. As mentioned above, the strongest argument for the use of
postcolonial theory to read and understand the literature of the Middle Ages has been the assertion that, though the Middle Ages was not a period living the effects of post-colonialism, the medieval is an idea more than a literal time and place. Therefore, it has been created rather than identified. Unlike the age itself, the creators of "the medieval" are products of a post-colonial world and so they bring postcolonial perceptions and understandings to bear on the Middle Ages. My problem with this is that postcolonial readings can only ever produce readings that evaluate the past from a present perspective. Such readings encourage analyses that, to use Frantzen's term, promote Anglo-Saxonism in a process that can only ever result in the Middle Ages being foil to the more refined modern ages.

Offering a pedagogical perspective on medieval analysis, rather than commenting through a suspicion of postcolonialism, in Thinking Medieval: An Introduction to the Study of the Middle Ages, Marcus Bull notes it is a problem when the Middle Ages is approached in a way that medieval people are never understood within their own age but rather are filtered through our understanding of ourselves, our community, and our politics. Approached this way, "At best medieval people become caricatures of the qualities that we welcome or shun when we encounter them in the modern world" (Bull 5). Bull asserts, to authentically appreciate, and to accurately study, the people of the Middle Ages, it is vital to contextualize their stories in terms of their age. He contends we must always remember that different ages have different tales, and different reasons for telling those tales, than do moderns. And, ultimately, that "it is always wise to assume difference unless and until there is some evidence for similarity" (Bull 5 – 6). I agree with Bull's point that it is dangerous not to understand medieval people in their own period,
but the approach that I propose, that is informed by psychoanalysis in its application of monster theory,\textsuperscript{38} allows modern audiences to draw significant connections between ourselves and the people of the past without fears of misreading. Ultimately, the fact that we are all human is enough evidence for similarity because it is only when we are able to find those connections, that we can understand the people of the past as humans, rather than history.

I began this discussion with reference to a foundational conference held in 1992, and I have discussed, at length, two of the three ideas I identified as fundamental to scholars at the conference. The first of these, that the field of Medieval Studies should avoid stases, through my analysis, is directly related to the second, that scholars should focus on how history was made by medieval people. And, I offer my readings of medieval religious conflict as means to address both concerns. Similarly, I believe these readings that focus on the way the self negotiates its way through ideological conflicts based in fear, address the third fundamental point referenced earlier and remaining to be addressed. At the conference Sheehan argued that the Middle Ages should not be studied in "a cultural vacuum" and should be explored through interdisciplinary study (10). Mindful of this point, when I set out I hoped to develop a theory that encapsulated the modern way we approach text. I called it post 9/11 theory, and I found a number of scholars from various fields who seemed to be arguing a new way of looking at things and who developed a lexicon that could be considered the foundation of an

\textsuperscript{38} When I state that my theoretical approach is \textit{informed} by psychoanalysis, I am recognizing that I use terms (specifically psychical reality and \textit{jouissance}) that are traditionally used in psychoanalytic analyses, but that ultimately I couple them with Cohen's monster theory in order to characterize not an individual self, but a medieval collective cultural self operating within a group consciousness, rather than with an individual conscience.
interdisciplinary post 9/11 theory that could be easily applied to anthropological, historical, literary, and even scientific studies. What I have come to realize, however, is that post 9/11 is not a theory as much as a frame of mind that infects, consciously or not, all Americans living in a post 9/11 world. That is to say, the events of 9/11, for Americans, are less Real (in a Lacanian sense), than are the interpretations, memories, and even the knowledge that 9/11 happened. The event itself occupies the physical reality, but the knowledge and aftermath of the event occupy the far more significant psychical reality. What's particularly valuable here is the way in which post 9/11 scholars have sought to make universal meaning of 9/11 by explaining the similar implications of the event for all affected. This universal affective response they define is what I call the post 9/11 frame of mind. Its articulation explains how a large group of diverse individuals can share a common understanding. Because of this, I think modern research in the post 9/11 frame of mind offers a more sophisticated understanding of Christian group mentality and consciousness toward Jews and Muslims that existed in the Middle Ages and is otherwise difficult for modern audiences to comprehend. Before moving forward, then, it is necessary to highlight the key interdisciplinary scholars who have contributed to explaining what I call the post-9/11 frame of mind.

The first of these significant figures to discuss is Jasbir Puar, a Gender Studies professor at Rutgers University. In contemporary culture, Jasbir Puar argues, 9/11 has become a metaphor that "reflects particular spatial and temporal narratives and also produces spatializing and temporalizing discourses" whereby everything (culture, politics, daily activities of the common person, etc.) is in a constant process of "coming together, dispersing, reconverging" (*Terrorist* xviii). Puar's point is that the collective
affective response to 9/11 is not to the event itself, but rather to what the event represents: "the ghosts of the future that we can already sniff" (Terrorist xx). This perspective reframes the standard way we classify history into past and present; instead, we are always in a moment of "becoming future" (Terrorist xx). 9/11 was devastating not for what it was, but for what it threatens to be the next time. Queer Studies scholar, Eve Sedgwick, calls this view of history the paranoid temporality: "No time," she writes, "could be too early for one's having-already-known, for its having-already-been-inevitable, that something bad would happen. And no loss could be too far in the future to need to be preemptively discounted" (131). To better understand Sedgwick's concept of the paranoid temporality, it is helpful to reference sociologist Nilüfer Göle's 2004 "Close Encounters: Islam, Modernity and Violence." Here Göle explains this same historical phenomenon by theorizing that history is a series of moments and that each historical moment is less about the moment itself and more about its own before and after. Some moments, being more significant than others, become snapshots. Göle sees 9/11 as a snapshot, a simultaneous "break and an explosion" that has forever cast historical narrative into two temporalities – that which came before, and that which exists after. The snapshot itself is the moment of devastating chaos that should have been predicted. Had it been predicted, it would have been prevented. But, since it wasn't (yet should have been) it creates the period of having-already-known. Therein lies the paranoia: We should have known, yet didn't, which means it could happen again and it could, again, be a surprise.

What might at first seem a purely theoretical concept is actually supported by science, once again encouraging interdisciplinary study. Current scientific research in and study of brain wave activity suggests that there exists a collective consciousness that is
comprised of each individual's thoughts that seep into the thoughts of others and thereby build a universal cognitive drive that is powerful enough to, in a sense, create events. Similar to the age-old notion of "the power of prayer," this collective consciousness creates what Cambridge professor and biologist Rupert Sheldrake calls a morphic field. This morphic field, conceptually similar to the earth's magnetic field, is how Sheldrake explains events such as birds flying in formation, herd migration, and even one's personal sense of being watched; the morphic field, claims Sheldrake is powerful enough to shape the world when the brain waves of individuals synchronize.

The Global Consciousness Project, in conjunction with Princeton University, has been collecting data on this phenomenon for nearly two decades. Using data gathered "from a global network of physical random number generators located" in seventy sites worldwide, GCP's stated purpose is "to examine subtle correlations that reflect the presence and activity of consciousness in the world" predicting "structure in what should be random data, associated with major global events." Over the course of this period, the most significant and powerful date indicating a unity in worldly consciousness was on September 11, 2001. The data supports Dr. Roger Nelson's contention that the emotional focus of millions of people worldwide on a single event can and will create a global consciousness. What's most interesting about the data from September 11, 2001, however, is that the spike in consciousness began hours before the first plane hit. While the implications of this cannot be fully realized, Dr. Nelson believes that it is evidence that the human subconscious is capable of seeing the future, and in those hours, the global consciousness – what Professor Sheldrake would call the morphic field – was already responding to the tragedy that was to come as the subconscious of multiple
individuals foresaw the events of 9/11. The 9/11 attacks, then, exist theoretically and scientifically as having-already-been. The world responded emotionally before the attacks even took place in the physical world. It is for this reason that, what Sedgwick calls, the paranoid temporality remains such a powerful and legitimate force. With 9/11, there exists a subconscious collective knowledge of what would happen – those *ghosts of the future* that we could *already sniff*. This process, that is now being explained by science, is a rearticulation of Freud's theory of the psychical reality. But, what Freud – and by extension, Fradenburg – explained on an individual level and only gestured to widespread cultural effects has greater implications when socially applied. And, what I demonstrate through this project is how the concepts of collective consciousness and the paranoid temporality explain medieval Christian fears of and subsequent actions against Jews (in chapter 2) and Muslims (in chapter 3), as readily as they explain contemporary American fears of terrorism and terrorist acts. This is why, as I explore in chapter 4, I think a more affectively and emotionally driven approach to teaching medieval literature would be the most effective in making the literature of the Middle Ages more significant in the lives of modern, post-9/11 student audiences.

In recognition of American fears following 9/11, in January 2002, President Bush expressed his "hope that life would return to normal" but also recognized that "it never will." "Those of us who have lived through these challenging times," he commented,

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Another way to articulate this is to compare the phenomenon to that intuitive feeling one has when she knows something bad is about to happen. Sheldrake's work suggests that in the moments before the 9/11 attacks, multiple people had "that feeling." Collectively the feeling was powerful enough to actually create the reality of the events. Certainly I recognize these cutting-edge scientific pursuits seem "out there," so to speak, but so too do many scientific endeavors when they are in their infancy. I present this information here only to illustrate that post-9/11 scholarship is remarkably interdisciplinary in that these fringe science pursuits are strikingly similar to the theoretical contentions of Puar, Sedgwick, and others here discussed.
"have been changed by them. We've come to know truths that we will never question: Evil is real." Though likely unaware of the depths of his own theoretical insights, Bush was commenting on this sensation of having-already-been, making the point that all decisions, whether conscious or subconscious, public or private will always-already be made with the presence of the 9/11 snapshot that exists suspended between its own before and after. It is political scientist Achille Mbembe who recognizes these before and after moments as fears. In explaining how humans respond to fear, Mbembe writes that present fears are built on a mixture of absences – the fear of the past built on memory, and the fear of the future built on anticipation. Post 9/11, it can be argued that we operate in paranoia of the next snapshot – of the next moment we should, but won't, see coming. Extended paranoia results in fear. Fear becomes dangerous when it drives action. Sedgwick, Göle, and Mbembe are all describing the same cultural phenomenon – the community response to fear. In communities, though, the physical reality of the fear is far less significant than the psychical reality, because the psychical reality is what drives action and response.

I employ the contemporary experience of 9/11 here as a way to demonstrate similarities between the psychical realities of the Middle Ages and contemporary America. Jeremy Cohen asserted that scholars of the Middle Ages must remember to focus on how history was made *then* by the people living it, in order to authentically understand the period and its people (89). Judgments of rationality aside, recognizing that the fears of 600 years ago are not that different from our own builds kinship, otherwise impossible to establish, thereby welcoming an affective connection between medieval and modern people. Because of this, I maintain that the post-9/11 frame of mind is a
valuable reference in my project for two reasons. First, scholarship offered in explanation of the post 9/11 frame of mind seeks to define a collective psychical reality that is not understood easily through purely psychoanalytic readings. I think this is because post-9/11 scholars are from all fields – from gender studies to science. When examined collectively, these scholars illuminate a collective understanding of cultural fear that, while contemporary, emerges just as definitively in explaining medieval Christian fears of Jews and Muslims. Application of this understanding of collective cultural fear, derived through interdisciplinary study, and applied to medieval religious conflict answers Sheehan's call that the Middle Ages not be studied in "a cultural vacuum" (10).

The second reason I find understanding of the post-9/11 mind significant for this project is decidedly less complex. Simply, we live in a post-9/11 world. Consciously or not, as individuals and as a culture, 9/11 is in our minds as scholars and as teachers; and, it is in the minds of our students who have lived nearly their entire lives in a post-9/11 world. If, as educators, we can find a way to tap into that shared experience and, further, if we can find a way to connect the fears Americans have following the 9/11 snapshot with the collective emotions felt by medieval Christians towards Jews and Muslims, we will have gone a long way toward making the Middle Ages relevant and affecting for modern students, because we will have made medieval people relatable. Though Jeffrey Cohen authored his monster theory nearly five years before the events of 9/11, I believe his articulation of cultural fear, coupled with the traditionally psychoanalytically-rendered articulations of jouissance and the psychical reality, define a collective cultural consciousness that proves timeless in understanding people within their societies. In the end, that is the heart of this project.
It is interesting to me that I write this 20 years after Van Engen called for change in medieval studies because I feel, again, that we have reached a critical point in the field. Fewer and fewer scholars are graduating with degrees specializing in medieval literature. Moreover, medievalists currently in academia are rapidly retiring; they aren't even being replaced. Today, multiple graduate programs throughout the country are without medievalists in their English departments. As Van Engen feared 20 years ago, I fear again that Medieval Studies no longer holds a respected – or even a necessary – place in the Academy. Having taught at the high school level for over twelve years, my ultimate concern is how this trend impacts secondary education. Fewer medievalists at the university level, means fewer classes offered in medieval literature to future teachers. In spite of the decreasing number of experts in the field, knowledge of and experience in early British Literature is required for the majority of graduating United States high school students. Add to this the growing demands on secondary educators in terms of checklists of core requirements for standardized tests and what happens is medieval literature becomes the unit cut, or the chapter students are encouraged to read alone. Or, at best, "early" British Literature is reduced to Milton, and in some cases even Shakespeare. Between limited interest at the university level, and less knowledge at the secondary level, I fear there is little hope that Medieval Studies will emerge on the opposite side of this education crisis. Again, I believe it is time to call for a reevaluation not for the future of medieval studies, but so that medieval studies has a future. And, I think we can begin with similar ideas as those that emerged from Van Engen's conference.
I spent the better part of this chapter illustrating how medieval literary scholars of the recent 20 years heeded MacCormack's advice to not regard medieval text as a canon of "authoritative statement and assertion" (106) and to introduce theory into the field to avoid constancy. And, I also demonstrated how a critical interest in postcolonial theory as a way to read and understand religious conflict in the Middle Ages has encouraged stasis. An effective weapon in battling interpretive stasis is a willingness to reinterpret as time and culture change. This is why I propose readings that intentionally seek affective connections for modern audiences in the study of medieval religious conflict. This is due largely to the fact that, perhaps more than any era in the past 200 years, contemporary culture understands the devastating ramifications of wars waged in the name of religion. And modern students, in particular, are empathetic to life lived during war times because, for the majority of their lives America has been at war. I firmly believe that educators need to draw upon this natural empathy of modern-day students in their instruction of medieval literature, especially that which deals with religious conflict.

While the bulk of my project addresses the interpretation of literature dealing with medieval religious conflict, particularly in regard to Christian relations with Jews (Chapter 2) and Muslims (Chapter 3), it is also important to me to give attention to how the literature of the Middle Ages should be taught, particularly at the secondary level. I am, first and foremost, a high school English teacher. It is because I am also a medievalist, that I want my students to develop an appreciation for and understanding of the people of the Middle Ages. For these reasons, my final chapter is far more pedagogically minded than the earlier chapters. In chapter 4, I explore the implications of affective analyses of medieval literature from an educator's perspective to illustrate how
medieval religious conflict can resonate particularly well with students who, first of all, live in a world suffering the effects of wars waged in the name of religion, and, in a broader sense, as teenagers who negotiate their daily lives through the intersections of psychical and physical realities.

One of my former World Literature students, a 9th grader at the time, offered the following in a reflection over our study of Christianity in the Middle Ages: "Of course, the people of the Middle Ages did not kill the Jews and Muslims just because. They did what they thought was right and unless we go back into time to see exactly why they did it, it is very hard to understand them and their thoughts" (Yang). A more intentionally affective approach that actively seeks to draw human and cultural connections between the people of the Middle Ages and of today can be viewed as the best way to "go back into time" because it allows students to better understand the people and their motivations through comparison to themselves. Professor of English Education and lauded pedagogical theorist, Gerald Graff calls such method "teaching the conflicts." An instructor teaches the conflicts anytime she introduces material raising more questions than answers, anytime she doesn't give facts but rather allows students to discover their opinions on given issues, anytime she allows controversy, disagreement, and debate into the classroom. Graff identifies multiple benefits of "teaching the conflicts," among which are allowing the students to participate in social debate, dialogue, and issues; teaching students to handle conflict in appropriate (rather than hostile) ways; and encouraging students to recognize connections between different ideas and interpretation of those ideas. He also argues that teaching literature in terms of the conflicts surrounding a given text can revitalize that text no matter how many times it has been studied. Teaching the
conflicts makes any piece of literature relevant for and interesting to students because in their learning, they are given the authority to contribute to the literary conversation.

In my fourth chapter, I use Graff, along with other pedagogical theorists (e.g. Louise Rosenblatt, Ron Miller, and Ernest Morrell) to argue for a discussion-driven pedagogy as the most effective (and affective) way to instruct students in the literature of the Middle Ages. Through modern textbooks and my twelve years of teaching experience, I show that what the high school classroom traditionally offers is a cleaned-up version of the community forces driving the Middle Ages. And, further, that subjects with political and religious implications are often avoided, particularly in terms of the Middle Ages. Literature, however, is inherently political: "the apparent representativeness of a text – its ability to make readers feel that it somehow speaks for a whole nation or social group – has been an important component of intellectual and literary value" (Graff 154). If instructors avoid the emotionally charged issues of the age, high school students are unable to capture the true medieval moment. Students are given nothing real to allow them to affectively connect with the people and the subject. Effective educators know that students must feel an intimacy with a text to write or converse about it. By approaching the Middle Ages through an emphasis on the medieval Christian collective cultural response to fear, and that fear's construction of literary Jews and Muslims, modern students are able to see medieval people through their similarities to us. Students are able to enter into an authentic conversation with the authors of the time by seeing the Middle Ages as first and foremost about people. Ultimately, this dedication to understanding the people in their age was the second hope of the medievalists at the Notre Dame conference in 1992.
Done well, a discussion-driven, affectively based pedagogy guarantees the field of medieval studies will not become static because each new generation is encouraged to appreciate literature in a way they never have before because they are able to read with personal engagement. Once they connect, the text is no longer foreign: It is a product of true human emotion and concern. Once the text is experienced as a genuine piece of human creation, students begin to feel a faithful intimacy with its subject and its culture. The extant literature matters because those people mattered. The literature is no longer a former version of the modern world; it is the literature of a previous culture with its own concerns, the details of which may or may not directly relate to modern society but most definitely lie woven within the fabric of humanity as a whole.
Chapter Two: Monster Jews as the Creation of the Christian Psychical Reality

"For [the synagogue] is not simply a gathering place for thieves and hucksters, but also of demons; indeed, not only the synagogue, but the souls of Jews are also the dwelling places of demons." – Thomas Aquinas

In my first chapter I explore how an interest in postcolonial theory as a way to read and understand literature of the Middle Ages led to interpretive stasis. I also offer monster theory, which I couple with the concepts of psychical reality and jouissance borrowed from traditional psychoanalytic applications, as a tool by which modern, post-9/11 audiences can better appreciate the literature of the Middle Ages. Readings uncovered through my application of monster theory reach understandings not just of the literature of the period, but also of medieval Christian society itself through examination of the stories that culture creates. Ultimately, this approach makes literature of the Middle Ages more accessible to students because it uncovers how societies of the past constructed their monsters through manifestations of their fears in a manner similar to modern enemy constructs. In this chapter, I focus this discussion on two popular stories from medieval Western Europe: Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Prioress's Tale," recorded in the 14th century, and the culturally engendered Hugh of Lincoln Ballads which were

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40 In Strickland, page 122.
handed down for years as folktale and finally recorded in the 19th century. While the
Hugh tale is frequently referenced as analogue to Chaucer's "The Prioress's Tale," my
research uncovered no critical examination that compares the two stories as literature.\(^4\) The analysis I offer later in this chapter, then, is a first in that it compares similarity in
language, representation of Jews, and description of culture between Chaucer's "The
Prioress's Tale" and the various versions of the Hugh tale published by Frances James
Child to reveal evidence of a collective Middle Ages Christian sentiment that consistently
demonized Jews. As explained in the first chapter, this demonization of Jews was not a
byproduct of the process of "self-definition by negation" (White 150) suggested by
postcolonial theory, but rather was a place for the collective Christian self to project its
pleasure and pain. If we remember that, from a Lacanian perspective, Christians of the
Middle Ages operated first and foremost in allegiance to God and in pursuit of jouissance
in the afterlife, then we are also reminded that it was impossible for Christians to separate
their motives and actions from the will of God. If Christians believed they satisfied God's
will, then to fulfill this version of the self, they needed an Other to operate under the
opposite of God's will, or in support of the devil. Non-Christians, here more specifically
Jews, thus became the demonized figures necessitated by medieval Christian theology,

\(^4\) It was, indeed, quite common for Chaucer to develop his stories from those made popular by
French and Italian traditions (i.e. "The Knight's Tale" correlates with Boccaccio's Teseida; "The
Wife of Bath's Tale" harkens to Roman de le rose; "Melibee" is a translation of a French version
of the Latin text Liber consolationis et concilii (Rudd 139)) and to mention significant
contemporary figures (i.e. "The Monk's Tale," "The Physician's Tale," The Legend of Good
Women). Gillian Rudd comments that Chaucer was so widely traveled through his civil and court
service (10), and was so knowledgable of stories and literary forms of other countries through his
translations, that he would have been equally well-versed in the folk imagination of Western
Europe (137). For this reason, I think it is particularly effective for literary analysis to align "The
Prioress's Tale" with the Hugh of Lincoln ballads.
social belief, and cultural practice. This chapter demonstrates this process through a close comparative analysis of "The Prioress's Tale" and the Hugh of Lincoln ballads.

While valuable critical examination of the Hugh of Lincoln Ballads is limited, Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Prioress's Tale" from The Canterbury Tales has been a popular source of critical examination throughout the better part of the past century. Written in the late 14th century, the Tale is one of 23 stories framed within the quasi-fictional account of 29 travelers on "pilgrimage / To Cauterbury with ful devout corage" (21–2) to venerate the relics of "The hooly blisful martir" (17), St. Thomas à Becket. At the behest of their Host, the pilgrims agree to pass the time traveling by "telle tales [. . .] Of aventures that whilom han bifalle" (792–5). Chaucer has these stories to tell because, as he informs readers in his "General Prologue," he joined the pilgrimage and has recorded

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42 It's difficult to offer an overview of critical examination of the Ballads because they are not, officially, a textual product of the Middle Ages. Rather, as will be discussed later in this chapter, it was in the late nineteenth century that Francis James Child collated the English versions of the tale, which had been circulating popularly for centuries, to publish in his larger work, The English and Scottish Popular Ballads. For this reason, most critical commentary of the various versions of the tale ignores medieval concerns of Jewish-Christian relationships and conflicts in the Middle Ages. (As I explore below, though, there were no Jews in England from the late 13th century until the 17th century, there was still the medieval Christian perception of Jewish conflict because the Jews still existed in the collective consciousness of Christians in spite of their physical absence.) Much critical commentary, in fact, explores Child and the procedures of his recording and publication of the Ballads, making no direct mention of the Hugh tales (see Kittredge's "Ballads and Songs" and Moore's "The Influence of Transmission on the English Ballads.") Articles that do mention Hugh do so only in passing, identifying it as among the oldest traditions represented in Child's collection (see Louise Pound's "The English Ballads and the Church," page ff 167–8).

43 Gillian Rudd notes that it is nearly impossible to pinpoint a precise date of composition because it appears Chaucer began the Tales around 1387 and worked on them intermittently until his death in 1400. The dating is compounded by a sundry of extant manuscripts of the Tales. There are 84 surviving manuscripts, only 55 of which appear to contain all tales known to have been written, and even within those 55 the sequence of the individual tales differs. Additionally, many tales (such as "The Prioress's Tale") exist in manuscripts independent of any other tales from the Canterbury collection (Rudd 106).

44 All line numbers are drawn from Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Prioress's Tale," The Canterbury Tales, The Riverside Chaucer, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989); this is the most widely accepted edition for scholarly and critical examination.
"Everich a word" (733). For this reason, he requests readers not be offended by what he has written because he has not written his own words.⁴⁵ One of these tales that could possibly offend is the tale told by the Prioress, which begins with a prayer in honor of the Virgin Mary, appropriate because the tale itself is of a Marian miracle. Though I examine the Tale in depth below, in order to appreciate the critical context that will be discussed, a brief synopsis here is appropriate.

As the Tale begins, a young Christian boy has learnt a hymn honoring the Virgin. Proudly (and as the Tale suggests, naively) he walks through a Jewish quarter singing stridently. His public veneration of the Virgin offends the Jews who capture him, murder him, and throw him into a sewer where, though dead, he continues to sing by virtue of a Marian miracle. The boy's mother searches for him and is led by the boy's own singing to the sewer where he has been discarded. An abbot releases the boy's soul, the Jews of the town are executed for murdering the child, and as the Prioress ends her tale, she reminds the audience of another boy, the "yonge Hugh of Lyncoln" who was "slayn also" by "cursed Jewes" (684–5; 1874–5).⁴⁶ It is because the Prioress draws a connection between the Jews of her tale and those from the popular Hugh of Lincoln tradition, that I believe the two tales must be examined in tandem. I think the reference suggests that Chaucer intends understanding of the latter to inform the former, and that, together, the stories reveal not only the extent to which Christians demonized Jews, but also the purpose such demonization served in Christian society. Before I can begin this comparative analysis,

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⁴⁵ It is valuable here to note that there are layer to Chaucer's role. He is the author of the Tales, but he has also fictionalized an author character named Chaucer who is on the journey to Canterbury. Just as any first person narrator, the Chaucer character is not to be confused for the author.

⁴⁶ Please note, with line citations for "The Prioress's Tale," the first line number references the tale as part of Fragment VII and the second references its alternate position in Group B².
however, it is necessary to contextualize the critical interpretive history of "The Prioress's Tale."

At the outset I mentioned that "The Prioress's Tale" has been a popular source of critical examination for decades. As early as the 19th century, in fact, William Wordsworth commented on the Prioress's "fierce bigotry" as the key personality trait allowing her to feel such sympathy for the tale's mother and child (Wordsworth 240). Drawing upon the early 20th century literary interpretive tradition, the majority of these examinations offer extensive explication of the text coupled with interpretive commentary. These early examinations do not use critical sources, nor do they employ critical, theoretical textual analyses, instead presenting readings that are formalist or opinion based in origin. Many early articles also explore the nature of Middle English language and the rime royal narrative form employed by Chaucer. Another popular topic for early examinations is analysis of the very nature of the Prioress, with significant attention given to her conflicting courtly and religious personas. When authors do

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47 See Phyllis Gage's "Syntax and Poetry in Chaucer's "The Prioress's Tale" (1966), Jane Baltzell's "Rhetorical 'Amplification' and 'Abbreviation' and the Structure of Medieval Narrative" (1967), and Paul Strohm's "Passioun, Lyf, Miracle, Legende: Some Generic Terms in Middle English Hagiographical Narrative" (1975).

48 This point is discussed further below. Here note that one of the most popular examinations of the Prioress is found in Muriel Bowden's A Commentary on the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales (1945). Required reading for most British students in the mid to late 20th century (Felsenstein, "Meeting"), Bowden's chapter on the Prioress focuses on the satiric nature of Chaucer's portrait of the Prioress. The satire, remarks Bowden, is found in that the Prioress has left cloister to partake of pilgrimage, and also in her description which Bowden correlates with heroines of romance in both feature and manner (94–8). Bowden does not comment extensively on the underlying satire in the Tale told by the Prioress, remarking only that the Prioress "is not greatly concerned over the suffering of her fellow-man" which is apparent through her tale "in which she tells with perfect blandness of the tortures visited upon the Jews" (99–100). In the whole of the portrait, Bowden fails to comment on the anti-Semitism found in "The Prioress's Tale." This is a failing common to many texts written in the 1940s and 1950s. See also James Lynch's "The Prioress's Gems" (1942) and "The Prioress's Greatest Oath, Once More" (1957); E.P. Kuhl's "Chaucer's Madame Eglantine" (1945); R.T. Davies' "Chaucer's Madame Eglantine"
reference other works, it is by way of identifying analogues to the tale, comparing it to the popular miracle of the Virgin tradition or identifying specific Biblical allusions that emerge through the narrative. Similarly, sources are used minimally by comparisons drawn between the Prioress and other literary characters, both from the Middle Ages and later. In all articles I've identified that were published prior to the 1980s, it comes as no surprise that the use of theory as a tool for literary analysis is nonexistent.

As stated in my first chapter, these formalist approaches were the norm for medieval literary interpretation up to the late 20th century. In spite of their formalist approaches, there are two articles that exist as reference points for later theoretical explorations of "The Prioress's Tale." These are R.J. Schoeck's "Chaucer's Prioress: Mercy and Tender Heart" (1956) and G.H. Russell's "Chaucer: The Prioress's Tale"
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(1969). The reason I believe these articles are such popular reference points for later critical examinations is because of their dueling opinions on the tale's anti-Judaic sentiment.\(^5^2\) Schoeck argues that the "pious hypocrisy of the Prioress" (253) is evidence of Chaucerian satire, insisting that because Chaucer demonstrates the Prioress to be more courtly than religious,\(^5^3\) her tale is easily held up for ridicule: "There is in Chaucer's treatment of the Prioress a clear-eyed recognition of the inhumanity of her Tale, its violation of the deepest sense of charity which fourteen centuries of Christianity had been laboring to develop, and its failure to carry the burden of charity which is enjoined on all Christians but especially on religious" (256). In other words, it is Schoeck's contention that because Chaucer does not describe the Prioress as pious and devout, the tale she tells must also be regarded as void of any significant religious pretense or Church authorization. Ultimately, claims Schoeck, because it is told by the Prioress, a woman of questionable religious authority, in the tale, "the widely circulated ritual murder legend is held up for implicit condemnation as vicious and hypocritical" (246).

Russell also references the gentleness and courtly innocence of the Prioress in building the opposite argument. Because the Prioress is so naïve, he argues, she would know nothing other than preaching what the church professes. In this case, she becomes not her own person, but merely a vehicle for the Church and the sentiments of the age. Russell embraces the tale as a traditional miracle of the Virgin story setting the "joy, sweetness, and love" (219) that a young boy has for Mary in opposition to the Jews as

\(^5^2\) Though Schoeck and Russell do not acknowledge one another in their articles, I have called their positions "dueling" because later critics set them in opposition. See Gillian Rudd, Albert B. Friedman, and J. Lawrence Guntner to name a few.

\(^5^3\) Though this contradiction in character is popular in Chaucerian scholarship, two of the most poignant examinations are found in Hirsh's "Reopening the 'Prioress's Tale'" and Guntner's *Sins of Madame Eglentlyne*. I address this point further in this chapter's conclusion.
"instruments of Satan" (221). Ultimately, writes Russell, the tale "offers a chilling intervention of a brutal but, to most medieval minds, just process of legal revenge [. . .] The Jews, who have always been in bondage, go to a death which is represented as the return of evil for evil" (223). What I find particularly interesting about this conclusion is that even without assistance from the modern analytical tool of monster theory, Russell recognizes the clear distinction the tale draws between the godlike purity of the young boy and the satanic renderings of the monster-ized Jews; further, he recognizes this distinction as normal, or "just" for medieval Christians. While this is a point unaddressed by Schoeck, together the articles by Schoeck and Russell reveal a popular topic for later critical examinations of Chaucer's "The Prioress's Tale." Critics contend that Chaucer was either representing the sentiments of his age by telling of Jews who murder a young Christian boy, or, he was commenting on the hypocrisy of the Church and the notion of Christian grace through the existence of such a Tale that celebrates the murder of Jews as told by a woman of the Church. In either case, at the heart of the story beats the medieval religious conflict between Christians and Jews.

In my first chapter, I demonstrate how a shift in academic interests led to an increase in the use of postcolonial theory to read and understand Middle Ages literature dealing with religious conflict. This is evidenced by the wealth of (what can be considered) postcolonial examinations, emerging in the late 20th century, devoted to "The Prioress's Tale." It is important to recognize that while many of these readings do not tout themselves as postcolonial in focus, the nature of the tale – the conflicts between the Jews
and Christians and the implicit anti-Judaic\textsuperscript{54} sentiment acknowledged by critics during the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century – lends itself to readings made popular through postcolonial analysis. Also in the first chapter, I identified two such articles: Jeremy Cohen's "On Medieval Judaism and Medieval Studies," significant because it was presented at Van Engen's progressive 1992 conference at Notre Dame, and Sylvia Tomasch's "Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew," an article included in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's The Postcolonial Middle Ages. Here, I review these articles, and others, to illustrate an emphasis on postcolonial theory in examination of "The Prioress's Tale" and also to reveal the collective shortcomings of such readings.

Jeremy Cohen's stated objective with "On Medieval Judaism and Medieval Studies" is to elucidate the situation of the Jews and Judaism in medieval Western Europe. Therefore, he begins by explaining how "the Jews comprised the only non-Catholic group consistently accorded official toleration in the medieval Latin west" (73) and that, initially, Christianity and Islam accepted Judaism.\textsuperscript{55} When the Roman Empire

\textsuperscript{54} Throughout I use the terms "anti-Judaic" and "anti-Judaism" rather than the more culturally familiar "anti-Semitic" and "anti-Semitism." In spite of the fact that many of my sources use anti-Semitism, I believe it is more accurate to use anti-Judaism, a term first used at the end of the 19th century by Bernard Lazare in his L'Antisémitisme: Son histoire et ses Causes to distinguish religious Christian opposition to Judaism from 19th century anti-Semitism which denotes racial opposition to Jews. This is a distinction supported by many Jewish scholars including Gavin I. Langmuir in History, Religion, and Antisemitism and Frank Felsenstein in Anti-Semitic Stereotypes.

