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From Marvels of Nature to Inmates of Asylums: Imaginations of Natural Folly

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Abstract: In medieval and Renaissance times European courts kept fools, who were placed into one of two categories: artificial fools (or jesters) and natural fools. The present study examines natural fools. Extant studies generally treat natural fools as both mentally and physically ill and/or disabled. This study contributes to the discussion of natural folly by examining two sources about the Ernestinian Saxon court fool Claus Narr. According to the documents natural fools were seen as permanently mentally changed people and classified as so-called "wonder men." Therefore they were kept and collected at courts. When permanent mental differences and psychiatric disease were maligned at the beginning of the 18th century, however, the natural fool became an object of education and medicine. This paper argues that the changing meaning of the natural fool nevertheless retained components of its initial medieval conception.

Introduction

In 1563 Archduke Ferdinand of Austria took over the castle of Ambras near Innsbruck (Austria) in order to live there with his commoner wife. He rebuilt the castle in a manner that allowed him to install his Chamber of Arts and Curiosities. When Johann Wolfgang von Goethe visited the castle more than two hundred years later he still believed to have seen the most exquisite examples of art and curiosities (Scheicher, 1977). Archduke Ferdinand and other noble and civil collectors of the 16th century were simply interested in anything or anyone potentially classifiable as a wonder. The relics that were believed to be wonder-working were, therefore, the nucleus of the Archduke's collection. He later gathered other marvelous objects such as sharks' teeth, whales' ribs, precious stones, curiously shaped antlers, weapons, artificial machines and rare animals under the assumption that everything that was rare or even unique in the world should be regarded as a wonder of nature. The rarity of each item subsequently increased the value of the wonder.

Even human beings were collected when their physical or mental state did not fit the norms of men. According to an inventory in 1621, the portrait gallery of Ambras showed pictures of people who were perceived as giants, dwarfs, or so-called hirsute men. The portraits of these marvelous men were placed beside the portraits of the duke, his family and other royal relatives thereby equating them with the sovereign and his family. In doing so, the monarch put himself on the stage of a marvelous and unique world. This singular collection reflected the uniqueness of the Emperor. Archduke Ferdinand was not the only one who possessed such a chamber of wonders.

The Triumph of Maximilian I. and the Fools

Besides these Chambers of Arts and Curiosities, various sovereigns of renaissance Europe used their marvelous possessions in order to demonstrate their power and uniqueness. One such example is the well-known Triumph of Maximilian I (1459-1519), the Large Triumphal Carriage. It presents a woodcarving of a parade of the Habsburgian emperor's Maximilian I. court. These woodcarvings were produced according to the instructions of Maximilian himself between 1512 and 1519, from which two versions have been handed down. Both of them show the royal household with its hunters, cobblers and tailors, episodes of Maximilian's life, and his treasures. The latter are divided into the "religious treasure" (andachtschatz), which consists of relics, and the so-called "treasure of use" (gebrauchsschatz), which contains jewels and other secular riches (Schestag, 1883). However, self-representation of the emperor was not restricted to treasures or members of the household.

The parade also includes two carts of fools. According to the rhymed explanation, the first cart is for the jesters (Schalcksnarren) and the second one for the natural fools (natürlich Narren). It is verifiable that fools have been kept at European courts since the 12th century. However, the origins of such fools are uncertain. They were held as entertainers and were distinguished, as in the Triumph of Maximilian I, which presented artificial fools—or jesters, and natural fools. The parade documents the categorization of these two types of fools in the carving of Kunz von der Rosen, a well-known artificial fool at the Maximilian court, who rides in front of the first coach, and the carving of a child (a natural fool) who rides in front of the second coach.

The first coach bears all medieval symbols of folly: the big ear of a donkey with a bell as a sign for "acedia" (laziness) or "stupidiitas" (Stupidity) and the ape as a symbol for "inconstancia" (uneasiness). In addition, the cart is dressed in special gear: the jesters' crowns and the jesters' crowns, the common imagination of folly during medieval and renaissance times, where they served as paid merry-makers. The purpose of the jester was to make the court laugh, using a whole range of comic performances such as mimic actions and obscene gestures. Through their actions and display they aimed to amuse the Emperor with disport. They were both laughed at and laughed with, for their foolishness was consistent with the jester's role. Natural fools also served to amuse the court, but in contrast to the jesters, they were only laughed at and not with, according to the following poem that was originally intended to be written on the banner above the natural fools' cart: "Another group is drawing near Riding, they're the next ones to appear. These are the fools of the natural sort, Very well known in the Emperor's court. They have often seemed so daft that at them one just had to laugh." (Midelfort, 1999, p. 239)^[1]

