

Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind 15

Danijela Kambaskovic *Editor*

Conjunctions of Mind, Soul and Body from Plato to the Enlightenment

 Springer

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STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Volume 15

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Danijela Kambaskovic
Editor

Conjunctions of Mind, Soul and Body from Plato to the Enlightenment

 Springer

Editor

Danijela Kambaskovic
ARC Centre of Excellence for the History
of Emotions 1100-1800
The University of Western Australia
Crawley, Perth WA
Australia

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Foreword

The main subjects of essays in this book range in time from the fourth to the eighteenth centuries, and the authors confidently reference intellectual history from Plato (a ubiquitous presence) to Spinoza. The covers of this book shelter a bold array of conceptual schemes, creative projects, scholarly methodologies and interpretative strategies, within many and diverse modern disciplinary areas: literature, history, philosophy, theology, theatre, rhetoric, music, fine arts, medicine and science. The collective direction to the relation of body to mind also functions to display an extraordinary variety of exemplifications and understandings. As the editor suggests in the Introduction, the volume is committed to bringing modern scholarly studies of past mind/body relations into contact with each other, and it celebrates the myriad heterogeneous conjunctions already made between mind (or soul) and body in our long cultural memory.

Without trying to duplicate the editor's outline of where her collection stands in relation to current literature, a good starting point for my reflections is the first essay, where Graeme Miles establishes what becomes an important motif in the book, that the 'Plato' of its title is not a fixed entity but a continually developing influence: 'The Platonic tradition is always transformed in the hands of its major inheritors and the contradictions are among what is most useful in it, most productive.' Miles shows the value of attending to context in interpretation, a context which includes the 'multiple and composite' selves that an individual interpreter might be at different times. So Michael Psellos will sometimes read allegorically, sometimes literally, sometimes for literary pleasure, sometimes for higher truths. As Miles says, '...[t]his implies not just a particular way of being, but also a manner of interpreting, embracing both the earthly and imperfect text and the transcendent meanings produced through its interpretive metamorphosis'. There are times when the body is of more value than the mind, both to the reader/writer and to the human being. In Psellos' appreciation of composite and compositional acts, Miles shows how limiting is the notion of a binarised hierarchy of mind over body as the core of 'Platonism'. In her two essays, Danijela Kambaskovic traces the cultural influences a very different Plato, sympathetic to the 'madness' of love and alive to the ethical value of mutual gazes, and examines the role of moral interpretations of the human senses in the culture of the European Renaissance.

In the context of later medieval religious lyric, Philippa Maddern points out that soul and body, whilst they seemed locked in mutual hostility, were also by definition mutually self-supporting concepts—each being what the other was not—whose union underwrote full human identity, but whose characteristics often seemed worryingly transferred from one to the other. The ‘Platonic’ idea that the soul is imprisoned in the body, Maddern shows, met opposing insistence that they were interdependent entities and identified in loving union. Like Miles, Maddern acknowledges the importance of interpretative context, specifically in this case whether pre- or post-lapsarian, and to do with salvation or damnation. Although Richard Read’s essay is on a totally different subject, his observation that ‘for both Rembrandt and Descartes true being has more the character of a verb than a noun’ seems relevant here to an approach that treats soul/body relations as dynamic and *in situ*, rather than giving them uniform and static definition. Read evokes the astonishing perspectival potential in the modern experience of the presence in art of a being from the past, where he finds, amongst many other things, ‘the impression of continuity between an abiding soul and a changing self’. Once again, the essay deals primarily with a complex, situational and temporally extended activity centred in a work of art and the possibilities of its interpretative ‘invitation’. In the process, the idea of ‘being’ is again productively extended beyond common limits. Read is one of several contributors to point out that ‘Descartes’ is no simple figure, not the bogey-man of mind/body division that he is sometimes made to stand for. Michael Champion’s essay on grief in Gregory of Nyssa is similar in its ability to rethink the set plays of intellectual history, returning a fixed descriptive binary (material/immaterial) to a specific creative environment where the one being can be imagined simultaneously in both a physical earthly form and a perfected state of sanctity.