\textsuperscript{55} Cohen believes Judaism was tolerated out of indebtedness to Jewish tradition and to Judaic foundations found in both Islam and Christianity. He does state, though, that as a whole "anomaly and ambivalence [...] typified the station and perception of Jews in medieval society" from the beginning, as Jews were always a source of "curiosity, consternation, and resentment" (75). On this point and in explanation of their subsequent expulsion from England (and other Western European countries), Sylvia Tomasch comments: "Although Judaism provided the foundations for Christianity, Jews threatened the definitions of Christian Society. Jews were expelled not merely because they first possessed (English) lands and goods from which they needed to be displaced but because they first possessed the (Christian) book from which they needed to be displaced" (251–2).
fell, and when the Christian empire in particular grew, informs Cohen, rights of Jews began to disappear. Though Jews were still expected to pay taxes, they suffered discrimination and persecution (76). From this point, argues Cohen, Jewish study, particularly at the university level, derives from the interaction of Judaism and Christianity (74). One is not taught without the other set in its opposition. This modern composite, argued Cohen in 1992, validates modern theory, particularly postcolonialism, as a tool for studying medieval Christian and Jewish relationships. Though Cohen doesn't specifically address Chaucer, his essay is significant because it recognizes an interpretive tradition that consistently sets Christianity and Judaism in opposition as a means of building understanding.

Relating Jeremy Cohen's assertions directly to Chaucer's Prioress, is Denise Despres' "Cultic Anti-Judaism and Chaucer's Litel Clergeon" (1994). Despres, who references Cohen directly, examines the Christian necessity for a Jewish presence in its self-articulation and understanding. But, as Despres reminds, because Jews had been expelled from England in 1290, the presence Chaucer relies upon is an "absent presence." That is to say, though Jews were not physically present in Chaucer's late 14th century England, they held a cultural presence through devotional art and literature, and through cultural memory. It was this absent presence that reinforced and validated Christianity: "Jews were not merely symbols of alterity in English culture, whether generic or specific, but rather [. . .] their presence was a necessary element in the

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56 Though Despres plays with the ideas in this early article exploring Chaucer's "The Prioress's Tale," she does not employ the term "absent presence" until her 1998 article, "Immaculate Flesh and the Social Body: Mary and the Jews." See Despres page 47 for the cited reference and explanation of the term.
devotional world of the later medieval English laity" (Despres, "Cultic" 427). In essence, argues Despres, it was in recognition of their distinction from Jews that medieval Christians were able to recognize themselves as Christians. Certainly her point about Jews existing in the realm of an absent-presence is poignant, but Despres fails to push her argument further to explore how Christians managed to maintain the existence of the Jew in a post-expulsion England, and further, why the Jew (as an idea) still carried such weight for Christians when "it," by this point, had become pure myth. An application of monster theory, coupled with the notions of psychical reality and jouissance as they are articulated in the first chapter, fills in these gaps by demonstrating that the Jewish presence completed Christianity rather than defining it, as Despres (informed by postcolonial theory) suggests.57

If readers will remember from my first chapter, when Jeremy Cohen presented his essay in 1992, postcolonial theory as a tool for medieval literary analysis was in its infancy. And while it is clear from her conclusions that Despres was dealing with postcolonial issues in 1994, it wasn't until Sylvia Tomasch's "Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew," appearing in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's The Postcolonial Middle Ages (2000), that the theory was formally united with Chaucer's "The Prioress's Tale." Using Despres' concept of the absent presence of the Jew and Robert C. Stacey's assertion that after their expulsion Jews remained "a ubiquitous presence in the English imagination established largely (and after 1290 entirely) through words, texts, and images" (25), Tomasch identifies the virtual Jew. The virtual Jew, she writes, is the most accurate way

57 My third chapter explores this same point to show how Muslims served the same role for Christians and Christianity.
to characterize the existence of the Jew, and of Judaism, as a legitimate concern for English Christians in the 14th and 15th centuries (243). Tomasz uses Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* to prove that "the Jew" was a concern for the English in spite of the expulsion because, as she writes, Chaucer references and alludes to Jews through the *Tales* with appearances "ranging from the faintly positive to the explicitly negative;" in the *Tales*, Jews are presented "as proto-Christian prophets, wandering exiles, blasphemers and torturers, and anti-Christian murderers" (243). Each of these references is in keeping with depictions of Jews of the time period and collectively, affirms Tomasz, they evidence the medieval Christian practice of perpetuating a virtual Jew in the absence of the physical.

The influence of postcolonial critique in her examination is clear when Tomasz proffers her assertion that the creation of and belief in the virtual Jew was foundational not just to medieval Christianity, but also to "the construction of Englishness itself" (244). Specifically in examination of "The Prioress's Tale," Tomasz theorizes that the setting of "The Prioress's Tale" – "Ther was in Asye, in a greet cittee, / Amonges Cristene folk a Jewerye" (488–9; 1678–9) – allows Chaucer to construct Englishness.

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58 Even before their expulsion, writes Bernard Glassman, Jews were regarded as outcasts in English society: "They were separated from the English people not only by their religious beliefs but also by their national and ethnic origins [. . .] they were considered to be part of a displaced nation living in a foreign land" (19). For this reason, suggests Glassman, King Edward's policy of expulsion in 1290 was successful because it was supported and enforced by a society already suspicious of Jews (19–20). From that point forward, then, Jews became popular villains, not just for Christians, but also for English. And, though they were physically absent, they were culturally present as villains in drama, art, and folklore. For further discussion of this point, see Glassman pp. 22–26.

59 This is a point also explored by James Shapiro in regard to the Renaissance through his 1996 *Shakespeare and the Jews*.

60 While beyond the scope of this project, it's important to note that Tomasz also explains the concept of the "virtual Jew" through examination of tales told by the Monk, the Pardoner, and the Parson.
geographically as well. The implicit point is that these events are in Asia, where Jews still exist. The suggestion, of course, is that the English need not fear such events because English sensibilities expelled Jews a century before; the expulsion decision is reaffirmed in the Tale's conclusion when the Prioress reminds her audience of the young Hugh of Lincoln who was tortured by English Jews prior to the expulsion. This dislocation of the Tale to Asia, writes Tomasch, also works to enable "an unremitting replay of perpetual Jewish crimes by containing Jews in an eternal, orientalized present" (248). It doesn't matter that there are no Jews in England; there are still Jews out there committing crimes against Christians. The problem with this analysis is that it focuses primarily on Jews as a perceived legitimate threat to Christianity, when in fact the mere presence of religious alterity preserved the sanctity of Christianity. An application of monster theory to this cultural conflict reveals that, for medieval Christians, it did not matter that the Jews practiced Judaism; it mattered only that they did not practice Christianity. In this regard, any non-Christian religious group would serve the same purpose and would be demonized by Christianity. It is for this reason that I find an early reading of the Asia setting, dismissed by Tomasch, to actually be quite valuable for modern readers of "The Prioress's Tale."

In 1964, Sherman Hawkins, one of the earliest scholars to explore Chaucer's use of the distant Asia setting, made the following claim: the Tale "belongs to a world of the

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61 In spite of the fact that Jews had been expelled from England, there were numerous stories circulating throughout Europe involving young boys who had purportedly been taken by Jews (e.g. Simon of Trent in Italy), as well as detailed accounts of instances of Host desecration (e.g. in Passau, Germany). These tales of Jewish crimes, living in both oral and manuscript traditions, contributed to a European Christian consciousness which feared Jews (Hsia 43–51). It is fair to assume that stories from continental Europe would have made their way to England, thereby further reinforcing English Christian fears. For a detailed discussion of non-English examples of the blood libel, see R. Po-Chia Hsia's *The Myth of Ritual Murder* (1988).
allegorical and supernatural rather than the world of literal reality. Its very setting in far-off Asia places the action midway between fourteenth-century England and miraculous events of Biblical history” (599). For Hawkins, "The Prioress's Tale" offers little in understanding Christian-Jewish relations in the Middle Ages because the Jews of the Tale aren't intended to represent Jews but rather any opponent of Christianity "whose wisdom is without faith" (Hawkins 606). Though he writes decades before Jeffrey Cohen developed his monster theory, Hawkins' argument is quite in line with my own in that he suggests that Jews in the tale are not significant as Jews, but simply as non-Christians. In this way, any religious Other would be monsterized to serve the same purpose.

Though she does not view the Tale as allegorical or supernatural, in "Chaucer's Prioress, the Jews, and the Muslims," Sheila Delany makes a similar assertion by explaining how setting the Tale in Asia aligns the Jews with the other enemies of medieval Christianity, the Muslims. Delany begins by demonstrating how, for Chaucer, the geography of the world was comprised only of "Auffrike, Europe, and Asye." Referencing Asia, then, for Chaucer meant simply not Europe and not Africa (198–9). The reference, however, is meant also to suggest an Islamic-governed region because, as Delany explains, "in an Islamic society the Christians would not be in charge [as they are in the Tale] but would themselves be governed by dhimma law" (204). Further, Jews would not be confined to a ghetto (or "Jewerye" as it's called in the Tale (489; 1678)) but would have lived in co-residence with Muslims because dhimma law held this was the

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62 Delany uses Chaucer's description of the world from Book III of his House of Fame to prove this point (Chaucer line 249).

63 Dhimma law is that which governs non-Muslims living in Muslim regions and within Muslim government systems.
surest way to convert nonbelievers. And lastly, Islamic law would have afforded the story's accused Jews a trial to determine guilt and punishment. Ultimately, then, asserts Delany, the setting of Asia does not create an allegory, but rather, it demonstrates a popular trope of the Middle Ages, which in art and literature linked Jews and Muslims. Thus, the Prioress, through her setting, condemns Islamic tolerance for other religions at the same time as she condemns those Christians who might believe punishments of Jews (expulsions, murders, tortures, etc.) too harsh or unnecessary. It is as if the Prioress suggests that this would happen to England if the English were to be tolerant of religious enemies (Delany 212). Again, while Delany doesn't invoke Lacanian terminology (doing so pushes the point to illustrate that Christianity necessitates the existence of non-Christians to fulfill the Christian self's pursuit of jouissance), her point is compelling in that, unlike Tomasch, she demonstrates the enemy to be not only Jews but any religious Other.

Complicating her position even further, in her final point, Tomasch explores Chaucer's role in the creation of the virtual Jew. Using a term coined by Zygmunt Bauman, Tomasch asserts that The Canterbury Tales illustrates Chaucer as engaging in allosematism in that for him, and for most English Christians of the time, the Jews existed as simultaneously good and evil (250). This dual existence, argues Tomasch, is ultimately what complicates modern understanding of medieval Jews because it creates

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64 See Cutler and Cutler's The Jew as Ally of the Muslim: Medieval Roots of Anti-Semitism for an extended discussion of how Muslims were anachronistically written into Passion imagery in evidence of this trope.
65 This point, central to my argument, is explored again in chapters 3, in regard to medieval Muslims, and in chapter 4 through discussion of the U.S. response to terrorism.
66 For an extensive discussion of the term, see Bauman's "Allosematism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern" in Cheyette and Marcus' Modernity, Culture, and 'the Jew' (1998).
an *a priori* perception of reality: the "truth" of the Jew exists before and without the reality of the Jew. As I see it, this also reveals a major problem in using postcolonial analysis in examination of medieval text: postcolonialism defines the reality of the medieval English Christian as solely and perpetually in opposition to the crafted "truth" of the Jew, rendering both understandings false and contrived.

In response to such postcolonial-driven treatments of "The Prioress's Tale," Michael Calabrese authored "Performing the Prioress: 'Conscience' and Responsibility in Studies of Chaucer's Prioress's Tale." Published in 2002, Calabrese's piece argues that scholarly examinations of the tale had been reduced to finding ways to teach the tale while simultaneously negotiating the problems of the past, healing its wounds, and finding a way to positively affect the future (66). Calabrese demonstrates remorse for the trend towards, what he calls, "politically conscious criticism" because such interpretations allow "The Prioress's Tale" to exist as nothing more than an example of medieval "alienation and oppression" (67) thereby reducing the text to simply "a type of historical hate crime" (69). Ultimately, claims Calabrese, what this does is to make Chaucer's "The Prioress's Tale" a seemingly authentic example of medieval religious conflict, a point he finds is not only inaccurate, but offensive. There is no evidence, Calabrese asserts, to suggest "the tale participated in or incited anti-Judaic attitudes or actions in Chaucer's England" (72). Moreover, continued analysis of the tale that relates it

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67 Tomasch's precise words read: "The English acted as colonizers, using their power to exploit and deterritorialize; the Jews were an internally colonized people, achieving release from English colonialism only at the cost of exile; the English / Christians constructed 'the Jew' as part of their fabrication of national / religious identity; and English artists and writers, such as Geoffrey Chaucer, participated in the ongoing, postcolonial, allosemiotic production of the virtual Jew" (255).

68 And, as I argue in chapter 3, it exists also in opposition to a similarly crafted truth of the Muslim.
to treatment of *real* Jews by *real* Christians, misrepresents the past, undermining actual documented violence toward Jews (72). The only remedy for this misreading, as Calabrese sees it, is to abandon postcolonial readings of "The Prioress's Tale," refocusing – in formalist tradition – on the text itself. Calabrese believes, extended textual analysis is the only sure way to avoid ethical analyses which yield a limited number of conclusions:

Chaucer is anti-Semitic and we have to live with it; Chaucer's *culture* is anti-Semitic and thus he is too by inclusion; Chaucer's culture was not *wholly* anti-Semitic, and Chaucer satirizes those who were by creating insipid anti-Semites; the Prioress, not her maker, therefore is anti-Semitic, and Chaucer was a sensitive, tolerant man, ahead of his time and thus welcomed in our own. (74)

Calabrese argues that the tale further benefits from formalist textual analysis in that such approach abandons emotionalism and affective poetics in favor of a distant rationality that can only enhance the study of medieval literature (83–84).

While I certainly support Calabrese's claim that postcolonial critique is not the best to offer in readings of "The Prioress's Tale," I have two principal concerns with how he articulates the failings of postcolonialism. First, I take issue with his point that, because the Tale is an inauthentic example of *true* documented crimes against Jews, it cannot simultaneously and accurately represent the spirit of crimes executed in the name of Christianity and hostile to Judaism. Extant medieval chronicles (many of which will be discussed at length below) prove that the sentiments relayed by Chaucer, through the Prioress, are representative of a culture experiencing fear of and exercising oppression against medieval Jews by constructing them as monsters. Chaucer's veracity is found not
in the details of the crime he describes, but is woven in the impressions formed and validated by the audiences of his Tale, both in its time and through the ages. In that regard, pointed examination of the actions taken and beliefs held by Christians in the Tale laments the crimes and examines the human drive at their origin. Second, Calabrese maintains that his most compelling argument against postcolonial readings is that they are driven by a sense of ethics and political consciousness, two drives he identifies with over-emotionalizing literary analyses. The first part of this, I might tend to agree with simply because it is dangerous whenever contemporary perspectives – ethical, political, or social – are used to evaluate societies of the past; and, as explained in my first chapter, postcolonial analyses lean toward such appraisals. But to suggest that these evaluations are improper because they are too emotionally driven confronts the very practice of literary study. Because *humans* are brought to its pages, literature is inherently emotional. As I assert throughout, but particularly in my fourth chapter, the responsibility in literary analysis is not to abandon affective responses, but instead to channel these reactions in a way that best serves the text, its author, the culture that produced it, and the modern culture that experiences it. Below I demonstrate how readings designed to focus on the religious motivations in the text as reflections of culturally engendered monsters achieve this because such readings do not render the "Chaucer is-" statements issued by Calabrese, but instead uncover possible answers to why medieval audiences were receptive to the telling of such tales in the first place. It is only after we understand why such tales were popular in their own age that we can come to appreciate their existence in ours.
Above, in discussing Tomasch's essay, I argued that a problem with using postcolonial theory to understand medieval Christians is that such analysis only ever allows medieval Christians to be recognized in opposition to the truths they created for medieval Jews, or the virtual Jew. Calabrese, too, recognizes this problem, but offers a solution that also eschews authentic insights into medieval culture because it seeks to eliminate emotion as a means through which to perceive the past. To avoid these theoretical quandaries, in my first chapter I introduce monster theory as a theoretical approach that examines people in their culture and the motives behind the stories they tell. In defining the effectiveness of monster theory, I relate terms such as psychical reality and jouissance that are traditionally accepted in psychoanalytic readings of text. But also, as I mention in my first chapter, much of the application of traditional psychoanalysis to the literature of the Middle Ages focuses on gendered imagination and sexual representation. This focus remains in psychoanalytic examination of "The Prioress's Tale." For example, H. Marshall Leicester explores the sexual jouissance of Chaucer's female characters in The Canterbury Tales with his examination entitled The Disenchanted Self: Representing the Subject in the Canterbury Tales. In characterization of the Prioress, Leicester concludes that the Prioress has become overly sentimental because she has traditional female forms of "carnality and competition" (198). Her sentimentality, then, is the cause of her affinity for "smale houndes" and "mous / Kaught in a trappe" (Chaucer 144–5). Writes Leicester, the Prioress has an "excessive indulgence in emotion" which leads her to "the expenditure of a disproportionate amount of emotional energy on [. . .] inappropriate object[s]" (211–2). Though Leicester does not mention it directly, his analysis suggests that it is the Prioress's heightened sentimentality
– and her own institutional prohibition against having children – that causes her to sympathize with the boy and his mother in the story she tells. His reading, though, makes no mention of religious interactions in the Prioress's story.

Another example of the critical application of psychoanalysis to "The Prioress's Tale" is Louise O. Fradenburg's *Sacrifice Your Love: Psychoanalysis, Historicism, and Chaucer*. Though she doesn't formally make the connection, Fradenburg's explication of desire here would suggest that the Prioress's very nature is one of desire: "Restraint, sacrifice, duty, 'containment,' are forms taken by desire. […] We are so accustomed to pitting morality against desire that it is simply hard to believe that morality is a form of desire, or desire is what morality is" (7). Because desire desires more than anything continuation rather than fulfillment, Chaucer's Prioress can be read as a character driven not by sentimentality (as suggested by Leicester) but by desire.69 While I appreciate the motivation to use psychoanalysis in analyzing "The Prioress's Tale," because Leicester and Fradenburg fail to tackle the religious conflict at the heart of the story, their readings don't demonstrate the significance achieved through the union of traditionally psychoanalytic terminology with monster theory and, therefore, their readings fail to reveal significant truths about "The Prioress's Tale," Christians of the Middle Ages, and humanity in general. Because purely psychoanalytic readings ultimately fail in revealing truths about medieval people and the enemies they engendered, I seek now to explore such reading by employing the critical apparatus outlined in my first chapter, and by

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69 This echoes Plato's *Symposium* (c. 360 BCE): "Then, said Socrates, he desires that what he has at present may be preserved to him in the future, which is equivalent to saying that he desires something which is non-existent to him, and which as yet he has not got. […] Then he and every one who desires, desires that which he has not already, and which is future and not present, and which he has not, and is not, and of which he is in want."
pulling the concepts of the psychical reality and jouissance from the field of psychoanalysis to repurpose in and unite with monster theory in order to examine the medieval cultural creation of the monster Jew.

In my first chapter, I discuss the process through which Christians of the Middle Ages turned their religious enemies into monsters by demonizing them. In brief, the process begins as medieval society, collectively, aligns its actions with the will of God. Theoretically, medieval Christians lived a psychical reality so dedicated to belief in the existence of God that this belief (a product of the imaginative aspect of the mind) became, for them, more real than their lived physical realities. Because of this, the primary drive for medieval Christians was the promise of jouissance at the hands of God in the afterlife. As I write in chapter one, pursuit of jouissance becomes the main drive for all earthly decisions because it has blended the imagined psychical reality (God) with the lived physical reality (human) rendering an inability to identify a difference between the two. This placed medieval Christians in a position of being unable to distinguish God's will from their own actions. By extension, God's enemy became their own; it was in pursuit and eradication of this enemy that they neared jouissance. This pursuit, moreover, necessitated the physical manifestation of the psychical adversary of God – the devil. And, through projection of their fears of the devil, medieval Christians created the demonic Jewish monster. It was because the Jewish figure existed as both a force to be feared and an object of desire\(^70\) for Christians that it can be regarded as, what Jeffrey

\(^70\) This is a desire in that through a process of negative theology, Christians were better able to understand the goodness of God by recognizing his opposite. See my discussion of Jeffrey Russell in chapter 1, particularly his assertion that "any 'knowing' of God that we may have must be acquired through 'unknowing'" (Russell 31).
Cohen would deem, a culturally engendered monster. The reality of the Jews mattered little. What mattered was the "cultural body" (Cohen 4) of the Jew that was crafted in the Christian mind, society, and lore to serve a very specific purpose – as the reflection to shine opposite to Christian devotion and piety.

Writing from a social-historical rather than theoretical or theological perspective, Jean-Jacques Rousseau offers an insightful explanation of how Christianity breeds its enemies. In book IV of *The Social Contract*, Rousseau discusses "Civil Religion," outlining the process by which religion and politics became bound. Using the Roman Empire as his focus, Rousseau explains how in the earliest societies, the way of life was a melding of social rules for living and recognition of the greater forces at work in daily life. These forces slowly evolved into a polytheistic program for explaining the world. The forces, or gods, began to receive worship for the power they wielded in the daily political and social lives of the people. In this way, religion became inseparable from the laws of the State. In terms of the formation of the Roman Empire, Rousseau notes, Romans simultaneously conquered and adopted the gods of their defeated. With Jesus, however, this union of the theological and the political separated. As Rousseau writes, "As the new idea of a kingdom of another world could never have entered the minds of pagans, they always regarded the Christians as true rebels who, under the cloak of hypocritical submission, only awaited the moment to make themselves independent and supreme, and cunningly to usurp that authority which they made a show of respecting while they were weak" (Rousseau 178–9). While perhaps excessively acerbic in identification of what he calls the "sacred cult" of Christianity, Rousseau's point is
nonetheless poignant. With Christianity emerged what can be called a division of allegiance; for Christians, the ruler (council, regent, king, etc.) was not their ultimate Ruler, and therefore, suggests Rousseau, Christianity is incompatible with civil society since Christians are never fully invested in this world. As Rousseau argues, through Christianity, everything that happens is justified, defended, or excused as God's will and all results are through Providence, rather than human endeavor.\textsuperscript{71}

Another element explored through "Civil Religion" is the idea that religion can never be civil because, by nature, it breeds intolerance. Rousseau writes, "It is impossible to live in peace with people one believes to be damned; to love them would be to hate the God who punishes them; it is an absolute duty either to redeem or torture them" (186–7). From this recognition, it is only a short leap to the persecution that breathes "only murder and massacre" and demonstrates it is "doing a holy deed in killing those who do not accept their Gods" (Rousseau 182). Ironically, then, while Rousseau sees the daily existence of the Christian as apathetic, passion is found in the face of religious alterity. The Christian justification would be that efforts of conversion (or, when necessary, extermination) are God's will.

Though he does not address the Middle Ages specifically, Rousseau's articulation of "Civil Religion" helps to explain the medieval Christian association of Jews with Satan. In order to justify their treatment of Jews as God's will, it was necessary for medieval Christians to transform Jews into cultural monsters. As discussed at length in

\textsuperscript{71} It should be noted that, in his discussion of Christianity, Rousseau draws a distinction between "religion of man" and "religion of citizen." Here I have presented Rousseau's concerns with the "religion of citizen;" the former, Rousseau characterizes as involved in "internal worship" and "external morality." It is the purest and most private form of religious worship; and, because it is not organized, it does not bred the intolerance found in the "religion of citizen."
my first chapter, and as mentioned above, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen identifies the process by which cultures create monsters. The cultural monster, argues Cohen, is a "projection of (an Other) self" (17); it does not exist in a binary world but rather, at "the gates of difference" (Cohen 7). Because it is a manifestation of cultural fears, the monster is more a part of the collective consciousness than society would care to admit. It is in its existence as a border creature, between society and an unidentifiable other, that the monster not only escapes definition, but jeopardizes the very differences by which society constructs its identity: "And so," writes Cohen, "the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions" (6). It is at once close to, and separate from, the society that created it. While Cohen is not writing specifically about the Christian creation of a Jewish monster, application of the theory to Christian-Jewish relationships of the Middle Ages suggests that Christians constructed the Jew, not

72 This concept, which I use throughout, is borrowed from the work done by Cambridge professor and biologist Rupert Sheldrake. Discussed at length in my first chapter, Sheldrake argues that, while similar to a culture's unified core belief system, a collective consciousness is more powerful in that it creates bonds that cannot be broken because it unites humans through a morphic field of brain wave activity. While Sheldrake's research borders on fringe science, his assertions seem particularly apropos to the beliefs of medieval Christians. Their faith united them to the core – their thought was not independent of the indoctrinated system of belief that worked to build, not a church of like-minded individuals, but an unwavering, fully unified collective Christian consciousness that dictated (and unified) not only what they believed, but how they acted on those beliefs. While my use of the term "collective consciousness" is informed by my study of Sheldrake, the term "collective conscience" is widely attributed to sociologist Émile Durkheim, who, in 1895, used the term to explain how an individual comes to recognize, accept, and safeguard his position in the larger community (Pragmatism 91-92) and how the beliefs of individual members of that community ultimately merge to form social truths that prove more veracious than natural, or scientific, truths: "The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society forms a determinate system which has its own life; one may call it the collective or common conscience. No doubt, it has not a specific organ as a substratum; it is, by definition, diffuse in every reach of society" (Durkheim, Rules 26). The sentiment receives further treatment by Carl Jung, who employs the phrase "collective unconscious" to indicate a passive existence. As Jungian philosophy argues, there exists, in the mind of the individual, a system of established cultural truths that form "a collective meaning, a meaning which is the common property of mankind" (322). I carry this triumvirate of connotation as I employ the term "collective consciousness" throughout this project.
in a postcolonial sense in order to validate themselves, but through a more significant process whereby their construction of the enemy was part of their individual human and collective cultural drive. The reconfiguration of the Jewish body as Satan (or associated with Satan) worked as a form of Christian self-identification. Cohen might state that the process "naturalize[d] the subjugation of one cultural body" in this case the Jews, by another (the Christians) "by writing the body excluded from personhood and agency as in every way different, monstrous" (Cohen 11). While it is difficult to pinpoint the inception of a cultural body, the propagation of the Jewish monster is clear through an examination of medieval art.

Physiognomic theory argues that the form an individual's body takes is a direct reflection of what is in the soul. To reflect – or perhaps to craft – the medieval collective consciousness belief in the sardonic Jew it was necessary to present the Jew, pictorially, as monstrous.\(^\text{73}\) In doing so, medieval manuscript artists, sculptors, and even costume designers drew upon a tradition handed down from Classic cultures that portrayed evil through physical distortion, dark skin, exaggerated features, and a prevalence of the colors yellow and red (Strickland 108). Because medieval people subscribed to the Classical belief that the head was the storehouse of the soul,\(^\text{74}\) in their depictions of Jews, the head was typically rendered most distorted, with pointed hats appearing atop heads with faces featuring elongated, often hooked noses and excessively lengthy beards. One

\(^{73}\) It's important to recognize that some favorable portraits of Jews exist from the Middle Ages, particularly those of Old Testament Jews, such as David, who later became celebrated figures in Christianity. My emphasis here is on the expansive treatment of "the common Jew" in the Christian creation of the Jewish myth.

\(^{74}\) An extensive discussion of this medieval belief system can be found in my essay "A Medieval King Disabled by an Early Modern Construct" in Disability in the Middle Ages. Ed. Joshua Eyler. Ashgate, 2010.
particularly striking piece heading the London Roll of the Exchequer for 1233 portrays Isaac, a Jew with a pointed nose and horned hat. The image juxtaposes Isaac with a demon of similar feature who reaches to Isaac in a gesture of affection, thereby drawing a familial connection between the two and reinforcing the representation of Jews as demonic progeny through depiction of pointed (elsewhere hooked) noses and pointed hats.  

Similar depiction appears in countless extant manuscripts of the 13th century. It also appears in the limited costuming that remains from the medieval mystery play tradition. In Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages (1994), Ruth Mellinkoff identifies two masks, likely used to represent Jews in the York Crucifixion Cycle, with bare dark skin, elaborately hooked noses, and grotesque warts. The mystery play tradition of portraying demonically rendered Jews as active instruments in the Crucifixion demonstrates the consistent medieval Christian [mis]interpretation of the Gospels. Medieval Christian imagery universally downplayed the role of the Romans in Christ's death while artistically representing the Passion as an act of aggression directly from the Jews to Christ. As Strickland notes, in the 13th and 14th centuries, artistic recreations of the Passion presented Jews in the time period's contemporary clothing. This pictorial imagery, then, educated an illiterate majority that the Jews were solely responsible for Christ's death. By showing contemporary Jews in the

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75 A familial affinity is also suggested by the 15th century German image "The Beast marking the Jew" which illustrates a procession of Jews receiving what can only be deemed an anointing from a horned goat figure. The popular association of goats with the devil suggests that the relation between Jews and Satan was widespread throughout Western Europe.

76 In medieval image, Moses frequently appears horned because of a Latin mistranslation of the Hebrew for "rays of light;" regardless, only the educated few would realize that Moses' "horns" were a sign of power and significance. The masses, writes Ruth Mellinkoff, would assume that the horns suggested even Moses was, ultimately, "just a Jew" (121).
Crucifixion, the subtle suggestion was that modern *real* Jews would behave similar to the *imagined* Jews of the Gospels.

Inarguably the surest way to ingrain the image of the demonic and monstrous Jew within the mindset of the medieval Christian was through image. And, the prevalence of these images throughout Western Europe worked to solidify a collective consciousness among Christians and against Jews leading to precepts of anti-Judaism that seemed unofficially codified in the society and appeared again and again in cultural lore, thereby proving how a monster is culturally engendered, as Jeffrey Cohen claims. One of the earliest appearances of the anti-Judaic literary strand is with the late twelfth-century tale of William of Norwich. Believed to be based upon a true story of a missing English child, as the legend unfolds, William, a pure young boy devoted to Christianity, was lured into captivity by a group of Jews who tortured and then, in a manner similar to the crucifixion of Christ, killed him, using the blood from the pseudo-Christ-child in their Passover ceremony. In the tradition of anti-Judaic tales of the High Middle Ages, the story of William of Norwich is significant for three reasons: first, it builds upon the New Testament tradition of the need to castigate the Jews as Christ-killers by making the story's hero an innocent boy of Christian faith. Second, it supports the bodily parallel

77 It should be noted, when it comes to medieval treatment of Jews, there is a fine line between folklore and history. As early as 1235 with the burning of 34 Jews of Fulda, there are numerous documented cases of Jews being punished for the murder of young Christian boys (Biddick 147). The punishments suffered by Jews are not the product of folklore; they are historical anti-Judaic actions taken by medieval Christians, and are evidence of authentic beliefs by medieval Christians about Jews. The recorded crimes of the Jews, however, are the likely product of folklore.

78 Jeffrey Cohen identifies "The Monster's Body Is a Cultural Body" as his first of seven theses in articulation of monster theory (4).

between Jews and the devil by crafting Jews as monstrous tempters bent upon destroying Christianity by literally consuming it. And third, it allows Christians to fill the role of the devil's opposite by allowing Christianity to occupy the heroic position as defeater of the evil other and defender of the Christian faith.\textsuperscript{80} As a contributor to the cultural creation of the Jewish monster, the story illuminates many of the points Jeffrey Cohen articulates to describe how monsters are crafted within society. First and foremost, the story is evidence of Cohen's point that the monster always escapes. Remember, with this point, Cohen means to suggest that monsters are necessitated by the cultures that create them and that, without a given culture, a specified monster cannot exist. In other words, the only reality is in the concept of a monster and the fact that each society will identify an entity onto which to project its needs for a monster. Thirteenth-century Christians have let "the monster escape" (Cohen 5) the true biblical Christ-killers (the Romans) and have projected that monstrous action onto the Jews, thereby engendering a monstrous body. The story also demonstrates Jeffrey Cohen's point that cultural monsters are characterized by differences from their paternal culture when it expounds the mysterious uses of the

\textsuperscript{80} In \textit{A Saint at Stake} (1964), M.D. Anderson contextualizes the story of William of Norwich for post-Holocaust audiences. Specifically, Anderson examines the cultural climate of 12th century England to determine how the Jews, then so significant to the English economy, could quickly become the fictitious and feared ritualistic murderers of young Christian boys. Anderson asks: "How did the story arise? What was its underlying basis of fact? What was the community like in which it all happened and what were the conflicting interests and other social forces, which made the death of an obscure child such a cause célèbre that the deaths of other children, all over Europe, were laid to the charge of the Jews?" (15). Anderson uses church imagery to support her assertion that the surging number of young boys, purportedly murdered by Jews throughout England in the late 12th century, was part of a church-crafted "cult of the child martyr" (17), whereby multiple districts throughout England (e.g. Norwich, Gloucester, Bury, St. Edmunds, Winchester, etc.) rivaled in the creation of their own martyrs. Jews were employed in the tales "in order to stress[. . .] parallel[s] with the Passion of Christ" (18). So, what began in the late 12th century as a fictitious rivalry between churches quickly became part of the collective cultural consciousness of England as the tales became more about the monstrous actions of Jews than they were about celebration of the child martyr. By the 17th century, then, these stories, which were now about the monstrous actions of Jews, stretched across western and central Europe.
child's blood in unknown religious ceremonies. But, the fact that Christians used blood symbolically in their own ceremonies is an example of Cohen's point that cultural monsters are both feared and desired. Christians, through transubstantiation, desire the union with Christ that they fear the Jews in the story commit with the Christ-like child. This pushes medieval Christians deeper into a place of fear when they recognize the similarities between what they project onto Jews and what they, themselves, actually practice.  

It is this fear of becoming the monster, then, that Jeffrey Cohen would argue is what keeps the Christians "in line" and keeps the Jews as the monstrously rendered wild, uncivilized figures who stand in opposition. Time and culture then build upon these elements within the tale to reinforce the creation of the Jewish monster. This is evidenced by the extent to which the tale of William of Norwich resurfaced in multiple forms, specifically in the multiple versions of the tale of Hugh of Lincoln derived from early

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81 Christian anxieties over what amounts to symbolic theological cannibalism are widely discussed in postcolonial theory. The notion, of course, is that cannibalism is the ultimate form of Other-consumption, but ironically, it is a primitive act and is widely associated with "monsters," "wild men," and "savages." In the Middle Ages, this idea is explored in fiction through the anonymous Richard Coer de Lyon; critically many scholars have explored the topic including Shirley Lindenbaum, J. Rives, and Geraldine Heng. What I find particularly interesting is how readily Christians attributed this practice to Jews when Mosaic Law prohibited Jews from even tasting blood. For further discussion of this point see Hsia (especially 8–11).