The Natural Fool

But who were these natural fools whom nobody seems to know today? Were they really different in their appearance, as Midelfort, like others, observes that, "the face of a couple of these fools betray serious mental deficiency" (Midelfort, 1999, p. 239)? The author explains further: "At court, too, the 'fool' might be not just the jester or the mentally retarded. In the broadest sense, the word and the idea included also physically impaired or deformed persons..." (Midelfort, 1999, p. 253) Others speak of irreparable physical and mental defects (Mezger, 1981). Natural fools were even regarded as anatomically ill-bred (Amelunxen, 1991) or mentally abnormal, ament, insane, idiotic (Langenbach-Flore, 1994). Their deviation is often seen both as mental and physical. From my perspective, conclusions on the cognitive ability, drawn from images like the one of the natural fools in the Large Triumphal Carriage, bear no evidence. It seems more useful to survey the medieval and renaissance imaginations referring to the natural fool. The arrangement of the natural fools in the wood engraving is very informative. The cart is a rural carriage made of wood and decorated with branches and bushes. Even the heads of the fools bear small twigs. The natural fools bear less symbols of folly than the jesters. Few bells and donkeys' ears adorn the other cart. The bushes symbolize folly instead of vices, as the adjective, "natural," characterizes these fools.

In order to better explain natural folly, one must first consider the medieval and renaissance understanding of nature. Nature stood for the power of creation that had its influence in- and outside of men (Grüb Müller, 1999). Nature determined the characteristics of human beings, animals and objects: "The folly of natural fools was given by nature; it was inborn. This folly itself was perceived as a medical difference. According to Konrad von Meegenberg's (1309-1374) explanation, the natural fool possesses a cognitive infirmity. The author gave this explanation in the middle of the 14th century in one of the best-known encyclopedias in German. The so-called Book of Nature (Buch der Natur), in which this explanation was given, was written in the tradition of the medieval natural philosopher Thomas of Cantimpré. It contains "all kinds of natural history, commonplace and marvelous, together with the general Augustinian message that everything in creation was wonderful." (Daston and Park 1998, p. 41) When Konrad von Meegenberg stresses that natural fools are congenitally insane - "[g]eprechen habent an der sêl werken" — (Konrad von Meegenberg, 1861, p. 488), he argues that their cognitive difference characterizes the natural fool. The medieval High German word "geprechen," however, does not refer to illness or malady but to need or want. Therefore, the natural fool in his understanding is neither mentally ill nor to be treated medically.

The conception of psychiatric disease as a temporary status of mental disorder is discussed elsewhere in the Book of Nature (Bernuth, 2004). In addition, it is noteworthy that neither Konrad von Meegenberg nor other medieval and renaissance sources understand natural folly as a physical difference. Konrad von Meegenberg classifies natural fools as "wonder men" — "[wundermenschen]" (Konrad von Meegenberg, 1861, p. 488). Wonders may be differentiated into two different groups according to antique and medieval sources: They are divided into the category of the monstrous individuals and the wonderful species. "Both continued to qualify as wonders because of their rarity, but they differed because of their rarer nature. The latter was a permanent and the former a (rare and exotic) feature of the physical world, generated by natural causes, while the former was a unique, supernatural, and usually ephemeral creation, directly dependent on the will of God." (Daston and Park 1998, p. 49) Natural fools belonged, according to Konrad von Meegenberg, to the class of the monstrous individuals, as did monstrous births. Whereas wonderful species were often located on the borders of the world, monstrous individuals had no particular place. Although the species were only seldom within reach, they were always perceived as a "regular anomaly, possessed of a stable form and properties, it expressed rather than violated the created order of nature, enhancing the beauty and diversity of the world." (Daston and Park 1998, p. 50) They were part of the Chambers of Arts and Curiosities because of their rarity. Equally individual anomalies such as monstrous births, double rainbows, blood rains, or comets were rare and also exhibited in collections.