Read remarks on the ‘intrinsic differences between painting and philosophy as forms of communication’. Given the importance of the relationship between mind (or soul) and body in theological, philosophical and scientific schemes, the topic could also have been a vital preoccupation in European culture even without any presence in literary tradition, and yet it is now quite unthinkable in distinction from that tradition. Perhaps more than any other theme, it is one that has made scientists and philosophers into poets as they contemplate the borders of physical and metaphysical being. William Schipper’s long contribution ends with Hrabanus Maurus’ mystical contemplation of Christ’s loin-cloth in his *carmina figurata* in honour of the Holy Cross. The same medieval author who distinguishes modes and degrees of sexual sin in his *Penitentials* with bureaucratic zeal is ecstatically moved here to celebrate in the hidden penis of Christ’s human body ‘the creator (or the creative power) who makes the created world visible for all mankind’. Like many contributors to this volume, Schipper is alert to the relation of genre to gender in discussion of the relation of bodily passions to the operations of mind or soul. So too, in his essay on bawdy punning on the Shakespearean stage, Laurie Johnson shows the difference that address to a female character makes in the potential for verbal sexual ‘play’, and also suggests that over time the bodily and gendered connections of Shakespearean punning diminish, perhaps because ‘knowledge’ itself is becoming a conceptually disembodied thing. The early modern ‘body-mind’ cedes to a

‘distinction between the human body and the knowledge that a human being may acquire in the world’.

Johnson’s thesis is a large one to rest on such evidence, but his term ‘body-mind’ reminds me strongly of how medieval and early modern writers without a highly developed metaphysical discourse could well express the body-soul relation in physical terms. As Thomas Malory’s Galahad reaches his end, the text says ‘he began to tremble ryght harde whan the dedly fleysch began to beholde the spirituall thynges’. In John Bunyan’s *Grace Abounding*, when the author’s conviction of his damnation is suddenly lifted as he reads Hebrews 12, he writes ‘Then with joy I told my Wife, O now I know, I know! but that night was a good night for me, I never had but few better... Christ was a precious Christ to my Soul that night; I could scarce lie in my bed for joy, and peace, and triumph, thorow Christ.’ These are truly both ‘fleshly’ and ‘spiritual’ moments. The flesh embarrasses some historical milieux and some writers more than others—Wim François gives a fine Counter-Reformation ‘Rig-orient’ example—but, as Karen Pratt’s essay on Jean LeFèvre indicates, even the introduction of bawdy satire and erotic adventure was not always incompatible with the discussion of serious religious and theological issues. The very presence of an ‘Ovid’ as protagonist of *De vetula / La Vieille* offers a challenge to readers about how they think bodily sex fits into the divine creative plan, just as it poses questions about what the real decorum of this literary text is: an entertaining and informative compendium, a flashy parody of scholastic method, a satire on the subject of clerical virginity, an eschatological meditation, or some mixture of these. LeFèvre’s method was apparently not designed to let anyone find easy answers to these matters. In a related way, Bob White’s essay on Shakespeare’s theatre looks at mixed emotions in individual characters and in groups, and at the ‘discrepant awareness’ of emotions between characters, and also between characters and audience. In these generic conditions, White suggests, both the utterance and the interpretation of emotional and mental states through bodily gesture and affect make up a volatile collective enterprise. And even in the formal rhetoric of parliament, Daniel Derrin shows, ‘moving’ required a complex co-operation between the persuasive strategies of the speaker and the ‘bodily memories’ of the listeners.

‘Bodies’ and ‘minds’, if no longer ‘souls’, are naturalised in our daily discourse, yet discursive evocations of the body and mind/soul are never free from involvement in the predominant systems of thought of their periods. Even in less learned texts, when hearts swell with anger or faces grow pale with fear, scientific commonplaces of the day about blood and vital spirits are being mobilised. At a more learned level, as Michael Ovens shows, a poet like John Donne uses the analogy of alchemy in a way that ‘overlaps’ with central Christian doctrine in its conception of ‘virtue’. ‘Alchemical metaphors ... diminish... the contrast between a corrupt body and a heavenly soul in order to shift emphasis to the sympathetic relationships which unite them.’ What Donne seeks in alchemy is an image of ‘continuity through transformation’, an elision of the corruption of death. Ovens makes psychological and poetic sense out of an arcane and now discredited ‘science’. Manfred Horstmanshoff reminds us that science itself is a genre dependent on institutional support, and that important switches in research method, like that from analogical

thinking to empirical investigation, both let literary metaphors detach themselves from science and ‘set ancient medical texts free for historical study’. Yet within this view of scientific change, Horstmanshoff presents an Aristotelian ‘hero’ sublimely resistant to Descartes’ new ideas. No shift in thought happens very suddenly or consistently, it seems, so that the pattern emerging from this collection is of multiple over-lapping head-sets and contexts, a long time-space of simultaneously experienced continuities and discontinuities. In a final and very long essay here, Charles Wolfe and Micaela van Esveld trace not only a history of materialist theories of the soul, but of ‘the presence of materialist “components” or articulated wholes *within* philosophical systems that are not themselves materialistic’, and they invite future materialists to ‘take up the challenge of conceptualising material souls’. The book ends, therefore, looking forward, and with no sense that the many matters it considers are now dealt with, safely stored in the past. It seems a long way from the tendencies to totalisation and reification summoned up by titles such as *The Elizabethan World Picture*, fine book though that was.