82 Though the majority of my analysis references Cohen, it's important to remember that in my first chapter I introduced Richard Bernheimer's position which, quite similar to Cohen's, argues that cultures engender monsters (what he calls "Wild Men") to act upon the repressed urges of the self, or those actions humans wish to commit, yet don't as members of "civilized" society (Bernheimer 3). Also of interest is On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears, by Stephen Asma (2009). In contextualizing the existence of monsters in culture, Asma begins with the Latin monstrum which derives from the root monere, meaning "to warn;" Asma's point is that a monster is an omen, "a portent of the future" (13). Read in the context of Cohen and Bernheimer, then, monsters warn "civilized" members of society against the worst parts of themselves.
chronicles and in Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Prioress's Tale" of *The Canterbury Tales*, both of which foil deicidal Jews with purity and Christ-like innocence of spirit and body.

The fact that anti-Judaic sentiment was at the very heart of Christian religious thought and the corporal demonization of the Jews was a part of Christian practice is clearly illuminated by examining "The Prioress's Tale" and the Hugh of Lincoln tradition through their depictions of Jews and the Jewish murders of the young Christian boys. These polemics allowed English Christians to cast Jews into the realm of the cultural monster to not only solidify their own existence as the social, religious normative as postcolonial analysis suggests, but more significantly in an attempt to understand their God and themselves. As explained in chapter one, Lacan theorizes that once the Thing – in this case, God – has been named, He can no longer be known. The only option becomes to know God through unknowing. Further in chapter one, I discuss Jeffrey Russell's description of negative theology: the process whereby the goodness of God is understood only through the recognition of what God is not – evil. Through the creation of cultural monsters, medieval Christians felt they were able to understand goodness through the recognition of evil. In its purist form, that evil was Satan, but because Satan,

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83 While I have located no known medieval census of *The Canterbury Tales*, extant manuscripts reveal that Chaucer's late 14th century "The Prioress's Tale" is known to have existed independently of *The Canterbury Tales* in at least ten manuscripts, thereby making it one of Chaucer's most popular tales among medieval people. In "The Canterbury Tales: Early Manuscripts and Relative Popularity," Charles Owen argues that the independent textual tradition of the *Tales* is the best way to determine popularity and significance in the Middle Ages. "The Prioress's Tale," with ten independent copies is second only to "The Franklin's Tale," with twelve (Owen 108–9).

84 Throughout I employ the phrase "Christian thought." What seems like a generalization to modern sensibilities is an accurate way to characterize medieval Christians. Just as medieval Christians viewed Jews as a collective entity, they viewed themselves as a collective entity standing against Jews in both practice and thought.

85 See Chapter 1, note 35 regarding the Hebrew word "Ha-shem."
too, was a named Thing, understanding could be reached only through the earthly projection of Satan. This resulted in the demonization of the Jews. Therefore, with Jesus's condemnation as their support, English Christians embarked upon a crusade to rid the community of the "serpents" and "generation of vipers," as they are labeled in the Gospel of Matthew, who Christ proclaimed would never "escape the damnation of hell" (23:33).

But, as Krister Stendahl recognizes, "what Jesus had said with prophetic pathos, identifying with his people" was misunderstood by Christians who seemed to be looking for any excuse to hate the deicidal Jews (33). Twisting the Bible to their own purposes and ignoring passages that did not support their cause, Western European Christians ignored Christ's plea, in the Gospel of Luke, for forgiveness of the Jews "for they know not what they do" (23:24) and waged a full attack on Judaism, interpreting the Bible to be used as the greatest justification for their actions as God's will against Jews.

As a tool of literary analysis, Jeffrey Cohen's monster theory allows readers to understand the motivations of medieval Christians as humans. When I write "understand," I certainly don't mean that modern audiences can support or even justify Christian crimes against Jews. Simply, I mean monster theory helps readers approach text and seek understanding from the perspective of the Christian self. It answers the question of motivation and makes it possible for modern audiences to realize how a culture could believe it was in the right, when modern sensibilities suggest otherwise. Postcolonial readings have simply reduced the Christian / Jewish conflict of the Middle Ages to an exercise in Christian power over a Jewish minority and an emergence of a Christian majority defined only in opposition to the oppressed Jews. A fundamental quake in this stance, however, is that during the period which produced the bulk of literature
articulating Christian / Jewish conflict, the Jews weren't even a minority; physically, due
to the expulsion, they were a non-entity. Because Christian stories were built only around
the myth of the Jew, postcolonial readings are rather insignificant. Conversely, because
monster theory encourages examination of the monster producing culture, first and
foremost it pointedly reveals the process by which medieval Christians created the Jewish
myth and ultimately the need that creation satisfied. Further, the theory takes into
consideration the fact that the myth of the Jewish monster spans years and evidences the
creation of a generations-long collective Christian consciousness. That is to say, so true
was the myth of the Jewish monster for medieval Christians, that the demonization of
Jews in the Middle Ages was a core element of Christianity.

Prior to Chaucer, Western Europe, in fact, had a long tradition of demonizing
Jews. The concluding stanza to "The Prioress's Tale" reads as follows:

O yonge Hugh of Lyncoln, slayn also
With cursed Jewes, as it is notable,
For it is but a litel while ago,
Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That of his mercy God so merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplie,
For reverence of his mooder Marie. Amen (684–90; 1874–80).

The prologue to the next tale begins as follows:

Whan seyd was al this miracle, every man
As sobre was that wonder was to se (691–2; 1881–2).
The final "Amen," to "The Prioress's Tale," coupled with reverence (indicated by the Middle English word *sobre*) of the listeners upon hearing the tale, work to present the story as a prayer in respect and veneration for young boys – like Hugh of Lincoln – who have fallen victim to the satanic mechanism of medieval monster Jews.

In the early thirteenth century, nearly 200 years before Chaucer crafted the Prioress and her tale, English chronicler Matthew Paris recorded the story of Hugh of Lincoln: "In 1225," Paris writes, "the Jews of Lincoln stole a boy called Hugh, who was about eight years old." It is recorded that the Jews held the boy for ten days, during which time they spread the word to Jews throughout England that a crucifixion would take place. When the Jews arrived from all over England, the boy was stabbed, spit upon, pricked, mocked, and ultimately crucified. After the Jews crucified the young Christian, Paris continues, "they took the body down from the cross, and for some reason disemboweled it; it is said for the purpose of their magic arts" (in Lachs 61). In Paris's version, the boy's mother searched for him and learned he was enticed into a Jew's home. Ultimately the Jews confessed, and all Jews in England were held responsible for the crime. As soon as the chronicle reached widespread clerical audiences and was further transmitted through the pulpit, thousands of Jews throughout London were jailed and executed (Lachs 62). The English, driven by their fears, sought to cleanse their country of Jews. The late fourteenth century reference to the legend in the conclusion of "The Prioress's Tale" illustrates how significant such stories remained for Medieval Christians well after the late thirteenth century expulsion of the Jews from England, thereby suggesting how menacingly the Jewish cultural monster lurked in the collective Christian consciousness.
In addition to Paris's record in *Chronica Majora*, similar stories of Hugh appear in medieval sources throughout Western Europe, including the *Annals of Waverley* wherein the Jews of the story try to hide their crime by disposing of the boy in a nearby stream. The water, it is reported, will not accept the product of Jewish evil so the body is immediately washed ashore. The Jews then try to bury the body; this time, the earth will not accept the evil doings and the body emerges the next morning, unburied. Finally, the Jews toss the boy into a well at which point a great bright light shines forth and the body of the boy floats to the top. It is in the *Annals of Waverley* that the body is said to hold the power of miracles by returning the sight of a blind woman who touches it when it emerges from the well. Eighteen Jews are reported hanged for the crime.

In the *Annals of Burton*, a manuscript dated a century after the first report of Hugh's murder, the young boy is said to have been kidnapped at sunset while he was playing with his schoolmates. The Burton chronicler reports that Hugh was held for 26 days with little to eat or drink and that, eventually, a council of Jews decided to kill him in a manner similar to the crucifixion of Christ. Throughout his torture and crucifixion, the boy did not complain and remained cheerful. It was not until he was stabbed with spears repeatedly that he finally died. When his mother found him, he had floated to the surface of a well. Suspecting the Jews, Hugh's mother convinced King Henry III to take action. Henry III coerced the leader of the Jews, identified as Jopin, into a confession by

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86 The *Annals of Waverley* was a product of Waverley Abbey, the first Cistercian abbey in England. Founded in 1128, the abbey, which celebrated wide popularity and riches throughout its first century, was presumably the inspiration for *Waverley* by Sir Walter Scott (“Waverley”).

87 The *Annals of Burton* is a product of the abbey of Burton-upon-Trent, founded in the 7th century.
promising to spare his life. Following Jopin's confession, Henry III has Jopin and 18 other Jews killed.

The chronicle history of Hugh is not limited to medieval English manuscripts but exists throughout Western Europe appearing in French, Spanish, Italian, and German traditions. Further, between 1137 (with William of Norwich) and 1605, throughout Western Europe, there are no fewer than fifty chronicled cases of young Christian boys who purportedly went missing and eventually were murdered, presumably, at the hands of Jews. And, both the French court under Philip Augustus and the Spanish court under Ferdinand and Isabella offer suspected Jewish crucifixion of Christian boys as rationale in their respective 1182 and 1492 expulsions of Jews (Child 242). What this suggests is that for nearly half a millennium, a Western European Christian truth was that Jews were to be feared for the ritual and habitual kidnapping, torture, and crucifixion of young Christian boys. By the late Middle Ages, it is clear that the Jews had become monsters engendered by Christian culture and that, moreover, the Christian dedication to the veracity and distribution of such tales proves their necessity in Christian philosophy and practice. To be so fundamentally significant in Christian lore, the stories must have offered some sort of exegetical message to Christians who told and retold the stories thereby allowing the tales to reinforce, not only the Christian belief in the Jewish role in the crucifixion of Christ, but more importantly the Christian belief in God's Providence and their role as God's earthly extensions and exercisers of His will. Further, the tales

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88 English chronicle history records six Jewish ritualistic killings of boys from Norwich (1137 and 1235), Gloucester (1160), St. Edmondsbury (1181), London (1244), and Northampton (1279) before the Jewish expulsion in 1290.

89 Child cites Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History* of 419 as the earliest recording of Jewish killings of young boys when Syrian Jews, as a result of their drunkenness, killed a young man. Similar stories have appeared in Greece, Russia, and Hungary as recently as the late 19th century.
aligned the Jews with devils making them the enemies of God, the enemies of Christianity, and ultimately transforming them into cultural monsters. The punishments suffered in the tales by Jews at the hands of Christians only work to further reinforce (in medieval Christian minds) the actions Christians should take in support of God's will and in opposition to the Devil.

It is impossible to argue which came first – the actual actions taken by Christians against Jews, or the stories that seemed to teach such Christian responses. Ultimately, though, it really doesn't matter. What matters is that to medieval Christians, their own actions weren't "wrong" . . . they weren't even "right." They were just God's will. They happened because it was part of God's Providence and, therefore, part of the Christian psychical reality. This is not, by any means, an effort to release medieval Christians from culpability for crimes against Jews. In fact, it is never the duty of modern eras to judge, morally, actions of the past. All we can do is to try to understand the drive to commit such actions to have a hope that they don't happen again. Medieval Christians, unfortunately, did not have the insight afforded by 600 years of reflection and perspective, and so the stories they told only solidified the existence of the Jewish monster in their minds. It can be argued that it was the fanatical belief in this constructed truth that gave birth to the tradition of the Hugh of Lincoln ballads.

In the late nineteenth century, under the title "Sir Hugh, or, the Jew's Daughter," Francis James Child collated the English versions of the tale, publishing in *The English...*  

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90 This point is discussed further in my fourth chapter when I examine the duties and implications of teaching medieval literature of religious conflict in contemporary high school classrooms.
and Scottish Popular Ballads, the fullest single treatment of the medieval legend.\(^9\)

Though the details of the individual versions differ, the outline of the story is consistent amongst the tales of Hugh of Lincoln: a young Christian boy is playing with his friends when he accidentally kicks a ball onto Jewish property. He requests that the ball be returned, but instead, he is instructed to retrieve it himself by a younger Jewish temptress. Hugh is afraid, but the Jewess tempts him with an apple. When he enters her home, Hugh is stabbed, his blood is taken, and ultimately he is thrown into a well from where, though he is dead, his mother hears him call to her. In many of the versions of the Hugh story, the young boy of Lincoln protests to his Jewish Temptress: "I dare not come" (N, 4),\(^2\) or "I dare not come, nor I will not come / Without my school fellows come all" (J, 4). The character Hugh, as a product of his Christian society, believes he has reason to be fearful of the Jews. As a Christian, readers can assume he shares the same collective consciousness that has monster-ized Jews to the point of raising fear in this child. It is interesting that his response is that he dare not come, and not just that he won't or shouldn't. The connotations carried by the word "dare" imply the prospect frightens Hugh beyond just a simple fear for his safety. It is almost as if he is saying I wouldn't dare, for it goes against my core beliefs. This fear is justified in "The Prioress's Tale" with the

\(^{9}\) Through his text, Child incorporates and represents the multiple versions of the legend across various Western European and North American traditions. Though not a medieval text per se, Child's ballads are the best source for capturing medieval anti-Judaic sentiment as expressed by the centuries long lore of Hugh of Lincoln. The popularity of the Hugh tales in English folklore is further evidenced by the modern band Steeleye Span who, in the 1970s, recorded "Little Sir Hugh." With lyrics such as "He kicked the ball very high, he kicked the ball so low, / He kicked it over a castle wall where no one dared to go" and "I won't come in, I can't come in without my play mates all / For if I should I know you would cause my blood to fall," it is clear that the English band is paying homage to the Hugh tradition that began in the Middle Ages and was recorded by Child.

\(^{2}\) The Hugh tales are cited from Child (see n. 42 above) first by version identification letter, then by stanza number.
claim that Jews are "Hateful to Crist and to his compaignye" (492; 1683); that is, because Jews hate Christ, they hate Christians. Examining the tales in tandem helps illuminate the extent of the myth of the Jewish monster in the collective Christian consciousness because the tales were born out of such completely different traditions. The story of Hugh was lore that was chronicled and then retold through generations of oral tradition before its multiple versions were finally recorded six centuries after the event supposedly took place. Chaucer's story, conversely, is a product of fiction, yet is clearly informed by the same Christian consciousness that kept the Hugh stories alive for so many years. By emphasizing the Jewish hatred of Christianity, these tales draw a line between Jews and Christians. But, it is important to recognize that Christians are the ones creating and proclaiming Jewish hatred of Christianity in these tales; the "real" Jewish voice is silenced. The Jews of the Hugh tales and of "The Prioress's Tale" are mythological and purely "evil" projections of what Christianity needs to fulfill its "good" whole. This is only further evidence of Jeffrey Cohen's claim that "the monster's body is a cultural body" (4), the creation of which justifies for medieval Christians, a reason to combat Jews and Judaism: they have conjured a malevolent and frightening enemy – a monster – against whom to defend themselves by virtue of their psychical union with the will of God. Ultimately, to be fully at union with God, Christians need an enemy opposed to what they hold as God's will.

93 The significance of cultural lore in Chaucer's Tales is further evidenced by 94 Though Jews were rendered voiceless in the medieval Christian literary tradition, scholarship shows their voice was expressed through Judaic philosophy. Daniel J. Lasker's Jewish Philosophical Polemics Against Christianity in the Middle Ages (New York: Ktav Publishing, 1977) provides an introduction to this expansive topic.
Jeffrey Cohen states that while cultures create monsters out of necessity, their creation leads to a fear. Articulated differently, that is to say, at some point in the psychical process, the collective consciousness forgets it has created the monster, and then comes to fear the very thing it engendered. Lacan would argue this is because the Thing has been named, and once named, it loses its "thingness" or all the elements which crafted its creation thereby resulting in uncertainty. This uncertainty breeds only fear. The Hugh and Prioress stories perpetuate the fear by exhibiting Christian efforts to control and appease this crafted cultural loathing by showing Christian cultural efforts to contain a created threat through isolating the entire Jewish community. Chaucer's Prioress describes "A Jewerye," or a Jewish ghetto, and the stories of Hugh depict a "Jewis castel" (B, 9) and a "Jew's garden, / Where the Jews are sitting in a row" (I, 2). Consistent with medieval history, these tales illustrate a practice with foundation in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 when the decree was given that, throughout Christian Europe, Jews must live in ghettos (as in "The Prioress's Tale") or in walled enclosures (the castle of the Hugh tales). The Council further decreed that Jews identify themselves with special clothing. This historical proclamation appears in one version of the Hugh tale wherein the Jews are "a-dressed all in green" (O, 3). Though the Lateran Council decreed Jews wear a yellow patch or insignia, the point here is that, from a Christian perspective, the Jews were crafted with no individuality but rather as a collective entity antithetical to God and,

95 As a point of interest, a popular tourist site and feature in the English Heritage National Monument Record of Lincoln is "The Jews House." The house, which dates to the 12th century, is made of stone with an exterior, castellated wall. Evidence suggests the home was "owned by a wealthy Jewess" who was "hanged in 1290 for coin clipping" ("The Jews House").
therefore, to Christian society.\(^6\) This point, again, is supported by Jeffrey Cohen who argues that cultural monsters are harbingers "of category crisis" (6), his point being that there is a cultural fear that monsters, will escape categorization and may slip into "normal" society, performing normate\(^7\) roles. Christian social efforts to contain and label Jews, as demonstrated by history and in "The Prioress's Tale" and the Hugh stories, help to ensure that the Jewish monster is categorized, and therefore, controlled.

Another way these stories work to control Jewish monsters through categorization is by consistently associating Jews with the devil. In my first chapter and earlier in this chapter, I discuss at length how Satan is the natural enemy of Christians who believe they exercise God's will. What the literary connections between Jews and the devil illustrate, however, is that the devil is the true enemy of Christianity and the Jews are just the earthly projection of the Christian enemy.\(^8\) This projection, that resurfaces in lore and literature, actually has its roots in the Bible. Chaucer's Prioress's declaration that "Oure firste foo, the serpente Sathanas, / That hath in Jues herte his waspes nest" (558–9; 1748–9), cannot be read without recalling a similar passage in John: "Ye are of your father the

\(^6\) Drawing upon the medieval symbolic tradition associating green with fertility (i.e. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*) one might argue that representing Jews in green suggests an underlying Christian fear of Jewish fertility leading to an increase in the Jewish population. The etymology of the word "green" also identifies cognates with many words suggesting growth / fertility (i.e. the Old English *growan* meaning "to grow," the Old High German *gruone* meaning "fresh, healthy," etc.) (OED). For more on the color green and fertility see Britton Harwood's "Gawain and the Gift" (1991) and Claude Luttrell's "The Folk-Tale Element in 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'" (1980). It also bears mentioning that some medieval and Renaissance traditions associated green with the devil. In Chaucer's "The Friar's Tale," the devil appears as a hunter dressed in green (1448 and 1525–34) and visually the connection is apparent in Michael Pacher's late 15th century altarpiece *Wolfgang und der Teufel*.

\(^7\) Normate is a term popularized by the field of Disability Studies to indicate that which society has socially constructed and accepted as "normal." Implicit within the term is the notion that there can be no normal.

\(^8\) Some of the earliest extensive discussion of this point can be found in Joshua Trachtenberg's *The Devil and the Jews* (1945) and Dagobert Runes' *Of God, the Devil and the Jews* (1952).
devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (8:44). Many of the Hugh of Lincoln ballads pointedly make Jews the earthly extension of the devil's hand. With imagery reminiscent of Satan's work in the Garden of Eden, the young Jewish Temptress of the Hugh tales becomes the devil's tool for destroying Christians; in one version of the tale she is described as producing an "Apple so red" (L, 4), which she uses to tempt the young Christian. Though Hugh insists in each version of the tale that he will not (or dare not) set foot in the Jewish home, ultimately, of course, he enters because the Jewish temptress, or earthly devil, entices him into what is frequently referred to in the tales as a "Jew's garden" (C and D, 6), with an entrance guarded by "ae dark door" (L, 7). The young Jewess's success in tempting Hugh from that which he dare not do, reminds of yet another component of Jeffrey Cohen's cultural monster: "Fear of the Monster is really a kind of desire" (16). For Lacan, fear and desire are perpetually bound and driven by the same motive for jouissance: we fear the monster because we do not understand it and our want to understand (or be close to that which is different) leads to a desire. It can be argued that this drive is the very nature of succumbing to temptation. So, when Hugh is effectively lured into the Jew's home, it is simultaneously his fear of and desire for knowledge / contact / experience / interaction, etc. with the Jewish monster that drives him. What is interesting is that this story both embraces the fear / desire Christians feel toward Jews and warns against it. As Hugh enters the dark Jewish world, Christian thought recognizes that the devil has succeeded in destroying yet another Christian by wielding the power of his children, the 'viper' Jews. These images – the dark door, the earthly hand of Satan through a female temptress – work both to solidify the creation of the Jewish monster and to validate Christian fears of that monster, thereby making yet
another of Cohen's points in definition of cultural monsters. Cultural monsters serve to keep a society obeying rules by illustrating what happens when rules aren't followed, when lines are crossed, when doors are entered.

To further solidify in the Christian cultural consciousness the dangers in religious transgressions, and to institute the distinctions between Christians who serve God's will and Jews who act as agents of the devil, the Hugh of Lincoln Ballads and "The Prioress's Tale" expound anti-Judaic sentiment and corporal monstrosity with the use of the young, innocent Christ-like child figure. Likely stemming from the cultural figure of William of Norwich, both traditions go to great lengths to establish the characteristics of faith and purity in the boys who ultimately fall victim to what medieval Christians would believe to be demonic Jewish nature. The Hugh of Lincoln tales consistently work to capture the young Christian boy's innocence by describing him as "milk-white" (F, 6), "lily-white" (G, 6), and as a "flower amang" (C and D, 1) all his age. Similarly, so full of faith and purity is the "litel clergeon" (503; 1693) of the Prioress, that he "knele adoun and seye / His Ave Marie" whenever he sees an image of Christ's mother (507–8; 1697–8). When this "white Lamb celestial" (581; 1771) walks singing through the Jewish ghetto, so devout is he that even though, "Noght wis te he what this Latyn was to seye, / For he so yong and tender was of age" (523–4; 1713–4), he continues to serve as cantor, purely out of faith. Establishing the Christian goodness of these boys works to make the actions of the Jews in the stories much more evil and monstrous. This further solidifies the distinct

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99 For an extensive examination of the Jewish temptress, see Madonna or Courtesan?: The Jewish Woman in Christian Literature by Livia Bitton-Jackson (1982). Through her text, Bitton-Jackson comments on the mystic qualities ascribed to "the Jewess" by Christians (2–3). These qualities – which build from chronicle legend and national folklore – work to create a mythical Jewess character that reappears throughout Christian literature and is exemplified by the temptress in the Hugh tradition (Bitton 27).
categories of Christian and Jew: Christians become the pure, innocent victims through the actions brought upon the Christ-like child (the symbol of their faith). Conversely, Jews, who exercise the Devil's will to the same extent, are the monsters who, as "The Prioress's Tale" suggests, conspired to cut the boy's throat and toss his body in a cesspit simply because he honored the Virgin Mary:

This cursed Jew hym hente, and heeld hym faste,
And kitte his throte, and in a pit hym caste.
I seye that in a wardrobe they hym thawe
Where as thise Jewes purgen hire entraille. (570–3; 1760–3)

The actions taken by Jews against Christians are similarly related through the Hugh tales where, following his enticement into the Jewish castle, he is held captive and prepared for consumption. In one version of the tale, Hugh laments:

They set me in a chair of state,
And gave me sugar sweet;
They laid me on a dresser-board,
And stuck me like a sheep. (O, 4)

In many versions there is a "roasting of a chicken" (H, 5) nearby. Considered in tandem, the versions of Hugh's experience in the Jewish kitchen suggest one thing – his captors plan to eat him. It is here that the ballads of Hugh introduce an aspect of anti-Judaism not touched upon directly by Chaucer – the notion of the blood libel, the belief that Jews partake in the ceremonial religious consumption of the blood of young Christian boys. Again, the Bible suggests the roots of this Christian belief:
Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men. Thus saith the Lord God; Because they say unto you, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations; Therefore thou shalt devour men no more. (Ez. 36: 12–14)

As figurative as the Biblical passage may seem to a modern audience, to a society bent on disparaging the Jews, the passage provides only further ammunition. And, to a Christian community willing to accept it as such, it fuels the creation of the widespread anti-Judaic myth of the blood libel, that Jews engaged in the ritualistic killing of Christian boys, ceremoniously consuming their blood in their unleavened Passover bread.

Since Old Testament law prohibits the consumption of blood for Jews, the origin of the blood libel myth is confusing. Art of the Middle Ages, however, helps to explain how the belief became engrained in the Christian subconscious. Prevalence would have familiarized medieval Christians with images similar to the Lovell Lectionary's "Desecration of the Host," portraying a Host at altar bleeding by the hands of demonically rendered Jews. Widespread exposure, then, would indoctrinate Christians in the notion that Jews sought to celebrate transubstantiation on a literal, rather than a symbolic, level (in Strickland 116). Performances such as the Play of the Sacrament worked similarly to engrain this image in the Christian consciousness by suggesting that Jews anxiously and greedily sought Host wafers. While I don't think it is the most

100 Specifically in Genesis 9:4 "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it" and Leviticus 3:17 "This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood" and elsewhere.
101 Christian fears, in this regard, possibly stem from confusion over the Jewish eating of matzot during Passover.
successful explanation for the myth of the blood libel, through application of projective inversion, Alan Dundes hypothesizes an interesting meaning for the Christian creation of the myth of the blood libel. Projective inversion describes the process wherein an accuser castigates the accused for performing an action he really wishes to perform (353) or for experiencing feelings he really feels. The projected feeling *I hate you*, is inverted to the sentiment *you hate me*; *Jews hate Christians*, is inversely projected from *Christians hate Jews*. In terms of the blood libel, Dundes contends that Christians actually want to commit blood libel – indeed, they are directed to in John 6:53–7:

> Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.'

So exists the Eucharist, which, supported through the Doctrine of Transubstantiation suggests a literal – rather than symbolic – act of cannibalism (Dundes 354). The participation in the Eucharist raises feelings of guilt in the receivers; this guilt is then inversely projected onto the Jews through the myth of the blood libel. Dundes' point is further supported by the fact that the chronicles tell us these crimes presumably took place around Easter and the Jewish celebration of Passover. Projective inversion, argues Dundes, allows Christians to absolve themselves of substantial guilt during the time of crucifixion and resurrection. The sentiment becomes not "we Christians" are guilty of
murder and ritual blood consumption (e.g. the Eucharist); but instead, "you Jews" are guilty (e.g. kidnapping Christian children or Host wafers to recreate the Crucifixion): "The fact that Jesus was Jewish makes the projective inversion all the more appropriate. It is a perfect transformation: Instead of Christians killing a Jew, we have Jews killing a Christian!" (Dundes 354). Because of prevalence in art and record, by the High Middle Ages, Jews had been crafted as a common enemy of Christianity. Therefore, as Dundes argues, the underlying guilt of the collective Christian consciousness, for "orally incorporating the blood and flesh of their god, commonly perceived as the Christ child" in their real religious ritual, made it easier for them to project that guilt to the "convenient Jewish scapegoat" whose religious practices existed only in the Christian imaginary (356). While Dundes' theory of projective inversion certainly offers an interesting theory to explain the Christian motivations for the myth of the blood libel, ultimately his theory falls a bit short. The blood libel accusation is easily among the most scathing and irreverent offenses libeled against the Jews. Reducing it to simply a product of Christian guilt minimizes its significance not only in Jewish-Christian relationships, but also in the larger history of vilification suffered by any religious group at the hands of another.

While Jeffrey Cohen argues that cultures create monsters that are repressed parts of the collective self and further, that monsters become physical embodiments of the repression and, by extension, invitations "to explore new spirals, new and interconnected methods of perceiving the world" (Cohen 7), this does not suggest that the blood libel was created out of this need to explore areas of self-repression. For medieval Christians, symbolically – in the form of the Eucharist – blood was viewed as a sacred fluid of which only the worthy could partake without consequence:
This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. [. . .] For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. (1 Cor. 11: 27–9)

With this theological evidence in mind, the blood libel could not result simply because Christians experienced anxiety given the symbolic existence of blood in their faith. Rather, the Christians, who through their psychical reality exercised God's will, were the only ones authorized to ritually and symbolically celebrate transubstantiation. The same psychical reality would argue that the devil, too, would seek to participate in a similar (though less symbolic and more impure) ritual. The Jews, who in the Christian mind occupied a reality governed by the devil, were the likely harbingers of this practice. I believe that this lingering and dueling contest of psychical and physical realities is more valuable in explaining the creation of the monstrous myth of the blood libel than is Dundes theory of projective inversion.102 This perspective is also supported by Cohen's point that cultural monsters both "police the borders of the possible" (12) and stand "at

102 Another widely held belief is that the blood libel myth evolved from "Crusading tales of the ruthlessness of the Saracens, who were said to use Christian blood in their demoniacal rituals" (Cardozo in Felsenstein 32). Because, as I mention in this chapter and discuss at length in chapter 3, Muslims were often associated with Jews, the accusation is easily transferred between groups viewed equally as enemies of Christianity. This theory, I think, further supports my position that Christians believed they were acting with God's will against enemies of their faith (and by extensions themselves).
the threshold of becoming" (20). Belief in and perpetuation of the myth of the blood libel reinforces, for Christians, that they are on the "right" side, on God's side. Their ritual of sacrament is symbolic and, therefore, not demonic and not monstrous. The belief that Jews participate in a similar ritual in actuality – consuming real Christian blood – rather than symbolically, shows Christians the possibility of the cannibalistic monsters they might become if they were to stray from the "right" path, God's path. The need for indoctrination is why the blood libel myth had to be culturally constructed and culturally propagated for centuries in art, drama, and literature.103

So widely reinforced was the myth of the blood libel in Christian thought that even when a story does not deal with it directly, its presence is evident. Such is the case with "The Prioress's Tale." Though the child is not plumped up "with sugar sweet" for consumption, he is compared, directly, to "O yonge Hugh of Lyncoln" (684; 1874). The Chaucerian audience would have read the allusion as subtext to suggest that the Prioress's litel clergeon was a part of what Christians held as a horrific Jewish religious ceremony. Further, referencing the blood libel and exaggerating the myth to its most horrific ends allowed English Christians to maintain the monstrosity of Jews by devaluing and by desecrating Judaism and its practices through the stories told by its culture.

103 In Trials of the Diaspora, Julius proves that modern society is not immune to the dissemination of the blood libel myth when he tells of an experience he had at Cambridge: "In my third year, just before Passover, a pamphlet was pushed through the front door of the house where I rented some rooms. [. . .] It warned its readers against any contact with Jews during the coming month, and urged parents to keep their children indoors or under close supervision. Gentiles everywhere, but especially Gentile boys, it said, were at risk of abduction and murder. It was the time of year when Jews preyed upon Gentiles for the blood they needed to make matzos, the unleavened bread eaten at Passover. Ritual murder, the pamphlet announced, is a reality that we overlook at our peril" (xxvi).
Following the portrayed demonic and ritualistic murder of the child in Chaucer's tale and in the Hugh of Lincoln tradition, a miracle occurs and the child speaks though he is dead. In the Hugh tales, the boy calls to his mother, telling her "a keen pen-knife sticks in my hert" (B, 12). His cries (and her faith in God) help his mother to find him at the bottom of "the little draw-well" (N, 12) into which the Jews have thrown him. Similarly, the boy of "The Prioress's Tale" continues to sing his tribute to the Virgin, from the cesspit where his body has been discarded. Through his song and "Jhesu of his grace" his mother is able to find him (603; 1793). If the alignment of these children with Christ was not already clear through their lamb-whiteness, purity of heart, and devout faith, the correlations are certainly made through what can be read as their resurrections. Before his final and symbolic "ascension" to Heaven, the child of the Prioress offers praise to "Crist that is of hevene kyng" (618; 1808); and Hugh blesses his "schoolfellows all" (N, 15), asking that a Bible be placed at his head (E, 20) "Till Christ and I shall meet" (F, 14). As recorded in Matthew, Christ's murder by the Jews unleashed blood on the Jews and on their children (27:25); so too do the murders of Hugh and the "litel clergeon" (503; 1693) curse the Jews in these tales. As "the blood out crieth" on their "cursed dede" (Chaucer 578; 1768), the Jews of both traditions suffer punishment at the hands of Christians.

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104 The pursuit for her child by the mother in the tale might certainly have reminded medieval audiences of Rachel's response, in Matthew, following the slaughter of the innocents. Further, the murders of Hugh and Chaucer's "litel clergeon," and other similar tales, would likely remind medieval Christians of the Matthew story (2:13–18) and would further justify, in their minds, the legitimacy of their fears of Jews.

105 We have already seen how, in Paris's chronicle, the Jews have crucified Hugh. And, as the story is recorded in the *Annals of Waverley*, the young child of Lincoln is inflicted with wounds resembling those of Christ: "the hands and feet were found to be pierced, the head had, as it were, a crown of bloody points" (Child, *Popular Ballads*, 235). Additionally, in both "The Prioress's Tale" and the stories of the Hugh tradition, the child's mother can be likened to the Virgin Mary because neither tradition alludes to a father for the boys.
Through these tales, the Christian hatred of the Jews as the killers of their savior has again been affirmed. The exegetical morals a Christian audience would glean from these tales only further support the beliefs they held. From their perspective, only the demonic and monstrous Jews would murder an embodiment of innocence and purity. The proof that existed as part of the medieval Christian psychical reality was that the Jews had done it before with Christ and so they deserved to be punished for doing it again.