However, in contrast to the wonderful species, the singularity of monstrous individuals was perceived as an isolated and uncontrollable event. Following the Greco-Roman and biblical tradition, in late medieval and renaissance times monstrous individuals were interpreted as divine messages (Daston and Park, 1998). They were understood as prodigies that foretold the future and presaged mainly terrible events. They were, therefore, used as divine messengers in order to warn mankind. From the beginning of the 16th century, wonders became fashionable all over Europe. Chambers of Arts and Curiosities were founded like the above-mentioned Habsburgian collection of Archduke Ferdinand. The collectors reflected the fascination in everything that was marvelous, exotic, strange and above all anomalous. Even the natural fool was regarded as a representation of a marvel, despite his or her classification, according to Konrad von Meegenberg, as a monstrous individual. This perception can be studied in one of the best-known German natural fools: Claus Narr.

Claus Narr as a Natural Fool

Account books of the Saxon court indicate the existence of a court fool named Claus Narr at the Ernestinian Saxon court in the 15th and 16th century. Claus Narr was first mentioned in 1461 and there are several notes surrounding the costs of his funeral in 1515 (Buchwald, 1928). There are also two literary sources for Claus Narr that should be discussed. First, there is one manuscript biography that is only available as a reprint from a Dresdenian manuscript (Schnorr von Carolsfeld, 1877). The author's name is Petrus Ackermann and he calls himself a deacon. We do not know more about him. He briefly tells the life of the fool in ten numbered paragraphs. The manuscript reflects many elements of oral story telling, indicating that there was an oral tradition of Claus Narr stories. It is not clear when the text was written as the date, 1536, was added by someone other than the author. If one accepts this date, there is already a gap of 21 years between the death of the historical Claus Narr and the manuscript. Further, if one accepts the date Ackermann provides for the birthday of Claus Narr, then more than 100 years have elapsed between his birth and the writing of the manuscript. Thus, although this manuscript is often regarded as a historical source, it probably contains more legends than historical information in the strictest sense.

The second text does not claim to be a historical source at all. This book has a typically lengthy renaissance title: "Sechs hundert/ sieben vnd zwanzig Historien/ Von Claus Narren. Feine schimpffliche wort vnd Reden/ die Erbare Ehrenleit Clausen abgemerck/ vnd nachgesagt haben/ Zur Bürgerlichen und Christlichen Lere etc." (Büttner, 1572) (Six hundred, seven and twenty stories about Claus Narr. Fine amusing words and talks that have been noticed and passed on by respectable persons. For civil and Christian lore etc.) This book with the shortened title, "Historien von Claus Narren" ["Histories of Claus Narr"], was written by the protestant pastor Wolfgang Büttner and printed in 1572. Büttner, who was born around 1522 and died before 1596, wrote it anonymously but hid his name in an acrostic. The Histories of Claus Narren is not the only book Büttner wrote, he also was the author of books concerning religious questions, poetic arts, and history. The "Historien von Claus Narren" is divided into 16 parts. Each part contains a different number of stories, which altogether amount to 626 (and not 627 as announced in the title).

Every story has the same emblematic structure of a heading, followed by a story printed in larger letters, and finally a moral poem. From the very beginning Claus is described as somebody who often shows his innate stolidity or folly.^[2] Later, Büttner explains that Claus is "not only out of nature in his sensuous strength, his reason and in his mind a simple minded, childish fool [...] but he had also received from elsewhere his simplicity and childish foolishness."^[3] Ackermann, the second source, places the onset of Claus' foolishness only at the age of four - "[von vier iaren an nerrißich gewesen]" (Schnorr von Carolsfeld, 1877, p. 279) and throughout the manuscript describes Claus Narr as a natural fool. Both sources, the manuscript and the printed book, describe Claus Narr as someone who foretold the future and had signs of clairvoyance. For example, Ackermann tells a story that refers to the historical setting of the Saxon reversion in 1485. At this time, Saxony was divided between the Elector Ernst and the Duke Albrecht. The story goes that when Claus was first informed about the division, he tore a velvet cloak in two just to demonstrate how much this would be a disadvantage for the country and the heirs.^[4]