Carolyn Dinshaw has recently written in *How Soon is Now?* (2012) that ‘...[t]here are temporalities that are not laminar flows of some putative stream of time, not historicist, not progressive or developmental in the modern sense’. For me, one effect of experiencing so many historical ‘conjunctions’ together in these pages is to feel that people of the past have never lived within discrete ‘eras’ or ‘world-pictures’, but, like us, amidst deep incommensurabilities, and that the more informed one becomes about a period or an idea, the less it will submit to neat temporal placement. Although attempting to understand the past depends on sensitivity to images, contexts and forms of mediation whose operations are no longer patent—that is a main rationale for the sheer amount of historical expertise packed between these covers—whatever we think we understand will always be a present event. The event of reading *Conjunctions* will be a different one for every reader. I think that it will be a work returned to on many occasions, rather than read cover to cover, raided for information, appreciated for subtle formulations of complex processes, and, in its editor’s words, treated as a place of ‘enjoyment and enlightenment’.

Andrew Lynch

Andrew Lynch is Deputy Director of the ARC Centre for the History of Emotions 1100-1800 and a Professor in English and Cultural Studies.

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This book is dedicated to the memory of Philippa Maddern, who passed away during its production, in gratitude for her unique combination of gentle friendship and incisive commentary which I shall always miss. I am also particularly indebted to Bob White for his unstinting support and intellectual inspiration. Thank you Bill Schipper for taking notice of a PhD student in the Cambridge University Library in 2004, and for agreeing to indulge her curiosity on the subject of Christ's loincloth in Hrabanus' *In Honorem Sanctae Crucis*. It is wonderful to see that old conversation come to fruition on the pages of this book. Thank you, Charles Wolfe, for our collaborations, and for always having a different point of view. Thank you, formidable researcher Marina Gerzic, for bringing order into chaos, dedication well beyond the call of duty and for your friendship.

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Contributors

M.W. Champion Classics, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

D. Derrin English, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

M. van Esveld Unit for History and Philosophy of Science, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

L. French English, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

W. François Research Unit: History of Church and Theology, Faculty of Theology and Religious studies, KU Leuven, Belgium

M. Horstmanhoff Centre for the Arts in Society, Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands

L. Johnson Public Memory Research Centre, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Australia

D. Kambaskovic Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions 1100-1800 and English, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

P. Maddern (late) of Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions 1100-1800, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

A. Marchant History, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

G. Miles Classics, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia

M. Ovens English, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

K. Pratt French, King's College London, London, UK

R. Read Art History, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

W. Schipper English, Memorial University, St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada

K. Wallace Musicology, Yong siew Toh Conservatory of Music, National University of Singapore, Singapore City, Singapore

R. S. White Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions 1100-1800 and English, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

C. T. Wolfe Philosophy and Moral Sciences, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

About the Authors

Michael Champion lectures in Classics and Ancient History at The University of Western Australia. His research interests include traditions of Platonism, late-antique cultural and intellectual history and early Christian studies.

Daniel Derrin teaches English and Media Studies at Macquarie University, Sydney. His research examines the intersections between the rhetorical practice and psychology of Renaissance England.

Wim François is Research Professor of History of Early Modern Church and Theology at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven). His main interests lie in biblical scholarship from the 16th-17th century, Bible translations, and Augustinianism c.q. Jansenism.

Manfred (H.F.J.) Horstmanshoff (PhD, Leiden) is Professor of the History of Ancient Medicine, Department of Classics at Leiden University, where he also taught Ancient History for many years. He is also a research fellow at The University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South-Africa. He was Fellow-in-Residence of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study from 2000–2001 and 2008–2009. His publications include *Magic and Rationality in Ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman Medicine*, (with M. Stol, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004) and *The Four Seasons of Human Life. Four Anonymous Engravings from the Trent Collection* (Durham-Duke University/ Rotterdam-Erasmus Publishing: 2002). His current research focuses on ancient physiology and the reception of ancient physiological concepts up to the Early Modern Era. His edited volume *Blood, Sweat and tears: The Changing Concepts of Physiology from Antiquity into Early Modern Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill) is expected in 2011.

Laurence Johnson is Senior Lecturer in English and Cultural Studies and a researcher within the Public Memory Research Centre at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. He is the author of *The Wolf Man's Burden* (Cornell UP, 2001) and numerous articles and book chapters in a range of fields, including

Cultural and Literary Theory, Cyber Studies, Early Modern Studies, Ethics, Phenomenology, and Psychoanalysis.