The Hugh tales tell of a Christian lesson which "the bairns o Lincolnshire / Were learning at the school" (Q, 1). Part of that lesson was that being Christian carried with it a commitment to punishing Jews for the believed wrongs they had done to Christianity. The other part was that a Christian life devoted to God was filled with wonders and miracles, but a non-Christian life – a devilish Jewish life – was filled with torment and suffering. In First Thessalonians, Paul characterizes the Jews as those "who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men" (2: 14–15). Paul further reminds Christians of the eternal sin of the Jews, warning that "the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (2: 15–16). The message to the medieval Christian community was that the Jewish community deserved any wrath to which it was subjected. Psalm 59, medieval Christians believed, offered further instruction for dealing with the enemies of Christianity: "scatter them by thy power; and bring them down [. . .] Consume them in wrath, consume them" (11–13). The fictional Christian community of "The Prioress's Tale" seems to take this advice:

With torment and with shameful deeth echon,

This provost dooth thise Jewes for to sterve

That of this mordre wiste, and that anon. (628–30; 1818–20)
The Jews deserved to die, the tale relates, through torture and shame. Similarly, the Hugh tales relate fictional punishments of imprisonment and hanging for the Jews. These fictional punishments were accepted treatments of Jews for medieval audiences because they believed punishment was inevitable and was foretold long ago when Pilate absolved himself of Christ's crucifixion. In Matthew, with the words let "His blood be on us, and on our children" (27:25), the medieval Christian audience recognized a Jewish admission and acceptance of guilt that aligned the Jews with evil in perpetuity. I think this Biblical portrait is the primary reason that Chaucer's true opinion of Jews has remained under question for centuries beyond the publication of "The Prioress's Tale."

Earlier in discussion of Schoeck's analysis of the "pious hypocrisy of the Prioress" (253), I mentioned that there is a distinct conflict in the Prioress's character. The issue at the heart of these readings is the degree to which Chaucer intended the Prioress to be an ironic character. When readers meet her in the General Prologue, she is described as wearing a coy smile (119), having a becoming nose (123), a dainty mouth (153), and a fair forehead (154). Her manners, too, are characterized as impeccable: "And ful plesaunt, and amyable of port, / And peyned hire to countrefete cheere / Of court, and to been estatlich of manere, / And to ben holden digne of reverence" (138–41). Here, Chaucer tells us how important it is to the Prioress to be recognized and respected for her courtly manners. In spite of the implications that her description hints at sins of pride and vanity, as J. Lawrence Guntner writes, the Prioress's description "is notable for what it does not say. Chaucer does not refer to the Prioress's religious qualities – her chastity, abstinence, humility, devotion, good deeds, or charity – but concentrates on social attainments and external appearance" (99). Add to this that the General Prologue does tell
readers that the Prioress feeds delicacies of roasted meat and milk to the lap dogs she keeps – which many in Chaucer's audience would have recognized as a violation of Benedictine rule – and readers can only assume that Chaucer intends us to believe, as John Hirsh states, that if the Prioress "is deceived in matters of dress, manners and social and human relationships [. . .] the woman will hardly be an authority on religion" (31). I raise this issue again here because I think, before closing, that it is important to address the question of Chaucer's motives with telling the tale he tells through the Prioress. For years critics have teetered between the extremes that Chaucer was anti-Semitic or that he was making a gesture of ironic mocking toward the medieval church. The character of the Prioress, and her intended nature, is at the heart of this debate. If she is to be read as a respected member of the church, then she tells a tale that Chaucer too would believe in. If she is to be mocked for her courtly nature and defiance of Benedictine rule, then with her Chaucer is vindicated from any accusations of anti-Semitism because his tale becomes a satire of the medieval church and medieval Christianity in general. Critics tend to fall equally on both sides of this debate.

The question of Chaucer's intentionality is further complicated by what has come to be known as Chaucer's Retraction. At the end of *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer offers an apology to readers and asks forgiveness from "Jhesu Crist" for his writings: "And if ther be any thyng that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unkonnynge and nat to my wyl, that wolde ful fayn have seyd bettre if I hadde had konnynge [. . .] Wherfore I biseke yow mekely, for the mercy of God, that ye preye for me that Crist have mercy on me and foryeve me my giltes" (1072–82). While the retraction appears at the end of *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer extends his apology to
multiple works – essentially everything he has written other than his translation of Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy*, as well as saints legends and homilies (1081), some of which are found in *The Canterbury Tales*. Specifically in reference to *The Canterbury Tales*, he apologizes for "the tales of Caunterbury, thilke that sownen into synne" (1089–90); that is, those stories which spread or "sew" sin. The reason this retraction complicates understanding of "The Prioress's Tale" and Chaucer's motives is because, again, his statements can be read in two ways: he either apologizes for his sins in propagating anti-Judaic sentiment in the Middle Ages, or he apologizes for taking a harsh and critical stance against the Church.

I raise these issues here because I think it is impossible for modern audiences to ever reconcile Chaucer's intentions and motivations with his perceived morality. And ultimately, I don't think it matters. Chaucer was, first and foremost, an author. His goal, and duty, was to entertain and the fact remains that he was writing during an age that would have subscribed to the sentiments expressed by the Prioress, regardless of his own personal moral leanings. We know that Chaucer traveled widely during the Middle Ages. We know that during his travels he had contact with Jews long after their expulsion from England. But it is impossible to know if this familiarity was enough to dilute a centuries long anti-Judaic sentiment that would have been built into Chaucer's conscience by his culture and by stories like those of Hugh of Lincoln. Indeed, we know of many brilliant minds (such as Thomas Aquinas whom I quote at the outset of this chapter) that modern sensibilities would regard as scathing in the degree of their religious intolerance.

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106 For more on this point see Brenda Schildgen's *Pagans, Tartars, Moslems, and Jews in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (2001) and Sheila Delany's *Chaucer and the Jews* (2002).
And, it would almost be too idealistic to assume that Chaucer were wiser and more culturally and spiritually liberal than were those for whom he wrote. Again I say though, ultimately it doesn't matter, for as difficult as it is for a modern, post-Holocaust audience to accept such scathing anti-Judaism, it was simply a truth of the age. And, it is surely in response to modern sensibilities that Michael Calabrese argues that contemporary discussions of "The Prioress's Tale" can be reduced to attempts to locate "ethical understanding" of the actions of medieval Christians or that they are motivated by "a higher responsibility to ethics" (73). But there is no rule that dictates that contemporary discussions of early anti-Judaic tales must accept or even understand beliefs of the past. And it is dangerous to mistake social exploration for ethical obligation. Socially charged stories, such as "The Prioress's Tale" and the Ballads of Hugh of Lincoln, cannot be separated from the cultures which gave birth to them for the simple fact that they reveal so much about the societies whose fears they represent and also about the nature of fear in humanity. This is why I maintain that readings examining the medieval creation of cultural monsters offer the most valid insights into the literature and the people of the Middle Ages. Because Christians were not responding to true Judaism, but rather to the myth of Judaism and the Jewish monster that they themselves created, Christian fears were operating in an imaginary realm of their own conception. Unable to consciously distinguish between the imaginary and the real, Christians had to hold onto the myth of the Jewish monster because, subconsciously, it validated their collective psychical reality that their actions were God's will. By default and remembering the context established in chapter one, if Christians were the physical existence of the Thing named God, non-Christians had to become the physical form of the Thing named Devil. In Western
Europe, art, chronicle account, literature, and popular belief positioned Jews easily in that place of opposition so necessary in the validation of the Christian self and in the pursuit of jouissance in the afterlife. Recognizing this point allows scholars of medieval literature to push an understanding of medieval religious relationships beyond a simple lexicon of "Christian us versus Jewish them" and allows a more significant understanding of the origin of Christian fear and belief through the monsters it needs to create. In continuation of this point, my third chapter examines how these monsters shift form, taking the shape of Muslims. And finally, in my fourth chapter, this perspective translates into how, through discussion-driven instruction of medieval text, students gain deeper understandings of how communities, of the past and present, equally respond to fear by engendering monsters to physically understand their psychical realities. Ultimately, it is only in this way that we can be assured we do not impose modern day evaluations upon the past, but rather that we use the past as insights into ourselves.
Chapter Three: The Necessity of Saracen Monsters in the Formation of the Christian Self

In my first chapter, I examine how medieval scholarship often relies too heavily on postcolonial analysis in exploring texts of religious difference. I further demonstrate how monster theory, coupled with the notions of psychical reality and jouissance, uncovers readings that help modern, post-9/11 audiences to better appreciate important aspects of medieval literature. Though I believe all modern scholars and readers of medieval literature would benefit from this theoretical shift, I think the focus is particularly beneficial for high school students because this approach encourages students to form affective connections to the texts they read. Just as I did in chapter two, I focus this chapter on a specific text – here, Song of Roland – to illustrate the limits of postcolonialism, and the effectiveness of monster theory, in understanding medieval stories of religious difference. Specifically, I argue that monster theory uncovers the reasons why medieval Christians needed a demonized monster group – here, Muslims – to fulfill the self. Further, I illustrate how this need is apparent in medieval culture (i.e. Song of Roland, religious text, art, etc.).\(^{107}\) I want to be clear that I do not intend to suggest that my application of Cohen's monster theory provides the definitive reading of Song of Roland. Rather, as I suggested in chapter two and as I discuss further in chapter

\(^{107}\) This is similar to the cultural need to demonize Jews explored in chapter two.
four, I find this approach to be a successful way to reveal connections between otherwise distant cultures. In teaching medieval literature, finding such connections inspires students to engage in authentic conversations about a text that seems otherwise wholly removed from their modern realities, a point I explore further in chapter 4.

Before I can discuss effective teaching methods for the text, it is necessary, in this chapter, to examine the critical history of Roland, specifically in regard to the Christian representation of Muslims in the Middle Ages. I focus this examination on Song of Roland (Chanson de Roland) because it is widely studied at the secondary level and because it is the most popular poem of the chansons de geste tradition.\textsuperscript{108} Since the early 1900s, the chansons de geste genre has been a source of intensive critical examination, and because the stories were crafted by western society and portray Oriental cultures, much of this recent scholarship is postcolonial in nature. Below I review, specifically, the failings of these critical examinations to accurately and authentically reveal medieval culture, to modern audiences, through its literature. First, however, I spend significant space contextualizing various aspects of the Roland tradition including the chansons genre, the use of the term Saracen, and the historical and religious contexts for the poem. Because understanding these elements is crucial in fully appreciating literary scholarship devoted to Roland, it is valuable to tackle these elements before offering a literary review.

As Suzanne Conklin Akbari asserts in Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, at this time in our culture, western

\textsuperscript{108} The poem itself is a product of Old French language and tradition; I deal with the poem here in English translation because my ultimate interest in the piece is in its prevalence in American high school classrooms where it is taught, almost exclusively, in translation.
representations of Islam have never been more prevalent. Because of our political climate the "Western imagination" is fascinated with portraying Muslims (1). I absolutely agree with Akbari and I believe modern educators should tap into this fascination as we teach our students. But, what I find even more significant is that the Western fascination with portraying Muslims dates back centuries into the Middle Ages, even spawning its own genre, the *chansons de geste*, or the songs of heroic deeds. Widely popular throughout France during the height of the Middle Ages, the primary function of the *chansons* was, as Norman Daniel argues, to "encourage prowess" as a motivator to fight in defense of Christianity ("Crusade" 72). In other words, Daniel contends the *chansons* inspired Christian troops to support their faith and to demonstrate their allegiance to God and country through military engagements in the name of Christianity. With plots typically glorifying the celebrated 8th and 9th century French king, Charlemagne, extant manuscripts offer over 100 surviving *chansons de geste*. Within those 100 are references to numerous other tales for which manuscripts do not survive. Of the *chansons*, the most famous is *Chanson de Roland*, *Song of Roland*. What is interesting is that while *Roland* is the most famous, it exists in only one manuscript that was not discovered until the beginning of the 19th century. In spite of its limited appearance in medieval manuscripts, *Song of Roland* remains required reading for many secondary level American students.

109 Though Akbari doesn't make the point directly, the Saracen of the Middle Ages has been replaced by the modern terrorist. This is a point I discuss further in Chapter 4.

110 The manuscript containing *Roland* is identified as *The Oxford University, Bodleian Library Digby 23 Manuscript*. 
The story told by *Song of Roland* is based loosely on actual events involving Charlemagne's army in 778. At the time, the Iberian Peninsula was a site of heavy conflict between Spanish, Islamic, and Basque kingdoms. As the Muslim Umayyad began to encroach upon Spanish Christians in Barcelona, the governor of Barcelona sought military assistance from the prolific Frankish army, led by Charlemagne. In exchange for his assistance, Governor Suleiman ibn-al-Arabi’ promised not to challenge Charlemagne as he annexed five significant Spanish cities for the budding Carolingian Empire. Following the defeat of Muslims in Barcelona, Charlemagne successfully conquered the Spanish cities Pamplona, Barcelona, Huesca, and Girona. However, Saragossa, a city ruled predominately by pagan Basques, could not be conquered. The defeat suffered by Charlemagne's army in Saragossa remains, perhaps in legend more than history, the only defeat suffered by the French army under Charlemagne.111 As Jo Ann Hoeppner Moran Cruz states, "the dramatic, unavenged (and unutterable) defeat then entered the realm of the legendary, where vengeance is exacted in legend if not in reality" (56). Cruz believes this is the reason that the famous story of Charlemagne's unsuccessful battle shifts out of the 8th century, in *Roland*, as Charlemagne is fictitiously placed in 12th century battles against Muslim enemies. The literary "fact" that Muslims are able to defeat France's greatest military leader becomes evidence for audiences of their threat to Christianity. Still, this historical to fictitious shift is one of the most curious elements of *Song of Roland*. Fundamentally, because many of the battles fought by Charlemagne's

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111 This historical context for *Roland* can be found in many places including Jo Ann Cruz's "Popular Attitudes Toward Islam in Medieval Europe" (1999), Philip Bennett's "Origins of the French Epic: The Song of Roland and Other French Epics" (2006), and Joel Rosenthal's "Will the Real Charlemagne Please Stand Up?" (2006).
army in the late 8th century were against Muslims, the shift in enemy is not as far-fetched as is the shift in time period, a point that even the Roland author feels he must justify. The Roland author recognizes the story's anachronism with consistent references to Charlemagne's age as "past two hundred" (524). Additionally, the author embraces a need to convince audiences of his own veracity by claiming the story has been recounted by "one who was there, on that field" (2095). But, as discussed below, repositioning Charlemagne out of history and into battle against Muslims serves, in large part, as crusading inspiration.

The fact that Roland exists, for modern audiences, as the most popular chanson makes it the primary example of the genre, which, in celebration of heroic deeds, illuminated religiously motivated differences between French Christian heroes and their Muslim enemies. Because the chansons reflected Christian culture and attitude throughout the poem, Muslim enemies are referred to, not as Muslims, but rather as Saracens. Since the term, which pervades the poem, is intended to be derogatory, any examination of the chansons de geste genre must begin with explication of the word Saracen. And again, this explication is necessary before any critical review of Roland.

112 Parenthetical references for Roland are to line numbers in the poem. All English quotations from Roland are from the 1978 translation by Frederick Goldin. I chose to work with this translation based upon its wide use by Roland scholars and because of the recommendation of William W. Kibler who offers an expanded evaluation of the various translations in "Editions and Translations" from his book Approaches to Teaching the Song of Roland (2006).
113 Through this chapter I make much of "the Muslim enemy" as impetus for the Crusades. It's important to recognize, however, that the fear of the Muslim was only one of many factors, which built a crusading fervor in Western Europe during the early 11th century. Other factors – which included the growing religious importance of relics, the frequency of pilgrimage as a demonstration of faith, and the Church's desire that Christians stop fighting amongst themselves but rather fight non-Christians – are not directly discussed here because my intention is to focus on the literary character of the Saracen/Muslim, how that character appears in literature (particularly in Roland), and how literary characterization increased, in part, Christian energy during the Crusades.
scholarship is offered in order to understand why literary scholars have embraced precepts of postcolonialism to inform theoretical readings. Moreover, understanding of the term is necessary to appreciate why, ultimately, these same postcolonial readings fail to fully explain the motivations driving Christian actions toward their "Saracen" enemies.

As mentioned, the term Saracen was most commonly used as a derogatory term for medieval followers of the Islamic faith even though the origins of the term are somewhat unclear. William Comfort argues the term comes from the French Sarrasins, which is itself "derived from the classic Latin name of an insignificant Arab tribe, the 'Sarraceni'" (629). Beatrice White further recognizes that a nomadic Saracen tribe was active in and around Syria in the 7th and 8th centuries (171). R.W. Southern argues the name is evidence that the group descended from the Biblical Sarah, wife of the Islamic prophet Abraham (16–7), but Norman Daniel disagrees, arguing that this "quite wrongly" assumes the word "Saracen" to be an Islamic term. Daniel asserts that because the term evolved with "polemic significance," it could not be Islamic in origin (Islam 100). Regardless of the origins of the word, the term Saracen rapidly became a tool by Christians to label any group of people who were believed to be non-Christian, or pagan. While the term was quite expansive in that Saracens included groups such as Armenians, Moors, Huns, Slavs, Turks, and Kurds, Christians viewed these individual groups as a single force united against Christianity. Polemically, then, they were united in name – Saracen. In actuality, these groups were largely independent. In fact, even within

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114 In Lewis and Short's A New Latin Dictionary, Saracen is defined as "the Saracens, a people of Arabia" (1630).
115 Jews, in fact were sometimes aligned with Saracens, a point the Roland author recognizes near the end of the poem as Charlemagne "sends a thousand French to search the city, / the synagogues, the mosques" (3661–2, my emphasis).
the Islamic faith there was dissention (that still exists today) between Sunnis and Shiites.\textsuperscript{116} But to the collective consciousness of medieval Christendom – and as represented by cultural products\textsuperscript{117} – these distinctions and subtleties did not exist. The groups were lumped into a singular unit antithetical to Christianity.\textsuperscript{118} So, while some of these groups were Muslim, many were just classified as Saracens because they were considered pagan in their collective position as non-Christians.\textsuperscript{119} While culturally the term was then "typically used to mean 'Muslim'," in practice it was "generalized to include both pagans and non-Western Christians (especially Arab Christians)" (Cohen, \textit{Postcolonial} 137, n. 5), thereby invoking derogative connotations for Christians. Therefore, because the term Saracen carried such negative connotations, it became a powerful tool in the vituperative representation of difference which spread "with special vigor" throughout Western Europe in support of the crusades (Cohen, \textit{Postcolonial} 114). The majority of critical examination of the term, in fact, has been in regard to its prevalence in crusading propaganda where the figure of the Saracen is used as "a call to arms" to defend and protect Christendom (Cohen, \textit{Postcolonial} 114), as in \textit{Song of Roland} and other tales of the \textit{chansons} genre. For this reason, most scholars use the term

\textsuperscript{116} The source of this dissention is in argument over the correct caliphs (descendants of Muhammad) to follow as appropriate leaders of the Islamic faith.

\textsuperscript{117} In \textit{Saracens, Demons, and Jews} (2003), Debra Strickland suggests that products of culture – be they art or literature – create ideology in that they bind the individual (as audience) to his social structure as he comes to associate cultural product as evidence of social truths (158).

\textsuperscript{118} For further discussion of this point, see Amin Maalouf's \textit{The Crusades through Arab Eyes}, esp. 44, 72–74, 87, 261–2. Maalouf's piece, a product of historical fiction, is a powerful narrative inspired by actual Arab chronicles of the Crusades.

\textsuperscript{119} Ultimately the Muslim affiliation of a group labeled Saracen by Christians is not as significant for my purposes as the fact that Christians used the term in a derogatory sense to classify all non-Christian, middle eastern and eastern cultures.
to differentiate between the actual historical Muslim, and its fictive literary
counterpart.\textsuperscript{120}

As mentioned above, the connections between Saracens and the crusading spirit
are certainly evident with \textit{Song of Roland}. Although the date of composition of \textit{Roland} is
not precisely known, scholarly consensus suggests it was composed between the late 11th
century and early 12th century, amidst Western Europe's crusading fervor in response
either to Pope Urban II's plea that Christians claim Palestine in the name of Christendom
or to Pope Calixtus II's dedication to rousing the French against Moors in Spain.\textsuperscript{121} In
either case, many regard \textit{Song of Roland} as crusade propaganda not that different from
the polemics offered by religious leaders and prevalent in Western Europe during the
11th and 12th centuries. Historically, the onslaught of religious polemics against Muslims
is credited to a letter from the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I to Count Robert of
Flounders, calling for help against the Saracens (specifically here, Seljuk Turks) in the
Byzantine Empire. As cause in the letter, Alexius writes:

\begin{quote}
For they circumcise the boys and youths of the Christians over the

Christian baptismal fonts, and in contempt of Christ they pour the blood
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{120} OED: The earliest English reference to the term is from 893 and is found in King Alfred's Old
English translation of Orosius' early 5th century Latin text, \textit{Historiarum adversus paganos libri septem (Seven Books of History Against the Pagans)} and carried a similar meaning through 1905:
"Among the later Greeks and Romans, a name for the nomadic peoples of the Syro-Arabian
desert which harassed the Syrian confines of the Empire; hence, an Arab; by extension, a Muslim,
\textit{esp.} with reference to the Crusades." The most popular definition of the Middle Ages was "A
non-Christian, heathen, or pagan; an unbeliever, infidel" which was first identified in 1250 in the
Saints' life \textit{Meidan Maregrete} and continued through the Middle Ages and into the Early Modern
Period. Further evidence of the purely literary context of the term is demonstrated by historian
Norman Daniel who, in \textit{Islam and the West}, comments that he avoids use of the term Saracen
because of its "misleadingly quaint and romantic associations" (33).

\textsuperscript{121} For further discussion of this point, see Robert Harrison's introduction to his edited text, \textit{Song
of Roland} (1970).
from the circumcision into the said baptismal fonts and compel them to
void urine thereon; and thereafter they violently drag them around in the
church, compelling them to blaspheme the name of the Holy Trinity and
the belief therein. But those who refuse to do these things they punish in
diverse ways and ultimately they kill them. Noble matrons and their
daughters whom they have robbed [of their possessions] they, one after
another like animals, defile in adultery. Some, indeed, in their corrupting
shamelessly place virgins before the faces of their mothers and compel
them to sing wicked and obscene songs, until they have finished their
own wicked acts.

Alexius' letter brought an impassioned response from Pope Urban II. In a speech at the
Council of Clermont on November 27, 1095, the Pope referred to the Turks as "an
accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not
directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God" (recorded by Robert the Monk in
Hollister 183). And, while neither Urban nor Alexius refers to the enemy as Saracen, the
name quickly became part of the Western European polemical vernacular appearing in

122 It is interesting to note that many actions in which the Christians participate during Roland are
strikingly similar to those actions for which Alexius belies Muslims in his letter. This is
addressed again below as I explicate Song of Roland through psychoanalysis.
123 Most sources use, as I have here, the translation by Einar Joranson, which appears in The
Crusades-Encyclopedia, edited by Andrew Holt (2005); it is a reprint of the same translation
50): 811–32. Another popular scholarly translation is that offered in 1980 by John Boswell in
Christianity, Social Tolerance (367). Note that Joranson maintains the version of the letter that
remains is likely a forgery of the original letter, which was lost. As evidence, Joranson cites
similarities between the speech of Pope Urban II and the letter of Alexius suggesting the letter
was likely written after the Pope's speech.
accounts by Guibert of Nogent, William of Malmesbury, and Alan of Lille. From this point forward, substantial polemics – both written and spoken – against Muslims were produced. In the multi-volume examination, *The Impact of the Crusades on Europe* (1989), however, Norman Daniel asserts that the Crusades did not lead to the polemics and that the polemics did not lead to the Crusades. Instead, he argues, anti-Islamic sentiment was prevalent in western Europe since the 9th century in Spain when Christians found themselves in the minority and under Muslim rule. Later centuries, then, applied the polemic tradition against Islam for their own purposes.

Islam, as medieval Christians believed it to be, was a product of fiction more than reality. Ultimately, medieval Christians sought not to understand the truth of Islam. Rather, suggests Daniel, they attributed meaning to Islam through their belief in "Islam" as it was constructed through anti-Islamic polemics. For this reason, Christians believed Christianity to be wholly different from Islam. Daniel's examination of anti-Islamic polemics in *The Impact of the Crusades on Europe* is truncated from his much earlier and comprehensive monograph, *Islam and the West* (1960). In *Islam*, Daniel also makes the

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124 Guibert of Nogent, in fact, authored one of the earliest accounts of Muhammad, justifying his portrait with "It is safe to speak evil of one whose malignity exceeds whatever ill can be spoken" (in Southern 31).

125 In *De gestis regum*, acclaimed 12th century historian William of Malmesbury noted that "Muslim enemies" inhabit one third of the world (in Daniel, "Crusade" 41).

126 In his *Contra paganos* (against pagans), Alan of Lille writes: "Now let us turn our writing against the disciples of Muhammad. Muhammad's monstrous life, more monstrous sect, and most monstrous end is manifestly found in his deeds. He, inspired by the evil spirit, founded an abominable sect, one suitable for fleshly indulgences, not disagreeable to pleasures of the flesh; and therefore these carnal men, allured by his sect, and humiliated by the errors of various precepts, have died and continue to die miserably; the people call them with the usual appellation Saracens of pagans" (trans. in Uebel 274).

127 The collection is edited and compiled by Harry Hazard. Daniel contributes the portion on the Crusades because of his notoriety as a scholar of Islam and Islam's interpretation by the West.

128 See specifically histories in honor of the martyrs of Toledo, including Archbishop Eulogius; a point of further interest, Eulogius is rumored to have been killed by the Muslim government in Spain for punishment from hiding a young Muslim woman who had converted to Christianity.
point that in the centuries following medieval Christian / Muslim interactions, very little has changed in the Christian perception of Islam. Further, in an addition made in 1992 before the 1993 reprinting of the text, Daniel comments that even for modern Christians to understand Islam, it is essential first to appreciate Muhammad's life and significance through a "sympathetic approach" that suspends disbelief in an effort to appreciate Muhammad as a holy figure (336). What is difficult for modern culture, suggests Daniel, was nearly impossible in the Middle Ages because both religions, in essence, were in their infancy. So, while modern audiences can recognize similarities between the two faiths, for medieval Christians, consciously recognizing places of overlap between Islam and Christianity would have been impossible because, as Daniel points out, appreciation of similarities requires a sympathy that Christians could not possess in the Middle Ages. Further, as I discuss below, the transmission of knowledge to Christians, regarding Islam, was, at best, misinterpreted as the Koran was inaccurately and inconsistently translated (Daniel 21–3). Still, modern audiences are more equipped to recognize similarities between the two faiths that would have been, for a variety of reasons, shielded from the medieval Christian consciousness.

As theological evidence proves, Islam and Christianity are not the opposing belief systems medieval Christians constructed them to be, which is why perhaps the greatest irony in the medieval Christian community's social construction of these two religions as antithetical lies in the fact that fundamentally Christianity and Islam are more similar

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129 See specifically pages 11 and 326–37. Of further interest for post-9/11 audiences is that in an addition to the 1993 reprinting of the book Daniel writes, "some Muslims admit as little common ground as Christians admitted in the Middle Ages" (332), commenting further that much of the modern day aggression toward the West from sects of Islam stems from beliefs that Islam must be in "self-defence" from "what they indiscriminately call the 'Christian' world [. . .] of 'crusaders'" (332).
than they are different. Modern audiences can recognize that both faiths equally trace their roots to Abraham, Christianity and Islam both locate importance in an established community of worship and faith in one God, or Allah. And the two religions believe in an afterlife of eternal heaven (paradise for Islam) or hell. Also of great significance for both faiths is the notion of prophecy, a point Muslims and Christians equally recognize as the "disclosure of three things: God, God's will, and the consequences of failing to live up to God's will" (Heck 10). It is important to understand these similarities in faith in order to fully appreciate the vigor with which the two religions focused on their differences during the Middle Ages. One of the most significant philosophies of difference is actually in regard to prophecy. While Christians and Muslims recognize Jesus as a prophet, unlike Christians, Muslims do not acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. Instead, the Islamic faith teaches that Christianity misinterprets Jesus as the literal

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130 Many of the truths of Islam and Christianity, such as their Abrahamic origins, are also true of Judaism thereby proving a kinship between the three primary religions of the Middle Ages. Further discussion is provided through Stephen Prothero's God Is Not One (2010) and Bruce Feiler's Walking the Bible (2001). Feiler, specifically, explains that the three primary medieval religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) equally accept Abraham as the first to recognize God as one (357). Feiler further explores similarities between the faiths as evidenced by their stories. For example, he notes similar stories between the faiths involving the conflict between Nimrod and Abraham (30), the creation of the world (358), and the universality of God (73). In a particularly poignant moment, Feiler relates the epiphany of his travel companion upon visiting the shrine at Haroun Mountain in Petra: "This shrine is there as a symbol, to remind us that we belong to the same tradition. The mentality of our people may have changed, but we have the same roots. There's no reason we can't get along" (402).

131 The faith community is called umma by Muslims. Throughout, Islamic terms are drawn from the "Official Islam Glossary" compiled and maintained by Dr. Paul V.M. Flesher, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Wyoming.

132 Admittedly here I offer a simplified glossing of similarities between Christianity and Islam. My purpose, though, is not to offer a full theological explication, but rather to acknowledge underlying similarities in faith before I later use psychoanalysis to demonstrate how these similarities – denied or ignored by Christians – worked in Song of Roland to reveal far more about the fears of medieval Christians than the supposed dangers of their enemies.
son of God, when the denotation is intended to be metaphoric (Heck 8).\textsuperscript{133} This is also the source of the other great theological difference between Islam and Christianity – the nature of the Trinity. While below I discuss the Trinity in depth, here it is important to point out that because Muslims do not acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God (i.e. as divine), they argue against the Christian belief that Jesus \textit{is} the word of God (as he is identified in John 1:1). For Muslims, a mere human could not be the Word. In Islam, the word of God is the Koran\textsuperscript{134} that descended from Heaven to Muhammad who was able to record precisely what God recited to him because he was otherwise illiterate and unable to alter the Word, thereby providing the pure and uncreated Word of God (Brague 128 and Daniel, \textit{Islam} 53–5).

The purity of the Word, as given to Muhammad, is echoed by the doctrine's name. In Arabic, Koran means "recitation."\textsuperscript{135} As the Word of God, then, the Koran is only true in Arabic; all translations are produced through interpretation, rather than recitation, and are thereby removed from the word.\textsuperscript{136} Nevertheless, in 1143 Robert of Ketton attempted a Latin translation of the Koran providing the West's first tool for significant Islamic study. The translation was commissioned by Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, who was driven by the lack of trustworthy information about Islam that was available in Latin. Because Peter did not know Arabic, he needed a translator; in addition to Robert, it has been suggested that Peter also commissioned a Muslim named (ironically enough)

\textsuperscript{133} For further discussion of Islamic prophecy see Daniel, \textit{Islam}, pages 36–46 and 88–93.\textsuperscript{134} Most Arabic texts translated to English use "Qur'an." I use "Koran" because it is the more common American spelling.\textsuperscript{135} The Koran is also called \textit{attanzil}, meaning "that which descended."\textsuperscript{136} For additional discussion of similarities between Islamic and Christian faiths see Paul Heck's \textit{Common Ground} (2009), Prothero's \textit{God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions that Run the World, and Why Their Differences Matter} (2010), and Rémi Brague's \textit{The Legend of the Middle Ages: Philosophical Explorations of Medieval Christianity, Judaism, and Islam} (2009).
Muhammad. With the undertaking, Peter claimed the purpose of his translations was to help those who read Islamic religious texts to "better understand what they read and know how detestable were his [Muhammad's] life and his teachings" (in Kritzech, *Peter* 205). But with this admission, Peter proves that any promise to explore the faith for understanding was simply a guise to allow an outlet to reveal the (crafted) failings of the Islamic religion.\(^\text{137}\)

The foremost scholar of Peter the Venerable, James Kritzech, explains that Peter's work, in this regard, came in three parts: first was the translation of the Koran, then Peter authored *Summa totius heresis Sarracenorum*, and finally he offered *Liber contra sectam sive heresim Sarracenorum*. With *Summa*, Peter sought to explain his interpretation of the Koran to Christians, and through the text, he portrays Muhammad as a bloodthirsty thief who claimed to be a prophet once he realized it would help him attain power, wealth, and influence. He further describes Muhammad as "vomiting forth almost all of the excrement of the old heresies which he had drunk up as the devil poured it out" (*Summa* 208 in Tolan, "Peter" 359).\(^\text{138}\) In *Liber*, Peter hoped to refute Islamic doctrine (Kritzech, "Robert" 311), to justify polemics against Islam, and to invite Islamic followers "to salvation" through conversion to Christianity (Kritzech, *Peter* 232). Kritzech believes

\[\text{137} \quad \text{Peter authored similar polemics against the Jews, writing the following in } \textit{Adversus Iudeorum (Against the Inveterate Obstinacy of the Jews): "How long, wretched ones, will you not believe the truth? How long before your iron hearts will soften? Behold how, for a long time now, nearly all the world has recognized Christ, and you alone do not recognize him. All the nations obey him; you alone do not listen. All tongues affirm him, hear him, understand him; you alone remain blind, deaf, like stone" (in Strickland 98).}
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\[\text{138} \quad \text{Peter also described Islam as a religion "utterly monstrous" (in Kirtzech, *Peter* 208) In } \textit{Idols and Simulacra: Paganity, Hybridity and Representation," Sarah Salih uses Peter's depiction of the monster Islam as evidence of medieval traditions of monster formation commenting that monsters – particularly hybrid figures – commonly signified paganity in art" (115, reprinted in } \textit{The Monstrous Middle Ages}, eds. Bildhauer and Mills (2003) from an earlier version presented at the International Congress on Medieval Studies in 2001).} \]
that Peter actually intended religious scholars of his time to use his first two works to refute Islamic doctrine, but when they did not, he took the task upon himself ("Robert" 311).