Büttner reports the same anecdote. His voluminous work also contains stories like the following: "The fool overheard what counts and counts every day. The latter was as faithful and pious. The fool said that one could admire the faithfulness and piety under the sun when everybody would have to take a half day ride due to the servant."^[5] This cryptic narrative is solved by the corresponding poem. It tells that the ride led to the gallows where the delinquent servant was hung.^[6] The natural fool's narrated ability cannot be ignored although not every story of the natural fool Claus Narr contains such prophecies and signs of clairvoyance. In contrast, Midelfort (1999, p. 265) states: "We need to admit, frankly, that we do not understand the fool's supernatural knowledge, if indeed he ever possessed any gift of clairvoyance." Signs of foretelling could also be interpreted as a part of natural folly. If one regards these fools as monstrous individuals, then one should expect some divine message. Whereas monstrous births were interpreted allegorically according to their appearance, divine omens were only perceived in the speech and acts of the natural fools. Tearing cloths in two or talking about a ride were both expected to outreach the singular foolish performance. But only certain stories in Büttner's Histories von Claus Narren and in Ackermann's manuscript biographies tell of prophecies. In both texts, the majority of the material consists of quotidian anecdotes like the following: "Claus watched a farmer tilling the soil and asked him: Why do you tear up the field? The farmer answered: Dear Claus, I would like to have grain and oats. Therefore I have to search it in the acre. Claus answers: Go on then and search deliberately in order to find much. Do not forget my share." (Büttner, 1602, p. 453)^[7]

There seems to be a great difference between this story and the two clairvoyant anecdotes. It neither bears a wise message nor appears to be funny. Modern points of view typically regard Claus Narr as a paradox example. In contrast, the fool is seen as a congruent figure in Büttner's book. Therefore, the moral closes the gap between the foolish performance and the fool's wisdom: "This seems to be a fool's joke. But it teaches you to believe in God. If you do your work you will be blessed with prosperity." (Büttner, 1602, p. 452)^[8]

The first line of the morale emphasizes the reader's impression of having read an amusing story. The following second line starts with an objection and explains the didactic content of the foolish performance. In the context of the above story, then, although the natural fool does not understand the whole process of seeding and harvesting, Claus nevertheless urges the farmer to search for grain and oats. Further, the fool believes in the ability of the farmer to harvest enough for even the fool to consume. The story can be read as an allegory of human life. According to this allegory the natural fool represents men that carry out their duty, believe in God and consequently strive and prosper. Büttner therefore comprehends the foolish performance, not as a stupid or jesting action, but as a didactic example. The foolish behavior is neither judged nor condemned. From my point of view the natural fool Claus Narr is thus perceived as a monstrous individual who contains a divine message (Daston and Park, 1998). Therefore, he is not expected to follow norms like everybody else. Furthermore, although the natural fool is a didactic example, his deviance is interpreted morally. Büttner's book, "Historien von Claus Narren," utilizes the concept of the natural fool in order to instill rules of conduct, such as the following: one should not eat too much, one should not drink, one should not commit adultery and one should obey the authorities.

These exhortations resemble other didactic literature of the 16th century. Ackermann's manuscript biography, on the other hand, does not contain moral rhymes. He merely collects stories that document the fool's deviant behavior. For example, Ackermann tells a story in which Claus tries to starve the castle inhabitants while hiding himself and not eating. Also the fool breeds eggs while fizzling like a goose.^[9] The paragraph ends with the conclusion that Claus had done more marvelous pleasantries.^[10] Ackermann's biography, then, narrates Claus Narr's foolishness, not as a didactic example, but as a wonder that can be laughed at or can be admired. When examining the enormous amount of money that had been negotiated for the fool, one can testify to the level of such natural folly. Ackermann reports, for example, that Claus Narr was assessed for 3000 thalers as a part of the Saxon crown when Saxony was divided.^[11] The comparison of the sum with another mention in the text helps to estimate Claus Narr's value. It is told that Claus apparently asked the Duke to help his mother who was a poor widow. The elector decided to give her 8 bushels of cereal and 4 florins a year, which together with the other sums, evidences how precious the fool truly had become. Although Büttner's book Histories von Claus Narren and Ackermann's manuscript biography differ in length and in bias, the two sources still have something in common. They both report the fool's signs of clairvoyance and his exorcials — or marvelous — status. Only the authors' aims and intentions vary. Whereas Ackermann writes a biography comparable to a miraculous legend that evokes astonishment and even amusement, Büttner uses more than six hundred stories to direct this amazement towards a didactic purpose in which he indoctrinates the reader. Both nevertheless represent attitudes towards the natural fool common throughout the 16th century.

