

THE HUNT IN ROMANCE AND THE HUNT AS ROMANCE

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Jacqueline Stuhmiller

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Jacqueline Stuhmiller, Ph. D.

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This dissertation examines the English and French late medieval hunting manuals, in particular Gaston Phébus' Livre de chasse and Edward of Norwich's Master of Game. It explores their relationships with various literary and nonliterary texts, as well as their roles in the late medieval imagination, aristocratic self-image, and social economy. The medieval aristocracy used hunting as a way to imitate the heroes of chivalric romance, whose main pastimes were courtly love, arms, and the chase. It argues that manuals were, despite appearances, works of popular and imagination-stimulating literature into which moral or practical instruction was incorporated, rather than purely didactic texts.

The first three chapters compare the manuals' content, style, authorial intent, and reader reception with those of the chivalric romances. Both genres are concerned with the interlaced adventures of superlative but generic characters. Furthermore, both genres are popular, insofar as they are written for profit and accessible to sophisticated and unsophisticated readers alike.

The following four chapters examine the relationships between hunting, love, and military practices and ethics, as well as those between their respective didactic literatures. Hunters, dogs, and animals occupied a sort of interspecific social hierarchy, and the more noble individuals were expected to adhere to a code of behavior similar to the chivalric code. Military and amatory manuals, like hunting manuals, are texts that encourage imagination and role-playing and utilize the

characters and narratives of chivalric romance. The hunting manual is a kind of arms manual that explains how to make war against animals; but it is also a sort of anti-love manual that teaches the hunter how to avoid feminine wiles.

The final chapter documents a wide-ranging literary motif (“the generic literary hunt”) that informs the structure and content of a large number of medieval works, from the most primitive hunting manuals to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

The concluding chapter explores the evolution and popularity of the English printed hunting manuals from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. The new manuals appealed to the social aspirations of an up-and-coming urban bourgeoisie, even as the European forests and their animals were disappearing.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The author received B. A.s in Integrative Biology and English Literature from the University of California at Berkeley and an M. A. in English Literature from Cornell University. She is a vegetarian, once worked in an animal research facility, and has never hunted.

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