While Peter's work did not have the immediate effect he had hoped, Robert of Ketton's translation of the Koran was the source many religious figures relied upon in their study of Islam, and in the 13th century, Vincent of Beauvais used Robert's translation to author *Speculum historiale*, a portion of his *Speculum maius*, which offers a Christian-mediated history of the Koran and Muhammad, as well as an interpretation of Islamic beliefs (Cruz 65). The most notable scholar of Robert's translation, however, was the late 12th century theologian, Peter of Poitiers. One of the extant manuscripts of Robert's translation is believed to have belonged to Peter of Poitiers. It bears heavy annotations that point out the "insanity, impiety, ridiculousness, stupidity, superstition, lying, and blasphemy" of Islam (Tolan, "Peter" 355). In one place Peter writes, "Note the unheard of names of prophets. Who ever heard of such prophets other than this diabolical one [meaning Muhammad] . . . I think that these were not men but demons: They possessed this Satan, and in this way he concocted his ravings [presumably the Koran]" (in Tolan, "Peter" 356). Peter of Poitiers' annotation sentiments are echoed in his letters, one of which reads "Since Satan has occupied almost half the earth with his Saracens [. . .] The Corrupter of human nature with this poison has tainted and infected those whom I mentioned, the Saracens of modern times" (in Tolan, "Peter" 352). It is clear that Peter of Poitiers defines Islam as a heresy with direct ties to Satan. This perspective, built from and compounded by Christian (mis)attempts to understand Islam, created the collective Christian belief that Muslims worked as vehicles of the devil. In "Conceptualizing the
Monstrous" (2003), Bettina Bildhauer comments that "fear was a tactic deployed by the Church" as a way to keep society in control (10). It can be argued, then, that religious texts, as polemics, kept Christians in a position of fear thereby reinforcing the boundary between Christian and Muslim societies. This idea that Muslims were to be feared, then, was further reinforced as demonic and monstrous Saracens appeared and reappeared throughout various polemics of the Middle Ages including the popular and prevalent *chansons de geste* genre.

I devote such time to examining religious characterizations of Islam because it is important to be familiar with the cultural beliefs and traditions feeding the literary representations of Saracens before we turn our attention to *Song of Roland*. Norman Daniel argues that in the 12th century, "writers struggled [. . .] to retain their inherited ideas [of Muslims as hostile, dangerous, bodily different, etc.] in the face of increasing experience of Islam as it actually was" ("Crusade" 54). In other words, the Crusades brought Christians face-to-face with real Muslims, most of whom did not fit Saracen stereotypes created by western Christian culture. In "The First Crusade and Islam" (1977) John France even goes so far as to intimate that because the composers of *chansons* received knowledge first hand or from "informants [who] had been on crusade," they would have known that their stories about Muslims and their worship were highly fictionalized (247). Because of this contact, France insists it became even more necessary for authors of the period to keep the Saracen polemic alive in literature to encourage further crusading efforts.139

139 Though beyond the immediate scope of this examination, in "Poetic Places and Real Spaces: Anthropology of Space in Crusade Literature" (1999), Stephen G. Nicols offers the perspective of
One of the most respected examinations of early Western European literary construction of Islam is R.W. Southern's *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (1962). Southern states that the entire western characterization of Islam stemmed from the Christian fear that the Muslim threat was "unpredictable and immeasurable" (4), citing Peter the Venerable's popular (in the Middle Ages) estimate that "Islam contained a third, or possibly even a half, of the people of the world" during the Middle Ages (42–3). For the Christians, then, the Muslims, who were already threatening simply because they were such a mystery to the Christians (particularly before the Crusades), represented a vast force with numbers significant enough to completely engulf Christendom. In questions of faith, particularly when faiths collide and cannot, philosophically, both be "right," it is easier to believe in monstrous projection than lived reality. Therefore, while contact during the Crusades managed to make Islam more familiar in the West, Christians still held anxieties over Islamic practices, rituals, and ways of worship. These anxieties, coupled with rampant Crusade propaganda, only bolstered the creation of fictive Muslim realities in the minds of the Christians and in the literature produced by Christendom. As Southern writes, "like well-loved characters of fiction, they [Muslims] were expected to

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a literary historian in examining the reality of Christians in the Crusades. Nicols coins the phrase "Christian Topography" (112), through his analysis asserting that the significance of the *Song of Roland* as crusading literature comes in "the way that Europeans represented the crusade project to themselves symbolically, particularly after the fall of Jerusalem in 1187" (112). For Nicols, the *Song of Roland* is significant in that it captures a period of history which otherwise exists liminally. In expanding a 1978 position first argued by Victor Witter Turner in *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, Nicols asserts that twelfth century crusaders were little more than homeless pilgrims; they left seeking to satisfy religious (sacred) endeavors, but through a string of complex political events, they existed constantly in transition (Nicols 115; Turner 3). In an abstract sense, *Roland* exists to offer a "geographical" location to the transient medieval crusaders. Similar interpretations of *Roland*, then, examine the medieval crusading impulse at the time of Holy War with scholarly analysis extending modern understanding of the Christian men who participated in the conflicts.
display certain characteristics, and authors faithfully reproduced them for hundreds of years" (29). In other words, the Christian truth of Islam was a product of myth, anxiety, and fiction, particularly the literary narrative that aligned Muslims with the devil. A similar argument is made in a more contemporary text. In his Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination (2002), John Tolan actually identifies Bede's early 8th century De locis sanctis as the earliest medieval text to align Muslims with the devil when he quotes the following: "Lucifer, into whose cult the race of the Saracens is enslaved" (73). Later in the Middle Ages, then, Christians compounded this identification as they crafted "the pagan enemy" of the Crusades as "a deformed mirror image of the righteous crusader, devoted to the devil rather than God" (Tolan, Saracens 122).

As Jeffrey Russell states in his lauded work Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages (1984), the belief that heretics, or any non-Christian group, created pacts with the devil was key in demonizing those groups.140 This transformed them "from ignorant souls steeped in error, to conscious servants of Satan" (83). Much of the demonization of Muslims came through Christian misunderstanding of their practices of worship. For example, in spite of the fact that Islam is a rigidly monotheistic religion, medieval Christians believed that Muslims practiced idolatry.141 The most significant demonization of Muslims by Christians, however, came through the crafted character of the Muslim prophet Muhammad. Russell reports that Christians aligned Muhammad with the devil in plays where the devil was called "Mehmet, Mahound, or another variation of the

140 The associations between Muslims and the devil, crafted by medieval Christians, are similar to those crafted between Jews and the devil that are discussed in chapter 2.
141 This Christian misunderstanding is discussed below in my explication of Roland. For further examination of presumed Muslim idolatry see Russell 83–4 and Daniel, Islam 243–4.
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prophet's name" (Russell 84). Clearly the Christian propagated belief was that Muslims lived their lives in service to the devil. Aligning the Muslim prophet with the devil was an effective way to set him in opposition to the Christian Jesus who, through the Trinity, was believed to be at one with God.\(^{142}\) For Christians, if Jesus were at one with God, Muhammad was at one with the devil. In her text *Saracens, Demons, and Jews* (2003), Debra Strickland examines many images of this "righteous Christian" versus "demonic Muslim" prevalent in medieval art. Of particular visual significance, given the present discussion of *Roland*, is an image from the *Grandes chroniques de France* that depicts French knights as they meet their Saracen enemies in battle. These enemies are powerfully depicted as dark in countenance with horns like devils (in Strickland 169). Even though the image dates to the 1370s, years later than the authorship of *Roland*, the point is nonetheless salient in that the image evidences the consistent medieval Christian perspective that aligned Muslims with the devil.\(^{143}\) The collective cultural belief in this association is quite apparent in *Song of Roland*, and it is one of the many associations Christians made with Muslims highlighted by the poem that, when examined using elements of monster theory, reveals not only the extent to which Christians demonized Muslims, but also the purpose such demonization served in Christian society. The 20th century tradition of *Roland* scholarship, however, has side-stepped analysis of the demonization (or monster-making) of Muslims in favor of further examination of the

\(^{142}\) Below I discuss further the conflicts between Islam and Christianity in regard to the Trinity.  
\(^{143}\) Strickland further cites images from medieval maps, tapestries, and church walls. Of particular interest is her explication of the monstrous races captured in the tympanum at the abbey church of a Madeleine in Vézelay. Because Bernard of Clairvaux preached the Second Crusade here, and because others departed on crusade from the church throughout the Middle Ages, Strickland concludes that "there is good reason to believe that, gazing at the images of the monstrous races, crusaders may have interpreted these as contemporary Muslims they would encounter in the East" (159).
chansons de geste genre as propaganda and further how this propaganda relies on religious symbolism that paints Christianity as the "right" religion when evaluated against the Islamic Other. The following literary review of this scholarship reveals that the inherent flaw in each of these discussions, then, is that they remain focused specifically on medieval depictions of Muslims rather than exploring what these depictions reveal about the Christian society that created them. In terms of instructing modern students, this is the difference between looking at a culture in the past (i.e. postcolonially) versus examining how the culture of the past informs modern society.

One of the earliest critical commentaries to examine Christian depictions of Muslims in the past is Dana Carleton Munro's 1931 essay "The Western Attitude Toward Islam During the Period of the Crusades." Munro's piece is not a direct analysis of Roland; rather, it is an examination of medieval propaganda used "to excite the passions of the Christians against the Muslims" (330). Not surprising is that Munro identifies many of the religious texts and polemics mentioned above as pieces of propaganda.\footnote{144 Included in Munro's discussion are those by the Fulcher of Chartres, the Archbishop Baldric of Dol, Guibert of Nogent, and Robert the Monk.} What is surprising, however, is that Munro is the first scholar to identify the chansons tradition itself as a product of propaganda. Specifically, he mentions Song of Roland as particularly effective in demonstrating Muslims to be "worshippers of false gods and idols" (331) and cowards in battle (334) who would willingly make (false) alliances with Christians if it meant furthering their own cause (335–6). Munro's ultimate point is that the polemics inspired the chansons tradition; therefore, he blames the church-authorized and produced texts (such as the writings of Peter) for perpetuating "the false beliefs about
Mohammed and Islam which are so common in the literature of the thirteenth and the following centuries" (337). The two traditions – the polemic and the *chansons* – then, worked together to create a Muslim "history" for the west that was purely based in myth and was then woven into literary tradition as real Muslims became the more menacing Saracen characters of fiction.

In 1940, William Comfort extended the work of Munro to offer one of the earliest examinations of Saracens in *Song of Roland*. Presented as an explication of consistencies in the French representations of Saracens across the whole of French epic poetry, Comfort's analysis is formative with an emphasis in locating specific textual elements and drawing conclusions from those identified points. The first of these points is Comfort's statement that were it not for the Crusades, "the Saracens would have cut little figure in Old French literature" (628). Essentially, argues Comfort, the Crusades gave the French a natural and legitimate antagonist to bring to life in their literature. Throughout French epic, Comfort states, this antagonist was a powerful and vast force, consistently depicted in squadrons of 50,000 or more men (630): "The desired impression was that of an indefinite *Hinterland* of Islam, from which countless thousands and millions of unbelievers swarmed upon call to combat the hosts of Christendom" (631). That is, the Saracens were given substantial numbers in literature – numbers well beyond the sizes of the armies they could have amassed in reality – in order to make the Christian defeat of

\textsuperscript{145} Comfort's work is particularly significant in *Roland* scholarship because it is cited by many later scholars including Meredith C. Jones (1942), R.W. Southern (1962), Charles Knudson (1969) and Lynne Dahmen (2000), to name a few.

\textsuperscript{146} Comfort dates this time period from 1100 to 1400 (659).
those enemies all the more significant and admirable.\textsuperscript{147} Further, recognizes Comfort, these masses of Saracens were rarely portrayed as individuals but rather as measureless forces, often shrouded by darkness,\textsuperscript{148} operating in opposition to individual Christians fighting for their religious cause (632). After extended analysis, Comfort's ultimate point does not stray too far from his early assertions, as comprehensive examination of medieval French epic leads him to conclude that, in literature, "the Saracens served chiefly as an objective to which the Christian heroes could devote their militant energies as soldiers of the Cross" (659). This objective was successful for authors of French epic because their audiences welcomed the perspective offered by these epics. They wrote for audiences willing to believe these spun truths about Saracens because, as Comfort asserts, the literature "was intended for home consumption by a class ignorant of the facts and subservient to the intolerant attitude of the Church in matters of faith" (659). Ultimately, then, whether intended or not, Comfort reaches the same conclusion as Munro: in an early gesture to core elements of postcolonial analyses, both Munro and Comfort argue that the construction of the Saracen was a tool to define Christianity by casting, into a position of inferior opposition, a figure antithetical to the Church's teaching.

Still focusing on depictions of Saracens rather than exploring the necessity for such depictions, in his 1942 article, "The Conventional Saracen of the Songs of Geste," C. Meredith Jones extends this perspective offered by Comfort. Jones' primary point is

\textsuperscript{147} Below I enter further discussion regarding Saracen numbers depicted in Roland. Important to note, though, is that the concept of the Saracens as an innumerable force is not specific only to French epic. The Englishman Sir Thomas Malory also wrote of the "Saracens of Southland, that numbered sixty thousand" in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century (Le Morte Darthur, 147). While Malory identifies a specific count – and elsewhere in Roland specific numbers are given – it is fair to interpret these large quantities to stand not for actual tallies in Saracen armies but rather for numbers too many to count.

\textsuperscript{148} Associations of the Saracens with darkness or blackness is discussed further below.
that 12th century literature can be read as symbolic not only of actual conflicts of the period, but also of true anxieties between Christianity and Islam during the Middle Ages. Jones argues that because of their heroic nature, the *chansons de geste* provide the perfect venue for expressing disagreements on the bases of religion. Moreover, he asserts, nowhere is the "pious conflict" between Islam and Christianity more clear than in *Song of Roland*, which presents, "as in a mirror, the reflection of the militant and missionary Christianity as the Middle Ages conceived it" (201). Not only does Jones accept the *geste* as accurate representations of beliefs and attitudes of the time period, he further argues that they were used as political tools to justify campaigns against Islamic territories by instilling in Christian audiences a widely believed (though wholly fictionalized) portrait of the enemy Saracen. While upon initial reading Jones' article hints at the Christian need to create Saracen monsters, ultimately, as those examinations provided by Munro and Comfort, his analysis falls short in offering an effective and justifiable reason for the existence of the *chansons de geste* genre. It is not enough to say that stories such as *Roland* pointed out differences between Christianity and Islam, particularly given that the differences between the religions were not that great. For the *chansons* to be significant polemics, they would need not only to demonstrate differences but also to prove how these differences both demonized Muslims and made Christians more righteous and, further, how that dichotomy was a necessity in the *crafted* belief system of the Christian psychical reality. As demonstrated below, the application of monster theory reveals the elements that make *Song of Roland* a significant polemic of the Middle Ages.

Though they fail to push their arguments the further step to examine how the Christian community projected the demonization of Muslims, critics later in the 20th
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century did make more pointed attempts to analyze the demonization of Muslims. One of the first to attempt this was Beatrice White, who, in her 1969 article "Saracens and Crusaders: from Fact to Allegory," argues that because the writers of romance and crusading literature knew very little about Islam, Muslims were cast in a "traditional guise of the fiendish enemies of Christendom" (178–9). Moreover, she writes, western authors sought to regularly characterize Saracens as in "rage at the inefficacy of their God's protection" (180). In this way, White asserts, crusading stories successfully contrasted losing Saracens, shunned by their God, with the faithful dignity and success of Christians whose God fought along with them while spurring them on to victory.

Essentially, though, all that White offers with this analysis is the perspective that demon-Muslims were cast in opposition to righteous Christians. Thus, her examination accomplishes little more than the recognitions of Munro, Comfort, and Jones, that the western Middle Ages portrayed Islam and Christianity in opposition.

Further examination of 20th century literary scholarship reveals that scholarly attempts examining the demonization of Muslims fall into this same trap that succeeds only in identifying medieval Christian culture portraying itself as righteous against fiendish Muslim Saracens. In "Popular Attitudes Towards Islam in Medieval Europe" (1999), Jo Ann Hoeppner Moran Cruz examines the specific way that Muslims were crafted as Saracens in order to be cast into the position of Other in medieval Christian culture. Her work examines, specifically, the role of the Chansons de geste genre in solidifying this Othering. In regard to Roland specifically, Cruz discusses the manner through which Christians lumped all non-Christian eastern cultures into the position of Saracen in the 11th through 13th centuries as a means by which to justify their crusading
efforts (57). As she states, portraying Muslim enemies in such a way not only contributed to the "missionary fervor" (70) of the Crusades, but it also helped to "promote a unity of religion" to Christianity (70) by presenting Islam as "a devilish apostasy of Christianity that was growing, not diminishing" (66). This justified, for the papacy and for all of Christendom, the use of force against Muslims and in favor of God, because being Christian didn't just make one non-Muslim, it also insisted that one fight against the opposition to further reinforce Christian precepts. While I appreciate the attention Cruz extends to demonstrating how literary crusading both created and propagated medieval beliefs, ultimately I think her argument – along with similar postcolonially informed arguments – falls short because she doesn't recognize that the Saracen characterization completed Christian identity rather than defined it.

This is a failing of Maghan Keita's "Saracens and Black Knights" (2006) as well. In examining the reasons behind the cultural construction of the "Saracen," Keita argues that, throughout literature, the Saracen was rarely distinct from Africans, Moors, or even Turks. Her purpose, then, is to warn against using modern understandings of race to read civilizations and cultural interactions of the past. Her article, however, does what she warns against when she asserts that "cultural othering" led to the medieval construction of the Saracen as a means through which to self-identify (66). Although Keita does reference the postcolonial work of Jeffrey Cohen to make the point that the Saracen, as cultural Other, occupied a position of intrigue for Western Medieval Culture, her

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149 This is a point echoed by Suzanne Conklin Akbari in "From Due East to True North: Orientalism and Orientation" (2000) when she asserts that "polemics against Islam, Crusade chronicles, and chansons de geste emphatically articulate a dichotomy of good Christian and bad pagan, 'us' and 'them'" (20).
Conclusion is inherently driven by postcolonialism when she states that because Saracens were so often aligned with Africans in general, "Africa becomes a backdrop by which things Oriental are known" (67). In other words, even though the distinctions Keita discusses are racial rather than religious, the way meaning is constructed by the Occidental West is the same: Western society used the concept of the Saracen in recognizing its own identity. The implications of race that pervade Roland are certainly valuable in making meaning of the Christian perception of Muslims, but as I explain below, race is one of only many ways jouissance-seeking Christians aligned themselves with God and their enemy with the devil.150

Another way Christians made meaning of religious difference in the Middle Ages was through gender. This is an issue Lynne Dahmen explores in her piece "Orientalism and Reading La Sarrasine in the Chansons de Geste" (2000). Though not focused specifically on Song of Roland, Dahmen explores how the knowledge and use of postcolonialism has dictated the way critical scholarship regards literature dealing with

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150 Throughout, I use the term jouissance as articulated in my first chapter. In short, my use is derived from Louise Fradenburg's application of the Lacanian term whereby the term comes to represent the union of pleasure and pain. For Christians constantly in pursuit of a union with God, the realization of that union (a pleasure pursuit) was so inconceivable that it became, simultaneously, painful because of its unfamiliarity. So, while medieval Christians desired union and glory in afterlife, subconsciously they carried anxiety (even fear) because they were unable to conceive of what that glory might entail. Articulated in this way, the Lacanian term further informs the social construction of fear explained by Cohen's monster theory.

151 At this point it is necessary to further mention John Tolan's comprehensive examination Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination (2002). Through his text, Tolan also identifies Song of Roland as a Christian tool to dehumanize a created "adversary, making [them] sufficiently 'other'" (126). But, writing as a historian rather than as a literary scholar, Tolan does not allow this identification of "otherness" to limit the significance he finds in the poem. Beyond its role in the creation of the other, Tolan gestures to an additional purpose for Roland when he states that while Christians crafted Muslims as other, the enemy ultimately "cannot be made too other, for it is not valorous to slaughter mere beasts" (126). Tolan does not push a reading of Roland beyond this point, but I think his observation meshes well with my own examination because Tolan is recognizing that medieval Christians did not just craft the Other as an adversary, but rather out of a projected need that, ultimately, satisfied personal, psychological pursuits.
the Crusades, and, in particular the way women (or Saracen princesses) have been
interpreted over the past 40 years (Dahmen 156). Dahmen asserts that early 20th century
scholarship avoided examinations of women in the *chansons de geste* and that
postcolonialism opened the door for such examinations to be possible so that female
characters are not just "seen as disruptive to a masculine master narrative" (158).152

Ultimately I appreciate Dahmen's article if for no other reason than so little attention has
been given to representations of Muslim women in the *chansons de geste*. But, I think
that by employing an us/them lexicon, she misses an opportunity to explore the way
female Saracens were manipulated by Christian authors to prove a more significant point
regarding the Christian desire to assimilate with Muslims figuratively and literally. While
this is a point I explore further in my examination of the Saracen queen, Bramimunde of
*Song of Roland*, it is valuable to point out here how significantly postcolonial scholarship
has dictated readings of *Song of Roland*. Even readings (i.e. Dahmen's) that should be
driven by other fields (i.e. Gender Studies) become trapped by the self / other lexicon in
finding understanding of early religious cultures in conflict.

The use of postcolonialism in evaluating medieval literature of Muslim / Christian
relationships is further complicated because, initially, Medieval Islamic Study was a
subdivision of orientalism; in other words, the study of Islam was considered "orientalist"
before Said's 1975 publication brought a shift in the meaning of the term. Likely this is
why even the earliest *Roland* scholarship (i.e. the pieces by Murno, Comfort, Jones and

152 Specifically Dahmen cites F.M. Warren's 1914 piece through which Warren argues that female
significance in the *Chansons de Geste* is limited only to "religious conversion and transfer of a
legacy" (159). Warren's argument is echoed in 1942 by Meredith C. Jones in "The Conventional
Saracen of the Songs of Geste" and in 1969 by Charles Knudson in "Le theme de la princesse
sarrasine dans *La Prise d'Orange*."
White), written well before literary theoretical analysis became commonplace, reads as though informed by postcolonial theory. In part, argued Richard Bulliet at Van Engen's 1992 conference, Said's concept of orientalism evolved from the fact that "Medieval Islam," as a study, was reduced only to those sources (primarily information about Muhammad's life, the political history of the caliphate, and Greek philosophy maintained through Arabic documents) that European scholars sought to translate and edit in the 18th and 19th centuries (95). Bulliet goes so far as to claim that the primary role of Said's work was to argue that "the orientalist profession" of the 18th and 19th centuries actually created the Other (100). Ultimately, Bulliet blames Said, and subsequent postcolonial scholars, for making Islamic studies inherently dependent upon Christian studies, rendering "Islamic studies [without] true intellectual autonomy" (103). In other words, though figures of the Orient began with autonomous identities, Said's work created the binary that dictated that Islam be studied only in opposition to Christianity's majority culture.

In spite of Bulliet's criticisms in 1992, the use of postcolonial theory to analyze Song of Roland has lingered even into the most recent extensive scholarly examination of Song of Roland – Suzanne Conklin Akbari's Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450 (2009). As Akbari states, her objective with the text is to examine the origins of many of the Orientalist stereotypes that still exist today.

153 This is a point supported by Daphna Berman in a 2012 article celebrating the legacy of Bernard Lewis. Berman writes, "When he [Lewis] was a student and a young professor, Oriental studies – as it was then known – drew on European experiences of the Crusades, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment" ("The Revered"). In fact, Berman contends, it wasn't until after World War II that American institutions even began to care about study of the Middle East due to "its strategic significance." Conversely, Middle Eastern scholar Bernard Lewis argues that "Orientalist scholarship in the western world began in the Middle Ages long before there was a question of French or British imperialism" (in Berman).
Further, with her text she hopes to explore "continuities linking medieval and modern discourses concerning Islam and the Orient in order to unearth the roots of modern Orientalism and to examine the categories, hierarchies, and symbolic systems that were used to differentiate the Western self from its Eastern other" (1). This is a symbolic system that Akbari argues began in the Middle Ages and has continued to reinforce the distinction between the East and West clear into the modern age. And, while her text is not specific to Song of Roland, she uses Roland throughout as evidence of how the depiction of Muslims in medieval literature was used to help define and instill Christian belief and practice to show "the readers of those texts what they are not so that they may understand what they are" (216). As I demonstrate in my first two chapters, in exploration of medieval difference, ultimately this us/them lexicon falls short because it can only ever render readings which unite the cultures in forming understanding through opposition, thereby always reaching the same conclusion: Christianity created the Saracen Other\(^{154}\) in order to have an entity to define, and subsequently recognize, itself against. While each of the afore mentioned examinations touches upon an aspect of Saracen characterization, which I also explore below, because of their postcolonial influences, the forgoing discussions remain focused specifically on the representations of Saracens, rather than ascertaining how such depictions reflect back upon the Christian self and the culture of creation. In other words, the examinations I mention render readings that remain perpetually in the past rather than reaching forward to find connections in the present. So, while I too evaluate the Saracen enemy, as represented in Roland, in terms of numbers of warriors, the darkness of skin, and the fictive

\(^{154}\) Or the Jewish Other as discussed in chapter 2.
ineffectiveness of their gods against the success awarded by the Christian God, I do so informed by monster theory, which allows me to draw conclusions about medieval Christian society not afforded by popular *Song of Roland* examinations. Monster theory proves an effective tool for analysis because it reframes the role and function of the Other as a necessity to the Christian self who, first and foremost, recognizes itself as performing God's will on earth. Buttressing monster theory with otherwise traditionally psychoanalytic terms reveals that Christians, who subconsciously viewed themselves as the physical reality of the psychical existence of God, in an effort to reach *jouissance* (or closeness) with God, needed to satisfy the other half of the equation. In other words, for Christians to believe their psychical union with God was true, they needed others who did not have that union with God, but rather had a similar union with God's opposite: Saracens represent for the Devil, what Christians represent for God. The application of monster theory to representations of medieval religious conflict in literature, then, go beyond the mere fact that an Other (or monster) is created in order to examine the beliefs of the culture that necessitated such creation. This reframing, that places emphasis on human belief, or fear, systems, is what allows modern audiences to forge a connection with the past as the people of the Middle Ages prove strikingly similar to ourselves. Before I can offer my own analysis, however, it is necessary to highlight how other scholars have identified failings in postcolonial readings and, ultimately, how those readings also fail to illuminate elements of *Roland* uncovered through my approach.

In recognizing the limits of postcolonialism, in "European Identity and the Myth of Islam: A Reassessment" (1999), Paul Rich argues against the significance of the role of Islam as Other in the formation of medieval western European identity. Further, he
argues that such an attempt to define the medieval west in opposition to foreigners can never be historically accurate because it applies contemporary themes in previous historical ages (437). While I commend Rich for this recognition, in spite of these assertions, his article still examines *Song of Roland* through its us / them characteristics as Rich makes statements like the following: "The poem celebrates the virtues of the feudal society of Europe in contrast to the dark forces of Islam and sets up a rigid model of Christian-Islamic opposition that is heightened by the fact that the leading knights in Roland's army do not come from one single locale but from large parts of Western Europe" (439, my emphasis). I think the fact Rich sets out to avoid a postcolonial application in his analysis of *Roland*, yet still reaches inherently postcolonial conclusions, is evidence of the need to shift from such readings in building literary interpretive understandings. Although monster theory still implies a self / Other lexicon, it recognizes that the Other does not define the self, but rather that the self needs the Other in order to reach self-actualization. Further, monster theory comes with the inherent understanding that ultimately it doesn't matter what group or figure has been recognized as monster (or Other). Simply, some thing is in that position because without the fear of a monster, the self is incomplete.

Though not addressing literature of the Middle Ages specifically, in "Re-visioning 'Lacanian' Social Criticism: The Law and Its Obscene Double" (1996), Slavoj Zizek explores how elements of psychoanalysis have been re-visioned, in a sense, for modern audiences and modern interpretations. As I do, Zizek repurposes the Lacanian notion of

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155 Rich's argument develops similarly to other scholars, discussed in the first chapter, who find it anachronistic to use postcolonialism in analyzing literature of the Middle Ages.

156 On this point, see my discussion of Lacan in chapter 1.
jouissance, to show that cultures interact from a simultaneous position of fear and interest; there is something in the Other that both "bothers us" and is "hypnotic" (18). As Zizek puts it, there is something in foreigners that is "more than themselves" and "not quite human" (18). What makes this significant, from the perspective of monster theory, as I use it, is that the feelings operate in the (psychical) mind, but the effects are felt in the (physical) body (24). That is to say, in spite of the fact that they are intangible and even unidentifiable, any perceptions a culture experiences toward a foreign group, or Other, become real in the subsequent actions taken by that culture. Zizek's work, in this regard, is significant in study of medieval representations and perceptions of Muslims because it is referenced by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen in his article, "On Saracen Enjoyment: Some Fantasies of Race in Late Medieval France and England" (2001). Though, surprisingly, Cohen draws no connections between Zizek's work and his own monster theory, he does make the point that part of the human fascination with and fear of the foreign or religious Other stems from Zizek's notion that "the other is never simply reducible to a finite list of attributes" (Cohen 129). Cohen's argument, then, is that part of the reason collective cultures respond to their outsiders with hostility is because of the uneasiness caused by the inability to fully classify these fringe groups. For this reason, he argues, in analyzing epochs during which such cultural responses occurred, we mustn't look at what we do when we dehumanize the Other, but rather, we must examine the forces that lead us to acts of dehumanization. A piece that bridges the work of Zizek with that of Cohen is Stephen Asma's Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears

157 I am fascinated by Cohen's failure to cite his own "Monster Culture" throughout the whole of this essay. Here, especially, he seems to be dealing directly with his third thesis, "The Monster Is the Harbinger of Category Crisis" (6).
Asma argues that monsters, as we imagine them, "are modified versions of [. . .] real creatures" (2) that were "originally built on legitimate threats" (3), but that eventually spiral into beasts feared to be far more dangerous than they are in reality. In this way, asserts Asma, monsters are individual creations that take on cultural significances ranging from harmless fears of insects and natural oddities (26) to the more crucial xenophobia (86–7). In the later of these, it is the fear of other races that simultaneously dehumanizes these races as monstrous (186). Cohen's articulation of this same concept recognizes how repeated representations of Saracens through literature creates biological truths about Muslims that dehumanize them and make them both corporeally and physiologically different from Christians (114). In other words, the "reality" of medieval Muslims results from the Christian fantasy of the Saracen: "The Saracen is a monster, an abjected and fantasmatic body produced through category violation in order to demarcate the limits of the Christian possible. As such, there were no real Saracens in the Middle Ages. And yet Saracens could uncannily take on a life of their own" (Cohen 121). It is actually bouncing off from this point that I offer the following examination of Roland, where, unlike Cohen himself, I actually employ his monster theory159 to explore how the collective Christian consciousness of the Middle Ages engendered – out of necessity – the medieval Saracen.160

158 Though Asma does not cite Cohen's Monster Theory (1996), he draws many of the same conclusions regarding how and why humans create monsters and the function that monsters serve in culture.

159 I think that it is because Cohen sees himself as a postcolonial scholar that he does not borrow the notions of jouissance and psychical reality from the field of psychoanalysis and, therefore, does not realize the connections to be made between his own monster theory and the possibilities of the theory's application to Roland.

160 While my literary review has focused primarily on theoretical examinations of Roland beginning in the 20th century, because Song of Roland is widely studied at the undergraduate
As I discuss in my first chapter, Jeffrey Cohen asserts that at any given time, a culture is operating from a position of fear; that fear manifests itself physically in the form of the cultural monsters engendered by a given society. In the Middle Ages, among these monsters were the Muslims, whom the society identified equally as Saracens or pagans. The exposition of *Song of Roland*, in fact, makes over fifty references to Saracens or pagans in the characterization of the Muslim army fighting under the command of their king, Marsilion. As the history of the term suggests, it is immediately clear that the *Roland* author uses the terms interchangeably, recognizing no significant distinction between Saracens or pagans; in places he also refers to them as Muslims, drawing a clear correlation between Islam and paganism. It is the distinction between Christianity and Islam (as paganism) that is the basis of the fear that creates the Saracen monster in the Middle Ages. In *Roland* specifically, from the opening stanza, Saracens

level, there exists a strand of scholarship that explores exclusively reading *Roland* in terms of how to best teach the text to undergraduate World Literature survey students. Catherine M. Jones, Gerard Brault, Mary Jane Schenck, Emanuel Mickel, and Lynn Ramey all approach *Roland* from formalist perspectives by examining individual episodes and the great implications of character and plot developments and devices. In analytical opposition to purely textual analyses, historians George Beech and Kelly DeVries argue for studies of *Roland* focusing solely on the story's true ninth century historical context with their examinations of feudalism and military history respectively. A few scholars examine both the literary and historical elements including Ian Short, who in "The *Song of Roland* and England," examines the political spin Western Europeans extended to examinations of Muslim / Christian relations. And, in "Will the Real Charlemagne Please Stand Up?," Joel Rosenthal explores Charlemagne as a literary character and, more significantly, as a historical figure. These articles are compiled in William Kibler and Leslie Morgan's comprehensive pedagogical resource, *Approaches to Teaching the Song of Roland* (2006). I give more attention to the pedagogy of *Roland* in my fourth chapter.

The English word, pagan, derives from the Latin *paganus* (n) meaning "Of or belonging to the country or to a village, rustic [. . .] unlearned," or *pagus* (adj) meaning "the country people" (Lewis and Short 1290). The implication for medieval Christians, then, is that those identified as pagan were commoners, unlearned in the sophisticated religion of the church. Further, Adolf Tobler's and Erhard Lommatzsch's *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* recognizes interchangeability of the terms pagan and Saracen by referencing *Roland* and translating both, from the Old French, as *heidnisch* (v. 7, p. 16 and v. 9, p. 187). Further denotations in Tobler from *Roland* include *grausam* and *untreu* ("barbaric" and "without faith", translated from Tobler's and Lommatzsch's German v. 9, p. 188).
are cast in opposition to Christianity with the description of King Marsilion of Saragossa, 
"who does not love God / who serves Maumet and prays to Apollin" (7–8). In the first 
chapter, I argue that the Christian psychical reality identified no difference between the 
Christian will and the will of God. Medieval Christians became the physical extension of 
the psychical reality of God. By necessity, non-Christians, here Muslims, stood in 
opposition to God's will and favor as enemies of Christians and Christianity. In this way, 
they become cultural monsters for medieval Christian society to fear.