From fools to inmates of asylums

Büttner's book "Historien von Claus Narren" was published in a series of 29 editions before the eighteenth century. Whereas in the prints from the mid-seventeenth century the moral poems had already been deleted, the interest in the natural fool continued. This phenomenon, however, discontinued when at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century the natural fool became an object of medical treatment, and later on an object of special education and rehabilitation. At that time, Claus Narr was no longer seen as a being outside the norm, rather, he was regarded as being within the norm and his behavior was perceived as a deviance to be treated and educated. "This development is connected with the emergence of "norms" and "normalcy" as a result of the emergence and application of statistical information around 1800 (Link, 1999). Methods such as the average were applied even when dealing with deviating cognitive abilities. The ideal of the medicotry, the "homme moyen", was established and deviating from the statistical intersection. This medicotry was now the standard and was subsequently connected with symbols of ethics, politics and beauty. Every deviance like natural folly was, from this point on, only measured in reference to their distance from the homme moyen. Norm, normalcy, and anomaly were seen as a continuum. There was no longer a gap between natural fools as part of the singular standing class of monstrous individuals and mentally ill people. In being adopted into the class of men, monstrous individuals lost their exceptional status that was related to divine messages in medieval and renaissance time. Therefore, Claus Narr could no longer be understood as a didactic example. Instead, natural folly was perceived as a malady. Permanent mental difference as natural folly and temporary mental difference as a psychiatric condition began to coincide. In 1861 Jan Daniel Georgens and Heinrich Marianus Deinhardt published their talks about orthopedagogy (Heilpädagogik). Until today Georgens' and Deinhardt's work is still considered among the most important contributions in the field of special education (Waldschmidt, 2004). These talks interestingly bear traces of medieval and renaissance perceptions of monstrous individuals and marvelous species. The remainder of this paper will briefly analyze their work in order to understand the constancy of ideas that influence contemporary perceptions of disability.

Georgens and Deinhardt's sporadic approach is the analysis of cognitive difference. They differentiate between endemic and sporadic idiocy: "[E]ndemische und sporadischer Idiotismus" (Georgens and Deinhardt, 1979). According to the authors one form of endemic idiocy is called "epidemic idiocy" ("Kretinismus") and it includes the degeneration of a population. This type of mental difference is described in ethnographic and geographic terms. Like the marvelous species of medieval and renaissance times, the endemic idiots are situated in isolated regions. Georgens and Deinhardt explain this phenomenon by attributing the notion of half-civilization to the endemic idiocy of the civilization and half-civilization. It is documented through the non-development of "animal" capabilities and is therefore regarded as degeneration. Also, endemic idiocy is considered to be a chronic disease of the community that may be cured.^[12]

In contrast to the medieval and renaissance perception of marvelous species, through malady endemic idiocy is now affiliated with the norm. However, the idea of a completely different population still exists. The sporadic idiocy, on the other hand, is discovered in "the social field as a consequence of the life within a civilized society outside the norms, his deviance is interpreted morally. Büttner's book "[Verrohung, Erschlaffung und Ueberreitung, welche das Leben der civilisirten Gesellschaft mit sich bringt]" (Georgens and Deinhardt, 1979, p. 201). According to Georgens and Deinhardt, this is due to either an unnatural neglect or overexcitement, or inappropriate care, or a latent morbidity of the genitor, or unnatural conditions, or unnatural sexual satisfaction.^[13] Georgens and Deinhardt, therefore, do not any longer attribute a singular mental difference to divine intervention, as was still done for natural fools, but instead the cause of mental difference is now termed "unnatural", while still bearing the meaning of a singular irregularity. The amalgamation of permanent mental difference and psychiatric disease can still be detected in their word choice. Sporadic idiocy is divided into four categories that are introduced by earlier concepts, both from the discourse of wonder and psychiatric ideas of temperance. Therefore sporadic idiocy is either: boredom (Stumpfsein), melancholic idiocy (melancholischer Idiotismus), dullness (Beschränktheit) or foolish idiocy (narrenhafte Idiotismus). In doing so, Georgens and Deinhardt refer to older concepts of mental difference while formulating and transferring them into their concept of orthopedagogy. Disability studies provides a forum that allows one to reframe "disability" as another culture-bound, physically justified difference." (Garland Thomson, 1997, p. 5) Today the word fool no longer plays a role in the specialized, medicalized and "educationalized" discourse of mental difference. Nevertheless it seems very likely that some medieval-influenced attributes of folly derived from medieval times such as clairvoyance are still nowadays ascribed to mentally changed people with cognitive or psychiatric impairments. Thus, examining historic points of view may be necessary to detect roots of the contemporary of disability in modern society.