The Song of Roland simultaneously legitimates and reflects this fear by describing 
the vastness of the Saracen army. Initially the army is characterized as "twenty thousand 
[... ] and more" (13 and 410). Elsewhere French informants warn of "four hundred 
thousand" (565 and 851); and later, there are "too many, [Roland] cannot take their 
number [... ] hosts and hosts everywhere of those strange men" (1035 and 1086). The 
message is clear; the Saracen monster lurks in expansive and unknown numbers and 
Christians would be wise to take action. This point is reinforced as the narrator 
describes the Christians heading into battle while "Four hundred thousand men" lie in 
wait (715); the narrator exclaims "God, the pity of it! the French do not know!" (716) The 
subtext of the panic is that audiences have been conditioned to believe in the limitlessness 
of the army and the depth of the potential threat to Christianity and should take

162 This is a point that will be discussed further below, but at this point it is necessary to recognize 
that Roland portrays Islam as polytheistic, worshipping the gods Mahumet, Apollin, and 
Tervagant. The creation of this "idolatrous Trinity," writes Strickland, is part of the Christian 
demonization of Muslims in that it helps cast Islam into the evil mirror opposite Christianity 
(167)

163 The vastness of Saracen armies presented in chansons likely stems from chronicle accounts. In 
particular, Erchimbert, a monk at Monte Cassino in the late 11th century wrote: "with all the 
appearance of a swarm of bees, but with a heavy hand, [the Muslims] came fast out of Babylon 
and Africa into Sicily; they devastated everything and all around" (from Heremberti Epitome 
Chronologica, trans. in Daniel, "Crusade" 56).
preemptive action. As a monster, the danger of Islam is that it has no boundaries. The Saracens are depicted in large quantities; they are mobile and unconfined to one geographic area. Cohen identifies, in his third thesis, that "The Monster Is the Harbinger of Category Crisis" (6). In other words, part of what makes a monster so threatening to a culture is the inability of society to categorize it. In true monster fashion, the Saracens cannot be confined to any particular region; Saracens come from many nations and races, thus, they constantly threaten the sanctity of Christendom. As a monster feared by Christians, there was always the threat that packs of Saracens could infest Christendom by breaking through its undefined borders with their limitless warriors. So vast are Saracen armies, Roland tells audiences, that even after much of the battle has taken place and many of Marsilion's army are killed, the Muslims are still able to muster thirty additional divisions of pagan warriors including Slavs, Armenians, Moors, Persians, Turks, Huns, and Hungarians. From the perspective of Christian audiences, the resources of the Saracens are limitless; if we read the text as propaganda, as many scholars suggest we ought, this vignette encourages Christians to be diligent in their crusades against pagans. Christian audiences would have been keenly aware of the tremendous successes of real Muslim armies throughout Europe. This legitimate knowledge, bolstered by the fictive masses of Saracen warriors from limitless regions portrayed in Roland, would successfully inspire Christian audiences to continue their crusades against this innumerable and multiplying threat.

See lines 3216 to 3260 for the expansive list of forces the Muslims enlist to fight on their side. While the Roland author does not specifically refer to these groups as Muslims, he does classify them, en masse, as pagans (3264/3273) thereby reinforcing the notion that Saracen resources were limitless.
Part of the manifestation of the Christian fear of Saracens comes in the way they are turned into monsters in action and appearance. Marsilion, himself identified as "that wild man" (228), is described as ruling with ten of the "worst of criminals" (69). And his brother, Falsaron is described as follows: "no criminal more vile; / a tremendous forehead between his eyes – / a good half-foot long, if you had measured it" (1216–7). Consistently the Saracens are dehumanized in the poem. They don't yell like humans, but whine and "bray" and "they bark like dogs" (3526–7). In "Simon Magus, Dogs, and Simon Peter" (1998), Alberto Ferreiro asserts that it is a common trope in Old French literature, to metaphorically attribute animal sounds to pagans (66). But beyond a trope, the animal sounds function to dehumanize the Saracens, casting them into "the Gates of Difference" (Cohen 7). They are human, but also animalistic. For the collective Christian self, this creates anxiety because Saracens are clearly different from Christians, but similar enough to be feared. The text refers to Saracens as wild men. As discussed in the first chapter, the wild man was a popular figure in the Middle Ages because, as Richard Bernheimer asserts, the wild man displays those attributes hidden within all of us that we fight to keep under control. The fear of the wild man – or for Cohen, the monster – then, is the fear that

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165 In addition to the associations with dogs and horses, repeatedly Saracens are referred to as swine. See lines 1230, 1251, 3275 and specifically the following Christian declarations: "We're in the right, and these swine in the wrong!" (1213); it will be "good to kill these swine" (1542). Because the Islamic faith does not allow the consumption of pork, the name is especially disparaging.

166 Ferreiro also argues that during the Middle Ages, dogs were frequent in Christian anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim literature primarily because the "polemical weapons that Christianity had aimed against Judaism were [easily] put into action to combat Islam" once Islam became the primary threat to Christianity (64). This association with dogs likely stems from scripture, which tends to portray dogs as dirty and impure (see Prov. 26:11, 1 Kings 21: 23–24, and Phil. 3: 2). This is seen in Roland when, in battle, the Muslim God Muhammad is metaphorically thrown into a ditch and eaten by dogs: "and throw the god Mahum into a ditch, / and pigs and dogs bite him and befoul him" (2590–1). Symbolically, Muhammad decaying in a ditch is literary evidence of the Christian denial of the Muslim belief that he ascended to Heaven.
we will lose that control and become, ourselves, wild. The Christian dehumanization of Saracens in *Roland* helps to appease that fear by making the distinction (the difference) between the two groups more significant: the Christians are human, the Saracens clearly animal. This goes beyond a simple us / them distinction implied by postcolonialism because Muslims have been projected into the Saracen role as Christians seek to, subconsciously, cast off the fear that resides within by prescribing it onto another group, a group that *becomes* monstrous with the projection.

In addition to their animalistic attributes, the *Roland* author illustrates how Christian culture views Saracens as monsters in other forms of behavior. The *Roland* author portrays Saracens as deceitful, with skills in trickery as shown early in the battle when they plan to fool the French into believing in their willingness to convert so that their attack will be a greater surprise (71–95). Near the battle's end, one of the Saracens "has feigned death" in order to attack Roland by surprise (2274). Both of these examples are evidence of the cultural monster's ability to defy categorization, shifting form as necessary (Cohen 5–6). In crafting Saracens as monsters, the *Roland* author enhances their deceptive nature by the delight they take in killing Christians: "these swords of ours are good, and they cut deep, / and we'll make them bright red with warm French blood. / How they will die" (949–51). Because *Roland* offers no companion scene that finds the French taking such pleasure in the murder of Saracens, the scene can be read as a projection of Christian feelings onto their enemy. As Cohen writes, monsters satisfy

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167 Interestingly in the midst of this plan, the Saracens recognize the wisdom of the French, commenting "we must be on our guard" because the French might see through their plan (192).
168 Here Saracens are found in active celebration of the opportunity to kill Christians. While the poem does relate brutal killings of Saracens by Christians, the information comes always through narration rather than active dialogue put in the mouths of Christian characters.
desires within the cultures that create them; here, Christian culture projects onto Saracens its own feelings of pleasure found in defeat of the enemy, but held in check because of conventions of Christian propriety.

Perhaps the reason Christians are never seen actively relishing the death of Saracens is because the *Roland* author implies throughout that Christians fight in honor of God. In other words, their psychical realities prove their actions are not their own: because, ultimately, they see their cause as God's cause, through their actions, they serve God. These beliefs of true Christians are exhibited by fictive Christians who pray to God before and during each battle. In the opening 200 lines of the first battle, in fact, the French pray to God eight times. Roland's battle cry, "Pagans are wrong and Christians are right!" (1015), coupled with the frequency of prayer and invocations to God, suggests the Christians are commanded to battle directly from God; they head into battle "faithful warriors," warriors literally full of faith (1143). When they arrive at the battle field, "the French dismount, cast themselves on the ground; / the Archbishop blesses them in God's name. / He commands them to do one penance: strike. The French arise, stand on their

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169 Modern readers of *Roland* ought to be reminded, here, of the response Pope Urban II received from the Council of Clermont after he delivered his speech in 1095, which led to the First Crusade: "When Pope Urban had said these and very many similar things in his urbane discourse, he so influenced to one purpose the desires of all who were present, that they cried out, 'It is the will of God! It is the will of God!' When the venerable Roman pontiff heard that, with eyes uplifted to heaven he gave thanks to God and, with his hand commanding silence, said: Most beloved brethren, to-day is manifest in you what the Lord says in the Gospel, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.' Unless the Lord God has been present in your spirits, all of you would not have uttered the same cry. For, although the cry issued from numerous mouths, yet the origin of the cry was one. Therefore I say to you that God, who implanted this in your breasts, has drawn it forth from you. Let this then be your war-cry in combats, because this word is given to you by God. When an armed attack is made upon the enemy, let this one cry be raised by all the soldiers of God: It is the will of God! It is the will of God!" (as reported by Robert the Monk, in Munro "Urban," reprinted in Hollister 184).

170 See lines 1045, 1047, 1062, 1073, 1089, 1177, 1183, and 1196.
feet again; / they are absolved, released from all their sins: / the Archbishop has blessed them in God's name" (1136–41). The detail of the first Saracen death coming at the hands of the Archbishop himself, further illustrates God's hand of support in this battle and reinforces the Christian admonition to their Saracen enemies: "You were doomed when you started [. . .] Let Mahum help you now. / No pagan swine will win this field today" (1336–8). Later, in the second battle, Charlemagne specifically recognizes that whatever the outcome, it will be God's will; yet at the same time, he recognizes his psychical union with God in that God's will is his will as together they avenge the death of Roland: "on this day, may Your love be with me: / and by Your grace, Lord, if it is Your will, / give me the strength to avenge my nephew, Roland" (3107–9). And later, after celebrating final victory in the string of battles, the French "cry out [. . .] the right stands with King Charles against the pagans! / God has chosen us to reveal His true judgment" (3365–68). Similarly, a few lines later, Charlemagne declares, "right is mine against the pagans" (3413). The repetition of the "rightness" of the Christian cause and the hand of God in battle again makes the line differentiating Christians from their monster enemy more apparent. If we believe, as Cohen asserts, that part of the fear of the cultural monster is that we ourselves could become that which we fear at any moment (20), then it makes sense that Roland audiences would need to be consistently reminded how Christian warriors were different from their Saracen counterparts and that further, unlike the Saracens, God works through the Christians.

171 Again, this scene echoes Robert the Monk's admonition in his account of Pope Urban II's speech at Clermont: "it is not fitting that laymen should enter upon the pilgrimage [crusade] without the blessing of their priests" (in Munro, "Urban," reprinted in Hollister 184).
172 The line reads, "Thanks be to God, now the first blow is ours" (1259).
173 Earlier the pagans are described as "marked men" (1058) and "bound for death" (1069).
The biggest difference between Christians and Saracens in battle is, of course, that at times, God specifically intervenes to keep the French soldiers safe. Frequently men "would have fallen, but for the hand of God" (3439). Specifically, when a spear comes down directly on Oliver, "God protects him: it never touched his body" (1316); in retaliation, by the grace of God, Oliver is able to defeat the pagan with a broken sword, using only the hilt to smash the shield and head of the pagan (1351–5). Charlemagne too is protected by God: "Charles staggers, would have fallen – comes very close; / but God does not want him to die or fall" (3608–9). Additionally, it is a direct result of God's desires that the French, the Christians, find victory: "The pagans turn, they do not stand, they flee: / it is God's will" (3623–4) because "A man fares well when the Lord is with him" (3657). For as supportive as the Christian God is to the French, the Saracen gods are portrayed as equally unsupportive.

When Marsilion's army suffers its second significant defeat at the hands of the French, they curse their faith and, in a blatant display of iconoclasm, turn against the idols representing their gods:

They rush into a crypt to Apolin / and rail at him, disfigure him to vileness: 'Eh! you bad god, the shame you have done us! [...] They tear away his scepter and his crown, / lay hands on him atop a lofty column / and throw him to the ground beneath their feet, and beat him with big sticks, smash him to pieces; and tear from Tervagant his great carbuncle, /

174 The intervening hand of God in battles seems to harken back to Ancient Greek epic when the gods, particularly Ares and Zeus, would intervene to bring about victory on the side they favored. Whether intentional or not, it seems the Roland author was operating within an established literary tradition by suggesting that God adjudicates victory for the worthy, or His chosen.
and throw the god Mahum into a ditch, / and pigs and dogs bite him and befoul him. (2580–91)

This is particularly significant when one considers that the story's Muslims are never seen in worship of their god(s); the idols appear only in bursts of anger over military defeat or in lamentation for their ineffectiveness and abandonment of their followers. Of further significance is the misrepresentation of Islamic doctrine strictly shunning the use of idols in worship. Prothero suggests that it is partly out of devotion to iconoclasm that the Pillars of Islam remain strong. Because Muslims do not possess physical icons to prove and practice their faith, they must demonstrate their devotion in action and religious duty (i.e. belief, payer, fasting, charity, and Haj) (34). The irony, of course, is that while Christianity too teaches against worshipping (false) idols, Christians, in fact, legitimize numerous idols in their faith practice.\textsuperscript{175} This depiction of Muslims as idol worshippers, then, can be read as a projection of anxieties of the Christian self on the Saracen enemy. Recognizing that idolatry is against Christian doctrine, Christians subconsciously question the area of their faith that encourages the use of relics (i.e. non-"false" idols) in worship. As this anxiety builds, it is projected onto the enemy who becomes an idol-worshipper; that is to say, while real-world practicing Muslims do not use idols, the Christian-created fictitious \textit{Saracens} do.\textsuperscript{176} Again, as monsters, this proves the Saracens lurk just at the gates of difference (Cohen 7). As the Christians, they use idols in worship, even bringing their beliefs onto the battlefield with them, yet unlike Christians, they

\textsuperscript{175} The medieval practice of pilgrimage sought to worship holy relics is one such example. Also, as discussed in this chapter, \textit{Roland} demonstrates the importance of relics as battle aides for Christian warriors.

\textsuperscript{176} Christian anxieties surrounding idol-worship emerge elsewhere in literature (see for example, Chaucer's Pardoner) and in history (i.e. Martin Luther's criticisms of the church).
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blame their gods for failures suffered. After the French defeat the Muslim army, they find the Saracens "lament[ing] their gods, Tervagant and Mahum / and Apollin, whom they no longer have" (2696–8). Even the Saracen Queen Bramimunde declares "These gods of ours are failures, deserters! / The miserable wonders those gods performed [. . .] they let our men be killed" (2716–8). With these declarations, a direct connection is made between Saracen (lack of) success in battle and the veracity of their faith. Often the Saracens call for divine intervention against the French, "but no god is with them" (2469) leading the Saracens to recognize "We were all born unlucky!" (2146). Set against the Christian soldiers whose prayers are always answered, this sends two messages to Christian audiences: first, it suggests that pagans are easily defeated because they are not divinely supported; second, it implies that the Saracens could be easily converted because their dedication to their faith vacillates. This second point is further enhanced by the fact that Marsilion and his men even refer to themselves as faithless: lines such as "Come, Pagan Men" (2844), "My own true heathen people" (3295), and "Follow, Pagans" (3326) can be read as Saracen confessions of and acceptance in the Christian belief that they have no true faith. The argument could also be made that they have convenient faith because even after they renounce their gods, they pray to them again as they head into battle: "Who seeks our gods' protection? Let him come forth / and pray, and serve, in deep humility" (3271–2). And later, Marsilion's comrade "calls the name of Apollin, / the names of Tervagant and Mahumet: 'My lords, my gods, I have served you long and well. / I shall make your idols of purest gold: only protect me now from Charlemagne" (3490–4). The suggestion here is that the Saracen gods are not trustworthy because they can be bribed or bought with the promise of riches in worship. Conversely, the Christians never
waver in their faith, even still believing "The Lord God be with us!" (3558) in spite of suffering significant losses in the first battle. This, too, is evidence of the cultural monstrosity of the Saracens. Cohen argues that monsters exist to keep society in check: they stand as examples of the worst that could happen if society were to abandon its moral code (12–20). Specifically in the Middle Ages, the Christian moral code maintained faith in God and the acceptance of all actions as His will. Because of this unwavering faith, the French, ultimately, are victorious over the Saracens. The implications remain, though, that turning one's back on God results in falling out of His favor.

Never in Roland do the French lose faith in God. Throughout, in fact, they are referred to as "good men," and it becomes clear that their goodness is a result of their faith. Another way the poem symbolically celebrates Christian faith is in the way that race and faith differences reinforce each other: the French are characterized by whiteness to enhance their purity against the dark imagery attributed to the Saracens. The warriors carry "beautiful and bright" swords (445), "sit on bright brocaded silk" (110), and Charlemagne himself comes to life with a white beard and "head flowering white" (117) because "God put the light in him of such lordliness" (535). The imagery is seen

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177 See lines 1273, 1288, 1413, 1501 and others.
178 It's interesting to note that when Marsilion rallies his remaining men to defend Saragossa against the French, the "pagans" are described as riding in the "image of good men" (3264). This suggests that they strive to be like the Christian French who are good men, rather than just an image.
179 In the Middle Ages, race didn't have the same connotations it has today. Then, race was a combination of multiple markers of difference including gender, sexuality, and religion (Heng 98); together, these factors combined to form greater distinctions in the medieval mind between the self and the projected enemies of the self.
180 Charlemagne is also characterized as having a "lordly body" (551 and 118), "hair as white as snow" (1771), and repeatedly a great beard of white (2308, 2334, and 2353 to name a few);
again when Charlemagne's messenger, Ganelon, informs Marsilion that the only way to avoid onslaught by the French army in Saragossa is to agree to convert to Christianity. Upon hearing the news, Marsilion "turned white" (485). The implication seems to be that whiteness is tied to Christian faith, whereas darkness is associated with paganism. The Ethiopians who fight along side the Muslims are described as "an immense black race" from "a land accursed (1916). Saracen troops in general are lumped as "that unbelieving race, / those hordes and hordes blacker than blackest ink" (1932–3). The figure Chernubles is from a place where "no sun shines [. . .] there is no rock that is not black, all black; / and many say, devils live in that land" (979–83). The Saracen warrior, Abisme, is characterized as "a wild man" (1478): "no worse criminal rides in that company, / stained with the marks of his crimes and great treasons, / lacking the faith in God, Saint Mary's son. And he is black, as black as melted pitch, / a man who loves murder and treason" (1471–5). As mentioned above, for medieval Christians, paganism was not merely renouncing belief in the Christian God, but was also aligned with allegiance to the devil. In other words, if Christians saw themselves as the physical extension of God, non-Christians had to be the physical extension of God's enemy, the

Marsilion's own wife even exclaims "that Emperor! that flowering white beard! / he is a brave man" (2604–5).

181 Though only ten lines are devoted to the "black race" of the Ethiopians, the fear aroused by their presence pervades much of the latter half of the poem. Because it is a poem about Christians fighting Muslims, the mere inclusion of the Ethiopians, writes Sharon Kinoshita (2001), suggests "a European fear of dark skin color, associated with evil and social worthlessness" (82). Their dark skin, coupled with their pagan alliance, show the Ethiopians also are without God's grace. Further, the inclusion of Ethiopians hints at Christian fears of the Islamic Empire's early and widespread expansion into Africa.

182 Marian Tooley's "Bodin and the Medieval Theory of Climate" (1953) explains that, in the Middle Ages, the relationship between climate and complexion was thought to be inverse (72–6), the belief being that a lack of light actually caused darkness of skin.
Devil. Employing Lacan's Other\textsuperscript{183} to explain the connection shows that Saracens became the earthly physical projection of the Devil. Just as Christians operated in union with God, so too did Muslims operate in union with the Devil. The Devil, the supreme entity of Christian opposition, manifests itself in the hearts and actions of Muslims, making them, for medieval Christians, into Saracens, the cultural monster engendered by Christian fear. Monster theory argues that this fear is born more from subconsciously realized similarities with the enemy than from differences from the enemy. In its beginnings, reveals Rémi Brague, Islam saw itself as "the final religion, the definitive religion, the religion that [picked up] from where both Judaism and Christianity leave off" (199). Anxieties over the legitimacy of this relatively new religion would have driven collective medieval Christian culture to craft this threat to its practice into the most monstrous figure its faith could conceive – the Devil. In this way, depictions of individual Saracens in Roland are even more significant. The figure of Abisme is rumored to carry a shield that was "a gift from the devil" (1502). And Siglorel "had been in Hell before" he was brought forth to battle by that "strange [Saracen] magic" (1391–2). The devil imagery continues when pagans fall in battle and "devils take away the soul[s]" (1552–3).\textsuperscript{184} In particular, when the Saracen king, Marsilion, dies, he is "weighed down by sin and calamity [. . .] gives his soul to the living devils" (3646–7).\textsuperscript{185} Even more telling, after Charlemagne's messenger, Ganelon, has spent time with the Saracens, he is chastised by

\textsuperscript{183} Lacan's Other and its role in my articulation and use of monster theory is discussed in chapter one.

\textsuperscript{184} See also the lines "Satan takes away his soul" (1268), "On your way to perdition!" (1296), and "Go now, find your protector!" (1303).

\textsuperscript{185} The connection made by the Roland author is supported by art; in particular, the Grandes Chroniques depicts Charlemagne's army battling Saracen enemies with dark skin, inhuman features, horns, and devilish eyes.
the French for being a "living devil, / a mad dog" (746-7), in spite of being blessed "In Jesus' name" (339) before he left.\textsuperscript{186} It is as if the \textit{Roland} author warns Christian audiences that the Saracen evil is contagious and that all Christians could potentially be contaminated by demonic Saracen darkness. The perpetuation of this fear guarantees the culture remains true to Christianity rather than giving in to its monstrous projections.

In addition to white and black imagery, \textit{Roland} also draws a clear distinction between light and dark. In particular, daytime is used to foreshadow success by the French army,\textsuperscript{187} and the dangers of the night are shared symbolically through the vision shown to Charlemagne by Saint Gabriel during which Charlemagne and his men are attacked fiercely by "serpents, vipers, dragons, demons of hell" as night falls (2543). The symbolism that aligns daylight with the French and darkness and shadows with Saracens pervades the poem.\textsuperscript{188} Marsilion finds safety only in the shadows, where he retreats after suffering defeat at the hands of the French (2570). And, when "Great darkness [. . .] falls on the land" and "there is no light" (1431–2), battle success shifts from the Christian side.

\textsuperscript{186} The full line relates that Ganelon was sent blessed "'In Jesus' name and mine'" with the "mine" referring to Charlemagne in a clear nod to Charlemagne's dual historical role as Emperor and religious leader.

\textsuperscript{187} See line 2845

\textsuperscript{188} This is actually a common trope in medieval literature; to the people of this early, agriculturally based society, darkness held great significance because it was a time of stasis, a time when the nourishing light of the sun was not shining. In writing about Grendal's late night attacks in \textit{Beowulf}, Herbert Wright (1957) comments that the night was a time when God's protective powers were at their weakest and demons inhabited the earth: "the fear of darkness [. . .] induced a willing acceptance of tales of giants lurking in the fens" (4). Because of this, the early medieval concept of darkness makes allowances for a figure's darkened countenance because darkness is an enveloping and consumptive state, which is brought on by a figure's disfavor with God. This is a point further explored by Deborah Youngs and Simon Harris in "Demonizing the Night in Medieval Europe" (in Bildhauer and Mills, \textit{The Monstrous Middle Ages} (2003)). Youngs and Harris examine the long-standing medieval "association of darkness with Christ's enemies" (137) which they argue begins with St. Augustine's 4th century \textit{City of God} wherein Augustine "used the creation of night and day as an interpretive tool" in discussing the goodness of angels (136). From that point forward, particularly in literature, "blackness and darkness" were associated with the "state of evil spirits" (137).
to that of the Saracens. The French recognize this, so after many of his men are lost, Charlemagne goes after the pagans and "prays to the Lord his God / to make the sun stand still for him in heaven, / hold back the night, let the day linger on" (2449–51). Following his prayer, Charlemagne is assured by an angel: "God knows, the light will not fail you" (2454). And then comes the line, "God made great miracles for Charlemagne, / for on that day in heaven the sun stood still" and darkness was delayed (2458–9).

Throughout, light is associated with victory and God's grace. Conversely, Saracens find their gods worthless during the daytime. After suffering daytime defeat Marsilion declares, "Those gods of ours! Every one was a traitor, / deserting him in the battle this morning!" (2600–1).

The active recognition of the ineffectiveness of their own gods makes Charlemagne's belief that he can convince Marsilion to "quit his gods, / abandon the idols he has adored, / and take their law, the holy Christian faith" plausible and logical for Christian audiences (2618–20). In the end, the Christian victory is solidified as French soldiers completely destroy any traces of the Islamic faith: Charlemagne "sends a thousand French to search the city, / the synagogues, the mosques of Mahumet, / with iron mauls and hatchets in their hands, / they break the images, shatter all idols: there shall be no more magic and no more fraud" (3661–5).189 Earlier in Roland, when Saracens destroy their own idols, it shows the ineffectiveness of their gods. Here, when Christians destroy the idols, meaning is found in absence as the Christians actively erase

189 It is interesting to note that in the poem's denouement, Jews (by reference to synagogues) are aligned with Muslims; this is the only place Roland makes direct connection between the two non-Christian groups.
the Muslim culture in Saragossa, thereby "proving" Christian victory. The events in Saragossa are actually foreshadowed by the poem's opening stanzas when audiences learn that a successful French campaign is why no pagans remain in Cordres as well: "not one pagan remained / who is not killed or turned into a Christian" (101–2).

In addition to destroying any remaining idols, to completely claim victory, Christians must convert or kill any living Saracens: "The King believes in God, he has one will: / to serve the Lord; and his bishops bless the waters, / lead the pagans to the baptismal font: / if there is one who now refuses Charles, / he has that man struck dead, or hanged, or burned; / and they baptized more than a hundred thousand / true Christians" (3667–3672). Again, though, conversion is not portrayed as an action that would be impossible to attain. The Saracens in the poem are seen renouncing their gods, destroying their idols, and recognizing themselves as pagans or heathens. Further, Marsilion refers to the home of his enemies as "the sweet land of France" (16) on more than one occasion. From the beginning, when readers are told that "The Emperor Charles of the sweet land of France comes to Saragossa to destroy all pagans (15–23), the French and the Christians become synonymous; their monikers are used interchangeably throughout Roland. So, when Marsilion recognizes France as "sweet," he can be said to be recognizing the harmony and rewards of Christianity, which again offers evidence that the Saracen monster lurks at the gates of difference (Cohen 7): the monster can recognize the beauty and light of Christianity, yet remains dedicated to the darkness of paganism.

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190 As discussed earlier, this again casts Muslims as idol worshippers to offer further reinforcement of their anti-Christian, monstrous existence.

191 This is ironic given that one of Islam's primary challenges to Christianity was that Christianity – with its devotion to idols and the Trinity – grew from pagan origins.

192 In the Old French the line reads "Li emperer Carles de France dulce."
While the poem consistently portrays the pagans as dark and in union with the devil, whiteness plays an interesting role in the pagan figure Baligant. The *Roland* narrator describes Baligant as:

> a great man! the fork of his legs immense, / the hips narrow, and the ribs broad and large, / the chest on him big and muscled like a lord's, / the shoulders wide, and his face full of light, / the fierce look on him, his head covered with curls, / that grand white head, white as the summer flower. / How many times has his courage been tested! / God! he would have been great, had he been Christian! (3155–64)

At first it seems this description negates my previous points, but if we employ Cohen, this passage offers only further evidence of Saracen monstrosity and the necessity of that monstrosity in Christian society. Cohen argues that a cultural monster is "a disturbing hybrid . . . suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions" (6). Here Baligant confuses the narrator because he is pagan, yet bears so many markings of Christianity in his good form and whiteness of feature. Perhaps Baligant's whiteness suggests the beginnings of a spiritual transformation that has begun with the flesh, but I think the narrator's exclamation that "he would have been great, had he been Christian" suggests something more. Cohen asserts that "fear of the monster is really a kind of desire" (16); this passage, I think, hints at the simultaneous desire and fear Christian culture held for pagans.¹⁹³ Christians knew the Saracens were powerful; they knew their

¹⁹³ Historically, of course, we know that not all Muslims are dark-skinned and Baligant's appearance in the poem is evidence of this reality Christian Crusaders would have encountered. The narrator's surprise and confusion in regard to Baligant's whiteness, however, suggest his figure is to be read symbolically rather than literally.
numbers were great. More than destroying them, it can be argued that they desired to assimilate with them, which is, in part, why the successful campaign in *Roland* ends with conversion.

The desire for assimilation with the Muslim body is also seen further in the conversion of Queen Bramimunde whom Charlemagne wants "led to conversion by love" (3674) and whom he keeps "in [his] household" (3976) until the conversion has taken place. The suggestion, of course, is that Charlemagne seeks a physical relationship with the Queen, a relationship he believes will lead to her conversion. Though readers are denied the intimate details, Charlemagne's instincts prove correct, for "they baptized the noble Queen of Spain, / and they found her the name Juliana; / she is Christian by knowledge of the Truth" (3984–6). I think, though, that this scene can be read in another way as well. The love that will lead the Queen to conversion could equally be the love of Christ, and subsequent "knowledge of the Truth" (3986), that she could finally receive living in Christian France. Regardless, it is quite significant that the only Saracen woman of the poem is not killed, nor forced into conversion, but rather guided to that point through love. The suggestion is that because women bear children, the veracity of their conversion is more important because they hold the power to produce more Christian, or more pagan, children. Further, Queen Bramimunde is an interesting figure in the poem because she represents the only character that is portrayed as both Muslim and Christian. In this way, she forces careful readers to recognize further connections to be made between the two faiths and again contributes to Christian anxiety over Saracen monsters lurking at the "gates of difference" (Cohen 7), avoiding categorization (Cohen 6).
Of the most fascinating and historically inaccurate aspects of Islam portrayed through *Roland* are its active polytheistic and idolatrous practices. In terms of Cohen, this can be interpreted as the fear-manifested monster Saracen as an extension of the Christian self. Discussed in brief above, it is interesting that throughout *Roland*, Saracens are monsterized through their use of idols, yet simultaneously the French soldiers use relics as aids in battle. In the pommel of his sword, Charlemagne carries the lance that wounded Christ at the Crucifixion; Ganelon swears "on the relics in his great sword" (1607), and Roland bears multiple relics in the golden hilt of his sword. This is why, the narration tells audiences, that "no nation can withstand" the French; they fight, literally, with physical weapons of Christianity (2511). The Christian "idols" are effective, while the Saracen idols prove worthless. In this way, the Christians justify for themselves the use of icons of worship while simultaneously demonizing Saracens for the practice. In my first chapter, when I align Cohen with the Lacanian notion of *jouissance* and the Freudian articulation of psychical reality, I assert that the monster is an extension of the self that the self no longer recognizes as originating from within. In theory, Christianity is opposed to idol worship, yet in practice Christians see nothing wrong with the use of relics as evidence of God's divinity on earth. Conversely, true Islamic faith renounces all forms of idol use, appealing directly to God in worship. Similarly, Islamic faith celebrates the power of *one* God, whereas Christianity celebrates the unity of three "gods" in one with the Trinity. In fact, Muslims argue that Christians are guilty of *shirk* (creating associations to God) through their belief in the Trinity because Islam believes in *tawhid* (the devotion to God as one) (Flesher). Islam, in fact, comments on the blasphemy of the Trinity in the Koran: "do not say, 'Three'; desist – it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but
one God. Exalted is He above having a son" ("An-Nisa" 4:171). In defense of their faith, modern Christians explain that the Trinity is not comprised of three separate entities but a unity of one and further, that God reveals Himself through the Trinity, but exists only as one. Roland, however, demonstrates medieval Christian anxiety in the Trinity through projection onto the enemy. Throughout Roland, Saracens are found in active worship of three gods – Apollin, Mahum, and Tervagant – in somewhat of a nefarious anti-Trinity. The projection of a trinity onto their Saracen enemies can be read as a projection of Christian guilt stemming from – what could be perceived as and, indeed what Islam accused them of – their own worship of multiple gods unified under the Trinity. What Roland presents, then, is a reversal whereby Christians project the questionable parts of Christianity (e.g. idolatry, polytheism) onto Islam in the creation of Saracen monsters.

The precepts of Christianity further reinforce the creation of the Saracen monster in one of the poem's most dramatic and symbolic events. Near the end of the first battle Roland strikes Marsilion, cutting off his right hand: "the Count struck him with Durendal and cut the right hand clean away from his body" (2780–1). If we remember that the hilt

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194 All quotes from the Koran are from the Sahih International translation available through quran.com.
195 The text makes consistent reference to the equality each of the three gods receives in worship. See "King Marsilion [. . .] serves Mahumet and prays to Apollin" (7–8 and similarly in lines 416–7); "Marsilion commands them bring forth a book: / it was the law of Mahum and Tervagant" (611), and elsewhere.
196 Another egregious error in the Christian portrait of Islamic belief comes in the frequent associations of Muslims with the devil. As part of their faith, Muslims dedicate themselves to Jihad, or the spiritual struggle of the self against sin. One of the conditions in this struggle is that Muslims will actively combat the devil through the belief in their heart, hands, tongue, or sword (Rich 442). Essentially, the point is that Muslims are not in union with the devil, but are instead in a constant struggle against evil.
of Roland's sword is filled with holy relics\textsuperscript{197} then, for Christian audiences, this can be read as Roland defeating his pagan enemy with what can only be considered a physical manifestation of Christianity. Marsilion is then forced into the next battle "with his left hand" holding his sword (2830). While the modern French word for left is \textit{gauche}, the Old French word is \textit{senestre} and the line reads "\textit{Al puign senestre}" (2830, my emphasis). Adolf Tobler and Erhard Lommatzsche's \textit{Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch} (Old French Dictionary) ascertain that, in Old French, \textit{senestre} denoted "of the left" as well as "deceitful, false."\textsuperscript{198} The correlation in meaning derives from the Latin word, \textit{sinister}. In \textit{A New Latin Dictionary}, editors Charlton Lewis and Charles Short classify "left, on the left, on the left hand or side" as the primary definition of the Latin word; they date this meaning to Publius Terentius Afer's \textit{Eunuchus} (c. 159 B.C.).\textsuperscript{199} Lewis and Short also identify alternate denotations as "awkward, wrong, perverse, improper" (the earliest use attributed to the 1st century B.C. poet Catullus, Lewis and Short 1707) and "unlucky, injurious, adverse, unfavorable, ill, bad" (attributed first to Virgil in \textit{Georgics}, c. 29 B.C., Lewis and Short 1708). What this suggests is that well before \textit{Song of Roland}, there existed a long tradition uniting the left with troublesome, even dangerous, things.\textsuperscript{200} This is further evidenced by the Bible's Matthew which offers one of the most quoted verses regarding the impurity of the left hand as set in contrast to the blessed right hand:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Saint Peter's tooth and blood of Saint Basile, / a lock of hair of my lord Saint Denis, / and a fragment of blessed Mary's robe}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{197} The relics in Roland's sword include "Saint Peter's tooth and blood of Saint Basile, / a lock of hair of my lord Saint Denis, / and a fragment of blessed Mary's robe" (2345–8).
\textsuperscript{198} Translated from the German "auch destre link" (Tobler 445) and "falsch, unrichtig" (Tobler 446).
\textsuperscript{199} The playwright is known to modern English-speaking audiences as Terence.
\textsuperscript{200} For an extensive discussion of artistic and symbolic traditions evidencing the left as unholy and evil, see James Hall's \textit{The Sinister Side: How Left-Right Symbolism Shaped Western Art} (2008).
And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world [. . .] Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye curses, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

(Matt. 25: 33–41)\(^{201}\)

The biblical allusion is further enhanced by the fact that Roland uses his right hand to dismember Marsilion. The line from Roland, "the Count struck him with Durendal and cut / the right hand clean away from his body" (2780–1), could easily be followed with the line from Exodus, "Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy" (Exod. 15: 6). Alone, this would not be enough evidence of intentionality on the part of the Roland author; however, between lines 2571, where readers first learn Marsilion has lost his hand, and line 2830 where he heads into battle with his left hand, phrases similar to "he has no right hand now"(2719) repeat more than five times. Readers are consistently reminded, in a short span of time, that Marsilion has lost his right hand by Roland's sword, and that now he is forced to fight using his left. This action reinforces the monstrous differences of the Saracens in both body and action. In terms of the body, medieval belief held that the state of a nation was mirrored by the physical strength and composition of its ruler.\(^{202}\) Because the Saracen king is now un-whole, medieval people would see this as clear evidence of the

\(^{201}\) See also Gen. 14: 15, Gen. 48: 13–18, Deut. 33: 2, Judg. 3: 21, 1 Esdr. 4: 30, Isa. 41: 10, Mark. 10: 40, and many throughout Psalms are only a few of many examples from the Bible that offer negative connotations for the left hand and positive for the right.

\(^{202}\) See chapter 2 for further discussion of associations made, in the Middle Ages, between the physical form of a ruler and the condition of that ruler's nation.
Saracen nation's corruption and impurity. The impurity of the nation, then, is further enhanced by the fact that it is Marsilion's right hand, the Biblical source of goodness, that has been lost. The Saracen monster, here, reminds Christians of the importance of remaining on the right side of faith.

If by the end audiences are not fully convinced that the Christian cause is right and the pagan cause is wrong, then the point is made blatantly clear in the punishment suffered by Roland's estranged stepfather, Ganelon. Before the battle began, Ganelon sought to work with Marsilion to destroy Roland; the poem's conclusion, then, offers a clear warning against those who work with, or are sympathetic to, pagans: "Ganelon must die, and in amazing pain. / Four war horses are led out and brought forward; / then they attach his two feet, his two hands. [. . .] Ganelon is brought to terrible perdition, / all his mighty sinews are pulled to pieces, / and the limbs of his body burst apart; / on the green grass flows that bright and famous blood. / Ganelon died a traitor's and recreant's death" (3962–72). 203 The character Ganelon provides the final and ultimate evidence of what happens to Christians who turn their backs on God and their faith and further reinforces for audiences the necessity of not falling victim to the monster society has created.

Early in this chapter I offered Akbari's poignant statement that western imagination is fascinated by representations of Islam; and, I think that it is part of our fascination that breeds religious conflict. Perhaps the key impetus for conflict between

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203 This traitor's death, suffered by Ganelon, reminds readers of deaths enacted by Thuringians and reported in Gregory of Tours' 6th century History of the Franks: "Two hundred girls they caused to perish by a cruel death; they bound their arms about the necks of horses which, goaded with sharp points, dashed asunder and tore the victims limb from limb" (90). Gregory notes that such a torturous death was typical of "savage [. . .] pagan teutonic tribes" (Dalton 213). Though we have no way of knowing with certainty, if the Roland author were familiar with Gregory's text, the murderous punishment of Ganelon, then, by his fellow Christians would read as all the more significant and ironic.
Muslims and Christians in the Middle Ages, and even today, is expressed poignantly by Daphna Berman in a 2012 article: It is the belief each group holds that "they are the recipients of God's final word, which they are obligated to share with the rest of humanity – a message that is both universal and exclusive" (Berman, "The Revered"). In other words, the conflict can be easily traced to the similarities in the two religions rather than in their differences. In truth, in making my argument, I assert that the Christian creation of the Saracen monster is built largely on Christian culture's inability to categorize Muslims based upon misunderstandings of Islamic faith and, even more significant, the confusion that results from similarities between the two faiths that the Christian psychical reality of the Middle Ages, literally, could not recognize or make sense of. These similarities place Muslims into the position of Saracens, depositing them right at the gates of difference, where the cultural monster commonly dwells. The devil imagery prevalent in *Roland* and medieval polemics only further illustrates this point because it is the same imagery my second chapter illustrates as projected onto Jews. Postcolonialism would have us believe that the creation of the Other is about a specific enemy of the French, of the English, or even of Christianity. The truth of the matter is, if that were the case, the enemy – the monster – would not shift forms so easily and we would not see similar characterizations of Jews, Muslims, and other enemies of Christianity not here discussed yet portrayed in medieval literature.\(^\text{204}\) The common ground in these creations of monster is in their associations with the Devil, the supreme figure of evil lurking in opposition to God, and by extension to Christianity. The Devil is a necessary player in the Christian

\(^{204}\) In particular, medieval literary representations of women, homosexuals, and witches employ similar terms and associations in their characterization.
pursuit of *jouissance*. As Christians seek to recapture the oneness with God that was lost when the Thing was named, they need an evil for their good: they need the other part of the self that is not as benevolent, is not in union with God, in order to make the victory of their idealized self more significant and valuable. This other self, then, is the evil side – the part of the self that struggles with temptation and that has been repressed so that the good self emerges victorious. These repressed feelings, these feelings that are associated with the Devil, are projected onto the nearest cultural body that makes sense. Jeffrey Russell writes, "the Devil is what the history of his concept is. Nothing else about him can be known" (23). In other words, the devil, as monster, exists only because a culture gives it identity. In the Middle Ages, a popular identity for the devil was Islam. As Muslims came to represent all the repressed parts of the Christian self, a cultural monster was formed. But monster theory reveals that these cultural monsters don't just lurk in the past; rather, they are part of the very nature of human existence, and, therefore, are every bit as relevant today. Ultimately, argues monster theory, it is that which we recognize (yet have repressed) in ourselves that we find the most fearful. But further, it is because we have repressed those parts of ourselves that we *need* the monster to exist. The monster helps maintain order, it keeps control, and it guarantees that society will never become what it most fears: the worst version of itself.
In 2004, when I began my course of doctoral study, I hoped to author, through my dissertation, a textbook with substantial supporting materials that would assist secondary teachers in accurately and effectively teaching important examples of the literature of the Middle Ages to high school students. However, because my degree is in English Literature, rather than Educational Pedagogy, ultimately this pursuit proved neither appropriate, nor feasible. Still, first and foremost I consider myself a high school English teacher; as such, the quest to improve available secondary-level pedagogical materials dealing with the Middle Ages remains a professional interest and ambition. It is out of this interest that this fourth chapter is born; and, while here I don't offer detailed lessons designed to drive the instruction of Song of Roland and "The Prioress's Tale," I do argue for a change in philosophy regarding how medieval literature is taught at the high school level and how it is represented in textbooks. Much of this philosophical change stems from the theoretical shift I discuss in my first three chapters. I have demonstrated the extent to which literary analysis of religious conflict in the Middle Ages has been dominated by postcolonial theory; further, I have offered monster theory as a more valuable theoretical lens through which modern audiences can appreciate medieval literature like Roland and "Prioress" – ripe with evidence of culturally engendered
religious stereotypes. I believe this theoretical shift will ultimately improve high school literary study of medieval religious conflict as well as make examples of medieval literature more relatable and teachable to students, thereby increasing how often it is taught to students. Through this chapter, I demonstrate how and why.

In the ensuing discussion, I make a number of assertions regarding what makes effective teaching, and how successful teachers best engage students. While I cite many experts in educational and literary pedagogy, many of these claims are my own. Again, because I'm not seeking a degree in Education, I have no researched data to support my conclusions. I rely largely on the experience gleaned from over twelve years of teaching full time in high school English classrooms – through both the observations I've made during that time and the innumerable discussions I've had with students and fellow teachers.205

In my earlier chapters, I make much of the 1992 conference hosted by John Van Engen of the University of Notre Dame. As previously stated, Van Engen's goal for the conference was to revitalize the field of Medieval Studies in order to guarantee a future for the discipline. At that same conference, William Chester Jordan offered a lecture that later became an essay entitled, "Saving Medieval History; Or, The New Crusade." I mention Jordan's essay here because in it he calls for a reevaluation, a reconstruction of the methods for teaching medieval literature to high school students. Jordan's main area of disagreement with the popular method is that it fails to enliven, in students, a passion

205 My experiences are varied in that I have taught in a private school (Eastside Catholic High School, Bellevue, Washington), traditional public schools (David Douglas High School, Portland, Oregon and Dallas High School, Dallas, Oregon) and a lab school (Burris Laboratory School, Muncie, Indiana) during this time.
for the literature of the Middle Ages. Moreover, he contends that the medieval period, with its knights, princesses, and mythical creatures, carries an inherent sense of awe, wonder, and attraction for younger students; but, as Jordan writes, when these young students grow into college students, it is clear to him that "some of the insipid material that is taught in grades kindergarten through twelfth" (268) has vanquished the natural fascination for the Middle Ages that students felt in their youth. As a college professor, Jordan finds it virtually impossible to restore the abandoned organic attraction to the period and the stories it tells. His essay, oddly written for an audience of higher education scholars, reads as a plea to reform the way medieval literature and history are read and studied by students before they enter college. Jordan writes that such an endeavor "would require the kind of expertise and mastery of studies of educational experience and theory" that he does not possess (268) because he is a college professor and has no experience teaching younger students. While I have neither the space nor the inclination to "fix" the whole of pre-collegiate medieval study, I endeavor here to begin a scholarly discussion involving how secondary educators might answer Jordan's plea and bring, as he requests, "some flair" into the study of the Middle Ages (268). In doing so, I contend that studying texts involving medieval religious conflict is key because such texts provide a gateway for modern, post-9/11 students to understand and relate to medieval literature more affectively. In other words, students are able to personally and emotionally engage with literature. As I demonstrate in this chapter, this level of engagement encourages students to find more interest in the text than they would have had they not been encouraged to connect affectively. As a classroom instructor, my experience has proven that the easiest way to encourage an affective connection in students is through a discussion-driven
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approach to literary instruction. In the following pages, I discuss elements of the educational work of Louise Rosenblatt, Ron Miller, Gerald Graff, and Ernest Morrell that contribute to my commitment to affective inquiries and inform my practice of discussion-driven pedagogy.

Throughout this project, I argue for the importance of finding affective connections to literature, and while the term carries a clear meaning in its suggestion that literature be personally relatable and emotionally engaging, it is with Louise Rosenblatt that the term carries its greatest pedagogical significance. Rosenblatt, who spent her teaching career at Barnard University, contributed extensively to the field of literary instruction. In her first book, *Literature as Exploration* (1938), Rosenblatt elucidates the elements of a philosophy that would define her career. From Rosenblatt's perspective, the purpose of literary study is to embrace the inherent connection between democracy and literature (xv) by finding a way for students to affectively associate with not only what they read, but with the cultures that produce text. The affective association, as Rosenblatt conceives it, recognizes that the meaning of a piece of literature is not found in the text or reader alone, but rather, it is built through a transaction of meaning whereby the text and reader work together to "author" the text. Because of this affective, or personal, connection that is forged between a text and each reader, students understand new material as it is filtered through previous understandings, beliefs, and experiences. Ultimately, this process helps students to more easily recognize their own positions in the world by understanding the world through the perspective of others: "The reader seeks to participate in another's vision – to reap knowledge of the world, to fathom the resources of the human spirit, to gain insights that will make his own life more comprehensible"
Further, this approach creates an "awareness of the highly personal nature of the literary experience," thereby guaranteeing that literary study will always be organic and never rendered "routine" (260).

Dealing specifically with medieval literature, it is often difficult for teachers to guide students to this affective engagement with text because the literature studied is so far removed from their own contemporary lives. But, as I argue in my first chapter, if students can be guided to understand that the motivations of those in the past are not that different from their own, this affective union can be easily attained. Emphasis on medieval texts dealing with religious conflict offer valuable opportunities for students to make connections between the past and present because these stories inspire readings that examine core human moralities. This assertion agrees with the basic tenets of Rosenblatt's philosophy: Rosenblatt writes, there exist "basic human traits that persist despite social and cultural changes;" and further, that these "universal' human traits" arise repeatedly in discussions of literature (12). In other words, Rosenblatt contends that throughout history and across culture, humans are driven by the same basic emotions. Connecting over these emotions is the surest way to connect with other cultures. In spite of these universals, however, Rosenblatt also accepts that individuals

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206 Here Rosenblatt echoes George Santayana who, in identifying the basic appeal of literature in his 1905 *Reason in Art*, writes: "The wonder of an artist's performance grows with the range of his penetration, with the instinctive sympathy that makes him, in his mortal isolation, considerate of other men's fate and a great diviner of their secret, so that his work speaks to them kindly, with a deeper assurance than they could have spoken with to themselves. And the joy of his great sanity, the power of his adequate vision, is not the less intense because he can lend it to others and has borrowed it from a faithful study of the world" (228 – 9 in Rosenblatt 7).

207 As do I, Rosenblatt recognizes that there are some complications with the term *human nature*, but ultimately, as Rosenblatt writes, it cannot be denied that "some set of notions dominates our sense of human behavior," particularly in a given culture (13). For this reason, it is a fair term to use to identify a specific human drive.
operate first and foremost driven by their own personal experiences. Rosenblatt's work seems to recognize that while language and literary understanding are "socially evolved," they are "always constituted by individuals, with their particular histories" (25); that is, students will invariably bring their past experiences to bear on their understandings of a given text. The best literary instruction finds a way to embrace those individual experiences within the larger realm of human "universals" in order to build modern understandings that form affective, human connections with the past. This is the only way, insists Rosenblatt, to guarantee a student will not consider literature "remote from his own present concerns and needs" (59). Further, embracing these connections between student and text, and between past and present, gives students confidence in their understandings; this is a confidence that builds each time they enter a new literary moment.  

Another compelling and (in the current educational climate) timely strand that weaves its way through Rosenblatt's text is her suspicion of testing and of the importance the field of education places on formal assessment. Rosenblatt argues that students of literature operate on two levels: The first of these is their own authentic and personal engagement with the literature read; the second is to satisfy the expectations of their literature teacher and the "field" of literary education (56). These two levels, more often than not, diverge from one another so much so that, as Rosenblatt writes, "much literary teaching has the effect of turning [students] away" from literary appreciation and

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208 This method, which Rosenblatt calls the creation of "a sufficient condition" (72) for literary analysis, is what is at the heart of my own discussion-driven pedagogical approach. (I explain this approach further, below.)
enjoyment (57). As evidence of this point, Rosenblatt references a colleague's experience in reading an old Scottish ballad from a textbook she was using; the colleague had found herself engaging affectively in the literary moment as she drew connections between the speaker and herself, only to turn the page and be confronted with questions like "'What is the name of this kind of poem? What characteristics does it share with other poems of this type?'" (66). What I find particularly interesting about this anecdote is that Rosenblatt's colleague had this experience nearly a century ago; as I explore below, textbooks have not moved away from this tendency to drive students toward formulaic and standardized responses and away from affective and authentic responses to literature. Rosenblatt asserts that the "primary criterion" to be considered in assessing a student's experience with literature "should be not whether his reactions or his judgments measure up to critical traditions but, rather, whether the ideas and reactions he expresses are genuine" (67). For this reason, Rosenblatt admonishes against the "misguided zeal" that many teachers, particularly those new to the field, use in their instruction as they drive students toward uniform, overly academic, and definitive answers to literature (67).

Rosenblatt actually begins her text with the following: "In a turbulent age, our schools and colleges must prepare the student to meet unprecedented and unpredictable problems. He needs to understand himself; he needs to work out harmonious relationships with other people. He must achieve a philosophy, an inner center from which to view in perspective the shifting society about him" (3). Written in 1938, these words are just as

209 In a particularly poignant passage Rosenblatt writes, "Few teachers of English today would deny that the individual's ability to read and enjoy literature is the primary aim of literary study. In practice, however, this tends to be overshadowed by preoccupation with whatever can be systematically taught and tested. Or the English program becomes what can be easily justified to parents and administrators, whose own past English training has produced skepticism about the value of the study of literature" (62).
applicable in our contemporary world as students, still, live in a turbulent and unpredictable age. Now, as it was then, it is vitally important for our students to use literature to affectively understand themselves and their role in the larger order; and, it is the duty and obligation of teachers to guide them on that path. The best way to do so is to encourage discussion of text because such an approach encourages students to use their own interest and knowledge in affective response to, and dialogue with, the past.

Ron Miller, an Educational Researcher who specializes in effective alternate education systems, expresses a similar suspicion of standardized-test driven curriculum while also recognizing the importance of embracing student interests and concepts of the world through instruction. In *What Are Schools For?* (1997) Miller argues for the necessity of holistic education. A holistic education, he states, is imperative in modern society210 because it enables "students to deeply question the assumptions and structures of their culture" (72); it is organic and "into alignment with the fundamental realities of nature" (78).211 This is an approach to education that Miller believes is "incongruous and irrelevant" in our modern culture (76) with an education system that anchors itself in regimented curriculum and standardized testing (77).212 The current education system, Miller insists, only enhances the issues of modern society. Among the most significant of

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210 When Miller mentions modern society, he is speaking from the perspective of the late 20th century. I find it fascinating (and disappointing) that fifteen years later, his concerns regarding the (mis)directions of education remain valid.

211 Miller's position is similar to those expressed by Theodore Roszak in *The Making of a Counter Culture* (1968) and Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Miller further writes, "The message here is that modern schooling's fixation on social efficiency and one-dimensional academic knowledge results in a barren, dispiriting experience for young people. When we view our children merely as 'intellectual capital' for the corporate economy, when we define education solely in terms of 'outcomes' that can be measured through mass testing, we are in truth sacrificing what is most precious within the human soul on the altar of modernity" (88).
these issues is the overwhelming amount of knowledge that students have at their disposal. We are an information-abundant culture, but what we, particularly our students, lack is "meaning and purpose; we lack a social vision that enables us to recognize which information is appropriate to the needs of human life" (81). Miller believes the answer to this issue plaguing modern education is to embrace holistic education; and, I agree with him for one significant reason. Miller writes that holistic approaches to education accept "the possibility that humanity is connected, in a profound way, to the continuing evolution of life and the universe" (79). In other words, Miller argues that the way people understand their individual realities is similar across time and culture. Embracing these similarities, as educators, is an effective way to teach students about past cultures.\textsuperscript{213} In this way, holistic educational philosophy is a movement driven by humanistic and affective educational approaches that view students not as "disembodied intellect[s]," but rather, as people moved by "physiological, emotional, moral, social, and self-expressive forces" (141).\textsuperscript{214} Because of these factors, a teacher's duty is to educate the entire student, embracing each of these defining human factors (161).\textsuperscript{215} Holistic education is well-

\textsuperscript{213} Though Miller does not reference Rosenblatt, his approach – particularly his contentions regarding affect in teaching – is quite similar to hers. I believe his omission results from his articulation of a general system of education, whereas Rosenblatt's work is specific to literature instruction.

\textsuperscript{214} This is an approach that also echoes the work of Douglas Sloan, William Doll, and John P. Miller. See, respectively, \textit{Insight-Imagination: The Emancipation of Thought and the Modern World} (1983), \textit{A Post-Modern Perspective on Curriculum} (1993), and \textit{The Holistic Curriculum} (1996).

\textsuperscript{215} One of the natural benefits that Rosenblatt, Miller, Graff and Morrell identify with drawing upon a student's interests and experiences through education comes when classroom behavior problems are alleviated. Specific discussion of this phenomenon can be found in \textit{Expelled to a Friendlier Place: A Study of Effective Alternative Schools} (1984), based upon a study by Martin Gold and David Mann through which the authors reevaluated traditional approaches in teaching in alternative schools. The authors discovered that when students were allowed to engage with the
suited to a discussion-driven approach because students learn, not only about affective forces in their own lives, but also about those in the lives of their peers. Further, the discussion setting affords teachers the opportunity to guide students in recognizing that the same forces defining their own lives have proven as equally significant in the lives of humans throughout history as expressed in their literature. As explored below in examination of modern textbooks, traditionally practiced high school methods, have not actively sought to make authentic connections between the modern lives of students and the lives of the cultures that created the literature they study. I see this as a huge failing in many modern high school English classrooms.

In 2005, Professor of Education and Information Studies at UCLA, Ernest Morrell, called for a secondary English education teaching reform similar to that urged by Jordan in 1992, and similar to that which I advocate. In "Critical English Education," Morrell makes the point that because society has shifted so dramatically in recent years, education needs to shift as well in order to meet the changing needs of students. For this reason, Morrell argues for a movement toward English education that supports student acquisition of language and literacy skills by instructing from within the students' "everyday language" and "critical texts" (313). In other words, Morrell argues for the importance of teaching students by using what they already know and are comfortable with (i.e. their lives and interests) because this approach guarantees the active involvement of the students in their own learning. As Morrell believes, the surest way to

studied material personally and affectively, they were more inclined to participate positively and, ultimately, they learned material.

216 This is a reform Morrell deems necessary for all current teachers, as well as all preservice teacher training and certification programs.
learn language and literacy is to participate in it. Forging a path for students to find their ways into the study of literature by using what they already know builds confidence because it draws upon their experiences in order to teach new concepts and establish new meanings. In addition to encouraging affective connections, a further benefit of this approach is that it reduces the possibility of reinforced and reproduced social inequalities finding their way into the classroom; because students are encouraged to participate using their own backgrounds as expertise, no one in the classroom becomes marginalized for their race, gender, national identity, socioeconomic status, sexuality, etc. All students, from all backgrounds, participate in critically developing their literacies from positions of credibility and power.  

In using the term literacies, Morrell draws a distinction between academic literacies and critical literacies: academic literacies involve effective strategies for reading, writing, and discussing literature, and have been the foundation of English educational methods for the better part of the past two centuries. But, Morrell argues, mastery of critical literacies should be an equal aim of modern teachers because critical literacies are concerned with "the consumption, production, and distribution of print and new media texts" (314). Critical literacies are also valuable because it is through such literacies that students are able to demonstrate not just that they have learned, but also how what they have learned is applicable in the real world, specifically, in their real...
Ultimately, learning is never effective unless teachers find a way to connect school literacies with non-school literacies; modern classrooms must bring the students' outside world, in, or students will never recognize, in what they learn, a value beyond the walls of the classroom. For this reason, Morrell makes a case for literary instruction that unites text with popular culture. Morrell's method validates the creation of authentic opportunities for students to engage with studied material affectively because it encourages students to explore their positions within the larger cultural significance. This is an educational philosophy similar to that recommended by Gerald Graff, English Education Professor at the University of Illinois.

Though focused on university instructional methods, Gerald Graff's *Beyond the Culture Wars: How Teaching the Conflicts Can Revitalize American Education* should be required reading for all secondary school teachers. Graff's goal with his text is to encourage classroom teachers to embrace the natural conflicts – issues such as gender, culture, race, religion – arising in a classroom by turning such conflicts into productive debates. Doing so legitimizes natural human conflicts by supporting them in a classroom setting, while simultaneously teaching students to engage in social debate and dialogue. Further, embracing difference in the classroom guarantees that a teacher will never presuppose "common culture" in her teaching (Graff 10); each student becomes an individual with his own beliefs, his own practices, and his own traditions. This approach is similar to that offered by Morrell because it allows students to see applications beyond

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219 Critical literacies develop student understanding of a given text or subject in the modern world. Further, critical literacies embrace the implications of academics beyond the classroom and in the real world to examine, in part, how education contributes to the social development of society.
the classroom. Once students begin to rely upon their own experiences in locating meaning in text, the literature begins to exist in their lives, because their understanding of the literature derives from their lives. Graff actually contends that a goal of literary study should be to help students see the application of literature studied beyond the given course (113). I believe this is most effectively accomplished when students are given multiple opportunities to discuss the literature they are studying. Discussion reveals, to students, that varying opinions exist and, more importantly, it teaches them how to appropriately defend their opinions about the literature in the midst of disagreement. As students develop and defend their positions regarding a text, they begin to build a faithful intimacy with that text. Suddenly, students don't just read, but rather they affectively relate to and care about the studied text. One of the most poignant assertions Graff makes is his statement that students come to literature apprehensive because they feel inadequate at finding "hidden meanings" (82 – 83). Graff argues that teachers can demystify the meaning finding process by encouraging different viewpoints of a single text rather than teaching from the traditional position, criticized by Jordan and many others, that the text has a single interpretation. This shift in pedagogy opens the learning community to multiple voices and possibilities thereby validating multiple interpretations students bring to discussion, because those interpretations contribute to the collective understanding of the text. This approach renders impossible any feelings of interpretive inadequacy. Once students carry the self-confidence of interpretive understanding, all texts become accessible because literature is no longer distant stories separate from student lives. Students, in fact, have been encouraged to understand text not from outsider perspectives, but rather through their own experiences. This is not to suggest that every connection a
student makes with a text will be sound. But, if instructors allow students the opportunity to connect, they will be engaged enough to want to build more sophisticated interpretive understandings of the texts they study. First and foremost, students have to be given opportunities to engage in ways that are personally meaningful to them. Later, through instructor guidance and discussions within the learning community, students have opportunities to refine their understandings and associations. But unless students are confident and interested enough to join the conversation in the first place, they will never reach a heightened appreciation of the presented literature.

One of the key methods by which to encourage students to join the conversation is by offering material that inspires opinion by highlighting difference. Many teachers, however, tend to avoid any politically charged topics in an effort to keep peace in the classroom. But, as Graff argues, literature is inherently politically and socially motivated. He writes, "the apparent representativeness of a text – its ability to make readers feel that it somehow speaks for a whole nation or social group – has been an important component of intellectual and literary value" (154). For this reason, effective teachers cannot avoid culturally charged issues, such as religion, in the classroom. Instead, they must tackle these issues head on. Returning to the topic of my larger discussion, in reading texts such as *Song of Roland* and "The Prioress's Tale" teachers cannot avoid discussing anti-Islamic and anti-Judaic sentiment portrayed because those attitudes carry intellectual value. Discussing the religious conflicts of those texts helps students to understand the motives of medieval people; but, more importantly, such discussion encourages students to
recognize their own prejudices and how those prejudices inform their personal experiences in their modern worlds.²²⁰

Above I mention Graff’s assertion that teachers avoid teaching from a position that all students share a "common culture," and I certainly agree with this contention, particularly for modern students of literature. I believe a discussion-driven approach to literary instruction not only accepts multiple cultures and experiences in the classroom, but also embraces those differences that make individuals unique yet define our collective culture. Ultimately, while it is true that we do not all share a common background, we are all human and, as such, operate through the same drives and attempts at self understanding. So, while our conclusions might differ, we reach ends through similar means. I make this point because experience has shown me that discussion-driven instruction helps students to recognize a kinship with civilizations past as they realize that the conflicts of the past are, essentially, the conflicts of the present, particularly in regard to hot issues like cultural, racial, and religious acceptance. Common complaints from students about studying medieval literature are that they can't relate to it and that it's irrelevant to modern society. Making the connection for students – or rather, allowing students to make the connection for themselves – that the conflicts of the present are similar to those experienced over 500 years ago, makes medieval literature relevant and interesting because students connect affectively to the people of the Middle Ages.²²¹

²²⁰ Discussions of religious difference and stereotypes taking place in spiritually and culturally diverse learning communities would prove even more powerful for students because, not only would they be exposed to first-hand knowledge from different perspectives, also they would be able to practice respectful dialogues of disagreement within a safe classroom setting.
²²¹ While here I deal specifically with medieval literature, it must be recognized that this is a process that works regardless of the time period studied. Spend any time in a high school classroom and it becomes clear that the main concern of students is how what they are studying is
Discussion-driven instruction, designed to allow students to make affective connections to text, makes literature of any time period relevant in student lives because it invites students to incorporate what is personally meaningful into their understandings of literature. It ensures they will experience fruitful and meaningful learning that will educate their souls for a lifetime. The dramatic economic shifts in American culture over the recent ten years demand that now, more than ever before, education aims to teach a student's soul rather than prepare a student for a career. In 1995, when he was a primary school teacher, current Penn State Professor of Education, Patrick Shannon wrote these words: Given the current economy, "schooling can't promise a student a better, steady employment, or even higher wages because the economy is not able to keep these old promises regardless of school standards or student achievement" (193). What was true in 1995 is even more true today. We cannot believe we are educating students to participate in a flourishing capitalist society; we can only trust that we educate them to find substance and satisfaction in their lives. A holistic education, an education that embraces affective and organic responses to literature and provides students a setting to discuss those responses, helps students develop life literacies by using what is real and important in a student's personal life and culture in order to make sense of civilizations past by uncovering basic human connections extending into the present.  

Earlier I mention that one of these basic human connections to be identified across time and culture is the concept of and connection to faith. It is the importance of relevant in their modern worlds. Any time a teacher can connect the emotions of literature's past players to similar feelings and situations experienced by today's teens, she has gone a long way towards making the relevancy apparent for her students.  

222 This concept of organic learning is also supported by many noted figures in the field of education including Rudolf Steiner (the Waldorf Method), Maria Montessori (Montessori schools), and John Dewey (laboratory schools).
religion in society, in fact, that is probably the most significant way for contemporary students to relate to the people of the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, textbooks used in the high school classroom lean toward an avoidance of significant religious issues. This point is apparent through examination of four representative textbooks under widespread use in high school classrooms. While I recognize that textbooks are not the definitive example to illustrate how a given piece of literature is instructed (many teachers, in fact, supplement their textbook use), I believe an analysis of textbooks is fair in this case for two primary reasons. First, textbooks suggest an approved course of study for literature; in the state of Indiana specifically, textbooks are directly tied to state standards and key elements to be assessed through standardized testing. So, while many teachers may supplement a unit, it is fair to say that the majority begin their instruction with the school adopted, state authorized textbook. Second, the sad reality is that there are very few medievalists teaching at the high school level. For this reason, teachers are far more likely to supplement the textbook in study of Shakespeare, or any area of American literature, (where they have more experience, knowledge, and interest), than they are in the Middle Ages; for most, the textbook provides the only information high school instructors will use in teaching the Middle Ages.223 Now, I don't have any hard and fast statistics to prove these suppositions. My information comes from my own experience teaching in four different English departments, in three different states, with over 30 English colleagues. My current English Department uses texts from the Glencoe

223 Readers will recall that in my first chapter, I make the point that there are fewer and fewer university professors specializing in medieval literature which suggests that there are fewer medieval literature classes being taught to future English teachers.
Literature series; my former departments used texts published by Prentice Hall. *Song of Roland* is represented similarly in each of these texts.

In Glencoe's *Literature: World Literature* text, *Song of Roland* is part of the "Early Europe" unit. In spite of the fact that the text offers "How did Christianity shape medieval civilization?" as one of the guiding areas of emphasis (the textbook calls it a "Big Idea") for the unit, the *Song of Roland* is tied to another guiding issue – "From Myth to Romance" – which explores how literature of the age "celebrates the courageous adventures and chivalric virtues of knights" (865). The educational representation of the poem, then, highlights its literary position as a product of the blending of Roman, Germanic, and Celtic heroic traditions prevalent in France and Western Europe during the High Middle Ages. *Song of Roland* is accurately recognized by Glencoe as a portrayal of events that happened centuries earlier. And, Glencoe acknowledges that because, during this time, "Europe was in the throes of the Crusades," the *Roland* author transforms the Christian Basques who battled Charlemagne's historical army, into Muslims. However, Glencoe regards this as evidence of the poem's epic and heroic qualities rather than as a piece of propaganda used to incite Christians in war against Muslims and any other group antithetical to Christianity. In addition to the presentation of the poem as a product of heroic, epic tradition, the brief excerpt offered (just eight of *Roland*'s 291 stanzas are included), highlights only Roland's initial success in battle, his sounding of the great olifant, and his ultimate, heroic death. Throughout the excerpt, French troops are lauded for their bravery and unity in battle. In spite of the introduction's recognition that the enemy is an army of Muslims, the chosen stanzas are not littered with the anti-Islamic sentiment that pervades the full poem. Only twice, in fact, is it clear that
the enemy is a religious enemy. The first stanza excerpted mentions the "pagans" who "die by hundreds" (1417); the fifth stanza offered includes the line "the Saracens rode out" (1776).