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Endnoten

- ^[1] "Ein ander Gesindt hernahet bey Kumbt auch gefahren an den Rey. Natürlich Narren ist es genant, ans Kaisers Hofen ist es genant. Sy haben maniche kurzweil gemacht so artlich das man Ir hat gelachet." (Schestag, 1883, p. 160)
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- ^[2] "sonne angeborne Stoliditet/ oder Thorheit/ [...] schimpfflich weisheit" (Büttner, 1602, p. A ii f). Unless otherwise stated, all translations are from the author.
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- ^[3] "daß er nicht allein von Natur in seinen sinnlichen Irren/ / der vernunft vnd verstandes / ein zertrüer / schlechter / einfaltiger / kindischer Narr [...] sondern anders woher / seine einfalt vnkindischen thorheit / Vrsach entsprungen / vnd geloffen ist" (Büttner, 1602, p. A iif).
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- ^[4] "Vnd er hat auch bey erstlicher vorangemener beytunge den bussen gerissen: alleine in ein gemach gansen, vnd ein Sammet schaub von schlieze auff in II teyll gerissen [...] wen sie noch ganz hette sie ein iglicher ein mall angezogen, Nun ist sie wenig nuzze, daran sie verstanden, das besser, das landt bey sammen blibe..." (Schnorr von Carolsfeld, 1877, p. 280).
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- ^[5] "Ein Bürger lobte vnnd rühmete seinen Knecht/ wie er traw vnd fromb were. Claus sprach: Das wollen ich vnnd du/ vnd noch viel 100. Menschen neuwlich an der Sonnen sehen/ wenn wir einen haben Tag vnnd zugetfallen müssen spatziren reiten" (Büttner, 1602, p. 448).
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- ^[6] "Also mit diesem Knecht es kam/ da er ihn riechten Galtgen gähg..." (Büttner, 1602, p. 449).
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- ^[7] "Claus sah einem Bauwren zur der pfüget im Acker/ vnd fraget jhn: Warumb zerreisestu also den Acker? Der Bauer sprach: Lieber Claus ich wolte gern Korn vnd Haber haben/ däs muß ich ino im acken suchen. Claus antwortet: Wolan such mich frey/ däs du viel invest/ vnd niem/ neil auch ino auso ackerst" (Büttner, 1602, p. 453).
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- ^[8] "Diß scheint auch steyn ein Narrens pott/ Aber eis leht dich trawen Gott/ vnd däs du thust das dein dabey/ So kumpt denn Segen mit gedey." (Büttner, 1602, p. 454).
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- ^[9] "... und do er zur Zzeit gehort wie man Schlosser aufhugerte, hat er sich auff einen humigen orth getretet/ der Bawer sprach: Lieber Claus ich wolte gern Korn vnd Haber haben/ däs muß ich ino im acker suchen. Claus antwortet: Wolan such mich frey/ däs du viel invest/ vnd niem/ neil auch ino auso ackerst" (Büttner, 1602, p. 453).
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- ^[10] "widernatürliche[n] Vernachlässigung oder Ueberreizung [...] auf Verkehrtheit der Fügung [...] auf die beständete Annahme einer latenten Anknüpfung der Erzeuger oder doch widernatürliche Vernachlässigung und widernatürlichen Befruchtung." (Georgens and Deinhardt, 1979, p. 201)
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Nature, to some, appears to be a tranquil and peaceful place - but there is also another side to nature. The natural world is a brutal dance of life and death where many prey animals and plants have been forced to develop interesting and surprising defense mechanisms to defend themselves from their predators and, in some cases, the elements. These 11 are perfect examples and range from the absurd to the, frankly, disgusting. The following are far from exhaustive and are in no particular order.Â They perform this incredible feat by pumping their body tissues with large amounts of glucose that acts as a form of natural anti-freeze to limit the size of crystals that can form. Advertisement. 2. The Sea Cucumber Fires Its Internal Organs At Attackers.