Glencoe's downplay of the religious conflict at the heart of the poem is further evidenced by the questions asked at the chapter's end. The interpretive and evaluative questions direct students towards the elements of characterization that prove Roland a hero, the symbolic qualities of his sword and olifant (the tools of his heroic deeds), and the poetic qualities of the poem itself. One of the final questions asks students, "What insights into medieval culture can you gain from this excerpt from the Song of Roland?" Clearly students are supposed to believe that the poem demonstrates the heroic deeds of brave knights characteristic of the Middle Ages, because that is all the text has given students to believe in the way it has presented Roland.

Glencoe does make some attempt to drive students in the direction of personal connection to their modern lives by asking the questions: "If these events had taken place in modern times, do you think Roland would be celebrated as a hero? Why or why not?" and "Write a character sketch of someone you know who has some of Roland's qualities. Describe the positive and negative aspects of your subject's personality" (885). In terms of the probing questions recommended by Graff, Rosenblatt, and Miller, however, these

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224 This is accomplished through the following questions: "Do you think Roland is a hero because he dies for his king and his country?" "Why do you think Roland rejected Oliver's advice until it was too late?" "What is Roland's last action in life? How does this contribute to his stature as a hero?" "Name three character traits that qualify Roland as an epic hero" (885).

225 This is accomplished through the following questions: "How does Roland's sword, Durendal, function as a symbol?" and "Roland dies from sounding the horn to call for help, not from a wound suffered in battle. What do you think the poet means to imply by this?" (885).

226 This is accomplished through the following question: "Identify two examples of repetition in this poem and comment on their effectiveness" (885).
attempts at generating affective responses from students fall short because they ask students to make inauthentic connections to the literature. From personal experience, I know that students laugh at the first question simply because it is inconceivable for twelfth century battle to take place in modern times. Thanks to media, whether the news or video games, modern students are very informed about military engagements; they know soldiers do not fight with swords or blow great horns to call their comrades. Of course it could be argued that the essence of the question is asking about the heroic qualities of Roland's death and implies that students modernize the events in order to answer the question, but ultimately the question is insignificant to students because it still forces them into answering yet another question about heroes and heroism. The second question is equally as insignificant because, again, its emphasis is on the qualities of Roland (those that make him a hero) and how students see those qualities in people they know. As the text is presented, students are never asked to affectively connect to the story because the story consistently remains an epic tale of heroism presented as common centuries ago.

The Prentice Hall text represents Roland similarly. Placed in the section entitled "Europe in Transition," the medieval literature chapter begins with a quote from Chrétien de Troyes' Perceval to illustrate how "characters in the literature of the Middle Ages" typically vacillate "between faith and doubt" (558). In spite of this insightful initial connection to the religious challenges of the age, the introduction proceeds with an emphasis on the importance of "the quest." And, though Prentice Hall sets the foundation for this quest to be a journey of personal self-discovery that negotiates challenges due to religious obligations, that is not the route it pursues. Instead, Roland becomes a
descendent of the "ancient Germanic tradition" as a piece "meant to be performed to stimulate a warrior's courage before battle" (562). As with the Glencoe text, the thematic emphasis for Roland is immediately on the celebration of heroic deeds.\textsuperscript{227}

As the Glencoe edition, Prentice Hall recognizes that the precise date and authorship of the poem is unknown and also that the poet employs poetic license to change the details of a true historic event. The poet does this, Prentice Hall writes, in order to "transform" and "aggrandize" a historical event for audiences who would appreciate the depiction of heroic deeds common in legends of Charlemagne's army (566). In the poem, Prentice Hall writes, the Basques of the original conflict that took place 300 years earlier, become "Moors – certainly a more contemporary and meaningful foe for both the twelfth-century poet and a public involved in the Crusades to recover the Holy Lands from the Muslims" (567), but this is the only mention of the Crusade context in connection with Roland. Further, throughout the introduction, the terms Muslims and Moors are used interchangeably. The term Saracens is first used as Prentice Hall contextualizes the poem, explaining "the second front against the Saracens was initiated by Charlemagne, who crossed the Pyrenees into Spain" (562). Later, in explanation of the performance elements of the poem's history, Prentice Hall writes that these epic poems "called the populace to war against the Saracen (Muslim) threat" (568). The problem, here, is that the term is used without explanation. And, throughout the excerpted poem, the term, which appears nearly a dozen times in the 53 stanzas offered, remains

\textsuperscript{227} As the most famous piece from the chansons de geste tradition, presenting Roland as a text celebrating heroic deeds is certainly accurate. My point, however, is that in the time, these "heroic deeds" were against enemies of Christianity. By not recognizing the religious context, the textbooks are not accurately representing the literature and are, more importantly, missing an opportunity to encourage affective engagement in students as they read.
unexplained. The implication is that Saracen is a synonym for Muslim. While certainly it was a synonym in the Middle Ages, it is grossly inappropriate and highly prejudicial to offer it as such to modern audiences. Dodging explanation of the term, however, is one of the ways that the Prentice Hall edition, as the Glencoe text, sidesteps the inherent religious conflict at the heart of the story. As Glencoe, Prentice Hall presents *Roland* as, primarily, an example of the heroic deeds and ambitions common in the Middle Ages. While the Prentice Hall excerpt is lengthier, the stanzas chosen are similar to Glencoe in that they highlight feats of battle and the courageous efforts of Roland, and the rest of Charlemagne's army, against the enemy. The interpretive questions Prentice Hall asks at chapter's end are also similar to those proposed by Glencoe in that they focus understanding on the heroic characters and their heroic deeds: Students are asked to consider the battle decisions made by Charlemagne, Roland, Ganelon, Oliver, and Archbishop Turpin.²²⁸

Prentice Hall poses one valuable interpretive question when it asks students to "Imagine telling this story from the Saracen point of view. (a) How would it be different? (b) How would it be the same? (c) What accounts for the similarities and differences?" (579). But, unfortunately, because of the way the story has been presented and contextualized, students have not been afforded the information necessary to effectively evaluate these questions. Additionally, the wording "from the Saracen point of view" is indicative of Prentice Hall's misrepresentation of the term: there would be no Saracen...
point of view; there would be a Muslim point of view, but deeming the opposite point of view *Saracen* is merely a projection of the Christian perspective and does not, ultimately, ask the students to make thoughtful consideration. Still, attempting to place students in the position of the story's enemy could garner responses that encouraged students to recognize valuable similarities between the two groups; and, such a question is a step in the right direction toward effective affective teaching, but, ultimately, the question still does not bring the text forward to the modern age.

Prentice Hall does make one interpretive attempt to encourage contemporary students to make modern connections with the past when it explains that, because the events described took place 300 years before the setting, "historical facts" are distorted. The text asks, "What historical events can you think of that were not accurately depicted in a movie you have seen or a novel you have read?" (579). The problem is, this question separates *Roland* and the Middle Ages from the interpretation by asking students to only consider contemporary depictions. A more affective and holistic approach, which I demonstrate below, encourages students to draw personal connections with the important themes and human elements of the text. When Prentice Hall does attempt such connections, it is done in a manner similar to the Glencoe text by asking students to focus on the "system of values that is described in the poem" in terms of "what motivates Roland and his companions" to behave heroically (589). So, as the Glencoe representation, Prentice Hall's *Roland* emphasizes heroism beyond all other elements to be gleaned from the epic.

By sidestepping the religious conflict in the poem, these textbooks present no opportunity for students to make the more substantial and affective connections to the
human drives at the heart of war. Students are not allowed to see how differences in perspective and in culture divided humanity in the past in the same ways they do today. Presenting *Roland* as simply a tale of heroism misses the opportunity to demonstrate how the people of the past were similar to those of today. Had Glencoe and Prentice Hall tackled the religious elements head on, as I illustrate below, students could have been asked significant questions that allowed them to draw connections between the *motivations* of warriors of the past and those of our own soldiers; students could examine how the collective consciousness of the Middle Ages drove nations to battle for reasons similar to those that lead Americans to enter war. In examining literature, looking at the characteristics of a character does little more than explore that character within his own tale and time; examining the *motivations* of a character, however, pulls that character from the text and from the time period by encouraging students to relate to him on an affective – not just scholarly – level.229

It is actually because of its ineffective representation in two textbooks I have been assigned to use in my own classrooms, that I chose to work with *Song of Roland* for this dissertation. Simply, I was shocked that textbooks so easily stripped the poem of the elements that make it a true product and representation of the Middle Ages and medieval people. Once a textbook truncates a work so severely, and prescribes a "Big Idea" to its interpretation, it loses any authenticity to the age. If it is no longer authentic in its own age, we cannot expect students to find its value in ours. Similarly, I also chose to work with "The Prioress's Tale" for this project because of its representation in high school textbooks with which I was familiar. But, unlike *Song of Roland*, "The Prioress's Tale"

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229 This is similar to the distinction Miller makes between academic and critical literacies.
isn't misrepresented by textbook publishers; instead, it is completely avoided.\textsuperscript{230} Both Prentice Hall and Glencoe include \textit{The Canterbury Tales} in their sections devoted to Early British Literature, but neither chooses to include "The Prioress's Tale," which, as I mentioned in my first two chapters, was the most widely distributed of Chaucer's tales during the Middle Ages.

\textit{Glencoe's Literature Reader's Choice: British Literature}, accurately places \textit{The Canterbury Tales} in the section entitled "The Anglo-Saxon Period and the Middle Ages." The introduction to the Middle Ages portion, however, focuses only on "War and Plague" (11), highlighting the Hundred Years' War and the Black Death as the defining factors during this "dark time in British history" (11). As the Glencoe World Literature text discussed above, the British Literature text presents units through three "Big Ideas." \textit{The Canterbury Tales} is, appropriately, addressed through "Big Idea: The Power of Faith."\textsuperscript{231} To build context, Glencoe informs students that the surest way to "express religious devotion" during the age was to embark upon pilgrimage to visit holy shrines and worship sacred relics (14). Of the most important of these destinations, Glencoe writes, was Canterbury Cathedral: "The pilgrims described in Chaucer's \textit{Canterbury Tales} are journeying to this holy site to seek blessings from the martyred archbishop" (14).

Glencoe further offers some biographical information about Chaucer and explains that the \textit{Tales} offers an example of a frame story. The text includes an excerpt from "The General Prologue," as well as excerpts from the tales of the Pardoner and the Wife of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{230} In my first chapter, I illustrate that, while "The Prioress's Tale" was the most widely transmitted tale in the Middle Ages, its transmission to modern audiences is limited because high school textbooks favor the less controversial tales of \textit{The Canterbury Tales}.
\item \textsuperscript{231} The other two "Big Ideas" offered in this section are "The Epic Warrior," related exclusively through Anglo Saxon literature and "The World of Romance," characterized by stories of Arthurian Legend.
\end{itemize}
Bath. Before students begin reading, Glencoe advises to "note the various ways in which the pilgrims interpret and act upon the requirements of their religious faith" (93), but because the introduction has provided no specific context to supplement student understanding of faith and religious orders during the age, this is an impossible pursuit for students to attempt with any sort of authenticity.

Though the Prioress's tale is excluded from Glencoe's offerings, her profile remains in "The General Prologue." Glencoe highlights two sections of her description, asking students to comment on the ways in which the Prioress conforms to student conceptions "of a high-ranking member of the church" and also, their opinions of "the Prioress's 'charity' toward animals" (98). These, I believe, are both constructive questions to ask of students to help guide them toward a valuable understanding of the Prioress. The problem is that a full understanding of the Prioress, as presented in the Prologue, cannot be reached independent of the tale she tells. It is impossible to recognize the inherent irony in the charity she extends toward animals without simultaneously studying the lack of charity extended toward fellow humans in her story. Further, the question regarding whether or not her actions and manners are befitting a member of the church cannot be appropriately or accurately addressed unless students are provided information regarding the Benedictine Rules that her character breaks; the textbook does not offer this information in its contextualization of the Tales.

Typical of textbooks, at the end of "The General Prologue," Glencoe poses questions intended to check for understanding and to further develop student thinking. Here, Glencoe asks questions regarding the narrative point of view and character details of the speaker. Further, Glencoe asks literal questions directing students to categorize the
pilgrims, based upon the roles they would serve in their society, and to where and for what reason they are traveling (115). In encouraging students to relate to the text, Glencoe asks the following questions: "Which characters remind you in some way of people you know?" and "How do people today amuse themselves on trips?" (115). Again, as with textbook questions posed through representation of *Song of Roland*, these questions only pretend to lead students to an affective union with the text because, inherently, they are not questions specific to the text. They sidestep the text in favor of asking students to respond only in terms of modern day experiences. Ultimately students need no understanding of the literature to be able to answer questions such as these. They are not probing; they do not require depth of thought; and, most significantly, they do not encourage students to realize authentic connections between the way humans of today and those of the past negotiate their places in the world and in their communities. Again, I firmly believe authentic connections are missed because of the tales that are excerpted and the context that is offered. Though Glencoe explains the pilgrims are on a spiritual journey, it does not contextualize the *Tales* in a way that makes medieval religious conflict apparent; additionally, Glencoe sidesteps needing to address religious conflict by avoiding tales that would bring, to the forefront, Christian adversity with other religious groups of the Middle Ages.

*Prentice Hall's Literature: Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes: The British Tradition* similarly sidesteps the need to address religious conflict by offering just an excerpt of "The General Prologue" as well as "The Nun's Priest's Tale"232 from *The

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232 The Nun's Priest, though a figure of the church, tells not a religious story but rather the story of the prideful rooster, Chanticleer, and the sly fox who lures him to his death. Additionally, because
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*Canterbury Tales*. The *Tales* excerpt is offered in the section entitled "From Legend to History: The Old English and Medieval Periods." This section presents a fairly lengthy introduction to the time period. Half of the introduction is devoted to events leading up to the Norman Conquest; the rest is divided amongst the feudal structure, the Magna Carta, the Wars of the Roses, and the printing press. Christianity, as an element of medieval significance, is relegated to an inset map showing the spread of Christianity from the late 5th century to the mid 11th century (5). The brief introduction specific to *The Canterbury Tales* contextualizes the importance of pilgrimages to medieval Christianity by defining them as "long trips to holy places" embarked upon by travelers who sought "divine assistance, such as a miraculous cure, or to give thanks for that already received. Others came to do penance or simply to show devotion" (86), but beyond this, there is no explanation of medieval Christian faith or the various roles in church hierarchy.

Unlike the presentation of the Prologue in the Glencoe text, Prentice Hall does not footnote questions for students throughout the reading. Footnotes, in general, are kept to a minimum throughout, and the only interpretive questions asked of students during the reading are called "Critical Viewing" questions. For these queries, Prentice Hall provides a contemporary artist's rendering of individual figures (specifically featured are the Yeoman, the Monk, the Cleric, the Wife of Bath, and the Pardoner) and asks students "what can you infer from this picture about [the character illustrated]." The questions at the end of the Prologue are primarily literal (e.g. "Where does the Prologue take place?")

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one of the most valuable aspects in reading *The Canterbury Tales* is in drawing connections between the characters and the stories they tell, the Prentice Hall editorial board missed a huge opportunity by providing one of the few tales told by a figure whom Chaucer chooses not to describe significantly with his Prologue.
"What entertainment does the host propose for the journey?" etc.). Those that ask
students to infer or to draw conclusions focus exclusively on Chaucer's "opinion" or
perceptions of the pilgrims (109). The problem, of course, with these inference questions
is that Prentice Hall nowhere explains that the "Chaucer" on the journey is a
characterized version of the author, instead leading students to believe – through the
wording of the questions – that this is the true Chaucer traveling with real figures on an
authentic pilgrimage.

As Glencoe, Prentice Hall does make attempts to connect the literature to the
students' lives by asking the following questions: "Think about a pilgrimage you've taken
or would like to take. Briefly describe your fellow ‘pilgrims'" (87); "Which pilgrim
would you most like to meet? Why?" (109); and "What modern character types can you
match up with the characters in the Prologue?" (109). But also as with the Glencoe text,
questions such as these only pretend to engage modern students with the medieval period.
In actuality, they do not provide students the opportunity to make valuable connections
with past societies because they avoid representation and discussion of true human issues
that matter across generations and cultures.

If high schools were populated with teachers holding advanced degrees in their
subject areas, or with instructors who were not overworked and had the time to research
supplemental material for each unit taught, textbook (mis)representations of material
would not be as significant of an issue. In actuality, the presentation of medieval
literature by textbook publishers, more often than not, is indicative of the type of
instruction students receive in the subject. As I mentioned above, few secondary teachers
have any specialization in medieval literature. Secondary teachers are not expected to
carry specialization in any one field, but rather to have a bit of knowledge in all areas; this is compounded by the fact that, in many states, only a limited number of high school teachers have advanced degrees in English. My remarks are not intended to insult my hardworking colleagues in secondary education. But the simple truth is, we see anywhere from 150 to 200 students on a daily basis. When time allows, we conduct outside research to supplement the information provided by textbooks. But in practicality, we do not have the Education School luxury of spending weeks developing a unit plan. This is why, out of necessity, the majority of secondary school educators rely heavily on the instructional information supplied by textbooks, and why, ultimately, the most common textbooks used in high school classrooms are doing students a disservice.

I would love to insist upon doing away with textbooks, but I'm in the trenches daily, so to speak, and I know that for the majority of my colleagues, that is simply not an option. I do, however, believe that teachers and textbook publishers need to be convinced that there is a better way to teach our students. As I champion above, that better way can be found through an affective and holistic approach that encourages students to understand conflicts of past cultures by drawing connections with conflicts in their own modern realities. In dealing with medieval literature and even more specifically with the popularly studied texts Song of Roland and The Canterbury Tales, these connections can be found through an emphasis in, not an avoidance of, the religious conflicts of the age that gave birth to these texts.

Though such a text does not exist for an audience of secondary teachers, William Kibler and Leslie Morgan's Approaches to Teaching the Song of Roland, offers over thirty articles exploring methods for Roland instruction at the undergraduate level. These
articles range in offering advice on the best translations and multi-media resources, to the most necessary historical contexts and critical approaches to pursue. Among these pieces is Barbara Stevenson's "The Postcolonial Classroom: Teaching the Song of Roland and 'Saracen' Literature." Fundamentally Stevenson makes the point that our students are products of a postcolonial world and that we need to embrace knowledge of cultural othering in our classrooms and through our teaching; and, while in earlier chapters I worked to move past this contention by arguing for a movement away from postcolonial analysis in order to pursue interpretations of similarity rather than difference, Stevenson begins her essay by making an assertion with which I wholeheartedly agree. Stevenson asserts: "In introductory courses students' knowledge of medieval literature may be limited to King Arthur's pulling the sword from the stone. Thus the teacher must first provide historical context for the complex Christian-Muslim relations of the Middle Ages" (90). Stevenson recommends building student knowledge through discussion of differences between Christianity and Islam, as well as by reading primary documents of the age (e.g. chronicles, speeches, etc.). Underpinning a reading of Song of Roland with the multifarious layers defining Middle Ages Christian-Muslim interaction establishes insights for students that reach well beyond the basic heroic elements celebrated by the text. Adequate religious contextualization inspires valuable conversations such as the ways in which both religions denounce one another in the text (Stevenson 91); it even gives substance to the otherwise general questions asked by the Glencoe text. When students have adequate background information, suddenly questions such as "What insights into medieval culture can you gain from this excerpt?" become more valuable. In particular, it validates Prentice Hall's assignment to students to "Imagine telling this story
from the [opposite] point of view" (579). Further, argues Stevenson, extensive religious contextualization prior to reading *Roland* prepares students to discuss elements of "divine intervention" (95) in the poem, as well as the ways in which Muslims and Christians equally viewed one another's worship practices as "pagan idolatry" (90). Pushing Stevenson's approach beyond postcolonial analysis only makes each of these interpretive moments more significant because it allows students to forge connections between medieval culture and their own, thereby encouraging affective engagement with the text.

As evidenced above in my presentation of the work of Morrell, Graff, Miller, and Rosenblatt, encouraging engagement in the classroom is as simple as providing students opportunities to recognize similarities with the past by building affective connections to characters and themes in literature. For this reason, I am a firm believer in the importance of discussion-based literary instruction. One of the current educational buzzwords is "authenticity." Education experts contend that the goal of teaching should be to create "authentic" learning environments where students engage in activities "authentic" in the field. In English, authenticity is found in reading literature, personally (affectively) engaging with it, bringing our thoughts to a small group of individuals who have also read and engaged with the same text (but in a different way because of their different experiences), and then leaving that transaction having understood our positions better, having made new connections, or having had our ideas challenged to the point that we revisit the text again to understand what our peers have shared. This is how English is taught at the graduate level; this is how the best English classes are taught at the undergraduate level, which is why the textbook presentation of units and lessons to high school students is so misguided. As my critique of textbooks above indicates, publishers
appear to advocate that students experience literature independently, without the benefit of a learning community, working through a string of questions only loosely related to the authentic text. And, while one might argue that textbook offerings could be discussed in large group formats, the questions themselves are wholly ineffective at inspiring conversation because they do not allow students to personally engage with significant issues. If I have learned one thing in twelve years teaching at the secondary level, it is that high school students are perhaps the most opinionated age group in America. They are more than willing to discuss, as long as they are asked the right questions. They are also very egocentric, so those "right" questions need to relate to their lives.

Because I teach in a lab school, my teaching is constantly on display. I have no fewer than three observers in my room on a daily basis. These visitors, who range from preservice teachers to administrators from other schools, consistently express their amazement in the level of discussion taking place; they are shocked that I am able to lead a discussion, with 9th graders, for an entire 55 minute class period. Some of my colleagues have expressed that they would love to run their classrooms through seminar, but they believe it would be too much work, so they fall back on the Q and A curriculum found in textbooks. The truth is, the seminar format requires far less work than making sense of modern textbooks. And, in actuality, the best discussions lead themselves. If a teacher completes the necessary preparatory work and poses the right questions, the students will do most of the work. And that's as it should be.

As I mentioned above, preparation is key in creating a successful environment that promotes student engagement in learning. For this reason, the first lesson of any unit is the most important. The first lesson is a teacher's only chance to hook the students and
to convince them that the literature to be studied – regardless of when it was written – is relevant to their lives. In my experience, this is most effectively accomplished by avoiding any mention of the specific literature and time period to be studied. Rather, I enter units by posing questions, based upon themes in the stories, to which all students can respond regardless of their levels of knowledge or academic successes. These questions ask for students to share their opinions and generally carry some degree of shock value in order to elicit responses from the whole group. For example, I begin study of *Song of Roland* by asking students to agree or disagree with the following statement: "It is the duty of a soldier to kill his enemy; morals have no place on the battlefield." I always give them a few minutes to write explanations for their agreement or disagreement before we enter discussion. These few minutes, particularly at the beginning of a unit, are vital in ensuring that the ensuing seminar is a discussion rather than an argument because students are given a chance to work through their immediate emotional responses and can begin to reflect on why they feel as they do. (Students – and adults – tend to immediately know whether or not they agree with a concept; it takes a bit of time, however, to appreciate the reason for that response.) From this point I take student volunteers to share their responses; some students will read written comments from their papers, others will talk through their ideas; both are effective ways for students to find their way into the conversation. I continue taking volunteers until the discussion "takes." What I mean by this is at some point a student will make a statement that raises a question, or inspires a comment from someone in the class. It might take two minutes for this to happen, it might take ten minutes, but the point is, it always happens and from that point the discussion takes off and, more importantly, the students are hooked.
Rarely on the first day do I introduce the text itself because the students are too engaged in the conversation. In fact, more often than not, the students remain after the class period ends to continue discussing. No matter how enthusiastic students are at the end of the period, however, experience has taught me never to try and pick up the discussion again the next day. That moment is gone; it is best to build on the energy from the previous day and move on to something new. A successful approach is to introduce the text by sharing an excerpt that ties to the discussion point of the previous day. For example, in teaching *Roland*, on the second day I hand out copies of stanzas 104 – 105 (Chernuble's death at the hand of Roland) and ask students to read the excerpt two times through to themselves. (It is important to note that, at this point, I still have not given students the full text of what they will be asked to read. It is vital to refrain from giving them the full reading assignment until they are ready for it; they are not ready for it until they are already engaged in the story. Giving a student a text too soon guarantees that they will focus only on the length, the age, the language . . . anything that will make them want to run from it.) After students read the selection, I ask them to share their initial thoughts with a partner. Similar to day one when I asked them to jot down their initial ideas, this partner-share gives them the opportunity to coherently formulate their ideas before we enter the large group discussion. In this specific scene from *Roland*, Roland not only kills his enemy, but also makes a plea to God. Because of the mix of a death in battle and a prayer, invariably when we enter large group discussion over the excerpt, students reference comments made the previous day regarding conflicts between personal morality and a soldier's duty. This second day, then, is spent fully in discussion of this one excerpt.
By day three, the students are generally excited to approach the text in full, but on the rare occasion I feel they aren't ready, I simply pull another excerpt and repeat the process of day two. Most important is not to rush this introductory process; students cannot be pushed into a text before they are affectively engaged. I find that engagement in *Roland* happens much more quickly now than it did at the beginning of my career. I attribute this to the vast familiarity students have with the concept of war; many, in fact, have older siblings stationed in the Middle East. In teaching the text, I use this to my advantage. I mentioned above that current textbooks do not adequately contextualize the term "Saracen." When we come across the term in class, I pause discussion to ask students if they know any terms Americans have used for enemies. After students share derogatory names – in addition to those names for Middle Easterners, students generally share terms applied to the Japanese and the Vietnamese, clearly drawing upon stories heard from family regarding wartime enemies – we discuss the nature of dehumanizing enemies by prescribing identities that turn our adversaries into monsters. From this point, students are eager to understand religious differences of the age, which I point out to them as we read and which, midway through the unit, they are able to identify themselves.

Some might argue that this approach does not allow for instruction in specific literary elements (like the heroic epic qualities that textbooks deem so important). In truth, it provides greater opportunity for instruction of literary elements because I am able to "slip in" such points through discussion, and students learn because they are actively engaged in the seminar. For example, Glencoe's question, "How does Roland's sword, Durendal, function as a symbol?" is far more interesting for students once they have
already come to appreciate Roland as a human struggling between his duty and his morality.

I cannot impress enough how important it is to make literature – especially medieval literature – significant in the lives of teens in order for them to be willing to read it, much less learn from it. As Graff mentions and as Rosenblatt suggests, literature teachers are predisposed to caring about the (majority of) literature we read; the same is true of college English majors. But for many students, the process of reading literature is a dreaded chore. Similar to the Roland work completed by Kibler and Morgan, in 1980, the Modern Language Association published its first volume in its popular Approaches to Teaching Masterpieces of World Literature series. The focus of this volume, directed toward professors of undergraduate students, is teaching Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales. Editor Florence H. Ridley begins the volume with a personal teaching anecdote: "At the beginning of every course on The Canterbury Tales, some undergraduate is sure to ask (even if silently), ‘What has Chaucer to do with me?’ Why indeed should we continue to teach the works of a poet who has been dead for half a millennium? Why in the age of jet travel be concerned with fourteenth-century riders on the road to Canterbury?" (xi). Ridley's experience is true of high school teachers and their students as well. The majority of students have a very difficult time connecting with and caring about the literature and people of years ago. Ridley writes that literature teachers bear the burden of convincing students that Chaucer's poetry "says something about human behavior true then, true now" (xiv). The collection she presents, then, is her attempt to demonstrate the ways various university professors – two thirds of whom are Chaucerian scholars – successfully accomplish this task. Ten of the twelve essays Ridley offers advise how to
effectively teach the poem to English majors; but, two essays examine how to teach the
poem as part of English literature survey courses for non-majors. Here, I will focus on
these two essays because the methods are more apropos to standard high school students.

In "Teaching Chaucer in a Historical Survey of British Literature," Michael D.
West recognizes that all college instructors are not experts in all areas of literature that
they are called upon to teach. For areas of non-specialty, many rely upon the heavily
annotated sources, significant introductions, and appropriate contextualization provided
by course texts. Texts such as the *Norton Anthology*, however, are luxuries not afforded
to high school teachers. West makes the point that Chaucer's works cannot be "presented
as embodying medieval culture unless that culture is also illustrated" through valuable
contextual information (111), which ultimately allows students the opportunity to
scrutinize the pilgrims (112). Scrutinizing the pilgrims, not taking them for face value,
brings to light Chaucer's "satire on religious themes" (113). For West, the interpretive
emphasis of the text can never be separated from the culture that produced the text.

Similarly, in "A New Route Down Pilgrims' Way: Teaching Chaucer to
Nonmajors," Stephen R. Portch agrees that culture and text cannot be separated. Further,
Portch emphasizes the value of discussion in helping students to understand and relate to
literature. Portch's argument is that teachers will never have a difficult time engaging
students already predisposed to literary appreciation, so they must concentrate on those
students for whom literary appreciation does not come easily. Critical reading, leading to
class discussion, creates ownership by building authentic understanding of the literature
studied (117). Because, writes Portch, "Chaucer wrote with exceptional vitality, much of
his accessibility to students depends on how much of his vitality a teacher can bring to
the classroom" (117). Portch identifies fostering an understanding of medieval religious influences as fundamental to building the connection between literature and culture that is so vital to engaging students.

Though presently I do not teach "The Prioress's Tale" as part of my curriculum, in the past I have worked through the piece in a method similar to my approach with *Song of Roland*. An effective statement I have used to begin "Prioress" study is "People should 'stick to their own' and religions should not intermingle." On the second day I offer lines 106 – 126, arguably the most horrific of the tale, which depict the Jews killing the Christian boy. Beginning with these lines forces the Jews to become enemies for modern students, just as they would have been for medieval Christian audiences. Then, once students have worked through their shock in discussion, I explain the history of the blood libel legend and they begin to understand that stories such as "The Prioress's Tale" were myth and not reality. With this understanding, as we read the full text, from beginning to end, students are able to identify how Chaucer builds to the final, vituperative characterization of medieval Jews and, further, what that characterization meant for medieval audiences. From this point, discussion is pushed beyond the text to examine portraits of Jews through World War II and then those pieces of propaganda are related to modern war propaganda (e.g. post-9/11 political cartoons, poetry, articles, short stories, etc. that demonize *all* Muslims, collectively portraying them as terrorists) in order to illustrate the similar ways societies past and present create their monsters.

To this point, I have established the benefits of affective and holistic pedagogical approaches in the classroom, in particular in regard to teaching "The Prioress's Tale" and *Song of Roland*. I would like to conclude by explaining how these approaches could
make literature dealing with religious conflict more valuable (i.e. more affective) for our contemporary students and ultimately, argue for the importance of medieval literature in teaching modern students about the effects, of religious conflict, on culture. As educators, we find ourselves in an interesting and convenient historical moment, particularly in regard to teaching students about societies engaged in wars with cultures whose religious and political compositions differ from those of the West. The vast majority of our students have never lived in a period when the United States was not, in some way, at war with the Middle East; and many of our students have never known anything other than a post-9/11 world. For these reasons, our students are virtually predisposed to appreciation of and association with literature depicting civilizations suffering the effects of wars waged in the name of religion, no matter how distant those civilizations might be. Tapping into this aspect of contemporary student realities is a way to help them build union with and understanding for dueling religious groups, particularly those of the Middle Ages. While certainly I recognize that U.S. involvement in the Middle East incorporates layers beyond religious conflict, the fact remains that the perception of the relationship between the U.S. and the Middle East is that we occupy fundamentally divergent world philosophies. This presumption of divergent philosophies, then, leads to the creation of the Middle Eastern, or terrorist, monster by the media in our contemporary post-9/11 culture. Modern media is akin to the literature of the past in both the creation and representation of society's fears. Because of this, American culture's collective perception of the terrorist is strikingly similar to the medieval Christian creation and representation of the Jew and the Saracen. Discussed at length in my previous three chapters, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's first and second thesis are, respectively, "The Monster's
Body Is a Cultural Body" and "The Monster Always Escapes" (4 – 5). What he means, of course, is that monsters are cultural necessities; the projected image of these monsters will shift (escape) as society shifts, but the monster will always exist because society needs it to exist – it is part of the body of culture. The terrorist monster is a necessity for our post-9/11, American culture; because it is a place for the U.S. to project its own repressed insecurities of transnational political involvement. Just as medieval Christians needed the created Jewish and Muslim monsters to carry the insecurities of their own religious faith and practice, modern Americans need the crafted terrorist to carry our insecurities. If teachers of medieval literature were to focus on stories, like *Song of Roland* and "The Prioress's Tale," that illustrate religious nations in conflict, these connections between then and now could be made and students would understand and appreciate the motivations of medieval people in creating and defining their cultural enemies. Further, because Cohen demonstrates that a fear of the monster is really a fear of the self, this affective instruction of medieval text would allow students to gain a deeper understanding of how communities collectively respond to fear by engendering monsters to satisfy the projections of their cultural anxieties.

Cohen believes monsters will always exist; and I agree with him. For this reason, prejudice and stereotypes will always exist; but if we can understand the drives that lead to the creation of those perceptions, and if we can accept that those drives start within ourselves, we will have come a long way toward limiting the damage such perceptions can do. In my second chapter I write, "It is never the duty of modern eras to judge, morally, actions of the past. All we can do is to try to understand the drive to commit such actions to have a hope that they don't happen again." Ultimately there are moral
implications to teaching textual representations of religious conflict in the Middle Ages and teaching conflict in any age. These moral implications are directly tied to the modern educator's duty, which is not to prepare students for careers or to guarantee they are as standard as all other students in America, but rather, to instill in them the recognition that they are made up of what came before and what will come after and, further, to inspire in them the desire to appreciate the full spectrum of humanity.
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