Danijela Kambaskovic is Research Associate, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions 1100-1800, based at The University of Western Australia. She has authored *Constructing Sonnet Sequences in Medieval and Early Modern Period* (2010); her shorter publications have focused on the history of first person genres, medieval and early modern poetry, Shakespeare, religion, philosophy, early writings on mental health and, more recently, the cultural history of the senses— or rather, places where these different fields intersect. She is an award winning poet.

Andrew Lynch is a Professor in English and Cultural Studies at The University of Western Australia, Deputy Director, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions 1100-1800. With Louise D' Arcens he has recently co-edited *International Medievalism and Popular Culture* (Cambria 2014). With Michael Champion he is currently editing *Understanding Emotions in Early Europe* (Palgrave).

Philippa Maddern was Winthrop Professor in History at The University of Western Australia and the Founding Director of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotion 1100-1800, one of the largest government grants in the field of Humanities ever received. Her field of research covered social, cultural and family and gender history of late-medieval England. She published on a wide variety of subjects, including violence and social order in fifteenth-century East Anglia, concepts and practices of friendship and gentility in late-medieval England, women's letter writing and late-medieval English children. The article she wrote for the present collection and her co-authorship, with Stephanie Tarbin, of a book on the varieties of family and household life in England 1350-1650, were amongst her final projects. Professor Maddern passed away in June 2014, as this book was readied for print.

Alicia Marchant received her PhD in History at The University of Western Australia in 2012. She has a forthcoming monograph on Owain Glyndwr in medieval English chronicle narratives (York Medieval Press, forthcoming, c.2014). Alicia is currently an Associate Investigator at the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions 1100-1800 at The University of Western Australia.

Graeme Miles is a Lecturer in Classics at the University of Tasmania. He completed his undergraduate study and PhD at The University of Western Australia. Following his doctorate he was an Asialink writer in residence based at the University of Madras, then a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Ghent, Belgium (2007) and tutor at UWA. His research interests include Greek literature of the Roman Imperial period, especially the works of Flavius Philostratus, the Platonic tradition and the history of interpretation and its representation in texts. Dr Miles' poetry has been included in anthologies of best contemporary Australian poetry.

Laura French Moran is a postgraduate student in English at The University of Western Australia. In 2012 she completed her honours thesis, exploring the impact of romantic relationships on personal identity in Medieval and Early Modern literature. She is particularly interested in multidisciplinary research considering introspective issues, such as personal morality, identity, faith, and the emotions. She is currently working on her degree in Creative Writing.

Michael Ovens is a doctoral candidate at The University of Western Australia. He is interested in theories of masculinity and the shifts of epistemological culture between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly in the areas of art, science, swordsmanship, and alchemy.

Karen Pratt is Professor of Medieval French Literature at King's College London. Her specialities are comparative medieval literature and translation theory; Arthurian literature; gender and Old French literature. She has edited three volumes of scholarly essays, the major reference volume *The Arthur of the French* and was assistant editor of *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*. She has also published a monograph on *La Mort le roi Artu* and an edition/translation of *Eracle* by Gautier d'Arras. She is preparing an edition and translation of Jean Le Fèvre's *Livre de Leesce* as well as participating in a European-wide project on short narratives in medieval miscellany manuscripts.

Richard Read is Winthrop Professor of art history at The University of Western Australia. He has published in major journals and is author of the national prize-winning *Art and Its Discontents: the Early Life of Adrian Stokes* (Ashgate and U. Penn. State University). He is completing a book on *The Reversed Canvas* in Western Art that was funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery grant.

William Schipper is Professor of English Language and Literature at Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland. He has published papers on Latin manuscripts, on Hrabanus Maurus's *In honorem sanctae crucis*, and on his encyclopedia *De rerum naturis*. He currently holds a research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to complete a new critical edition of the encyclopedia for *Corpus Christianorum*.

Michaela van Esveld is a graduate from the University of Sydney, where she awarded a Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours in the History and Philosophy of Science. Her thesis was entitled *Learned healthfulness: following Descartes' medicine from theory to practice*.

Katherine Wallace is Assistant Professor (Musicology) at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, National University of Singapore. She has published on the intersections of Renaissance music, art, and literature, and female performers in the *Sun Yat-sen Journal of Humanities* (2010), *Music in Art* (2008), and *Sharing*

the Voices: the Phenomenon of Singing (1997), and has recorded for the Arktos, Catsprey, and Ablaze labels.

R.S. (Bob) White is Chief Investigator, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions 1100-1800, and Winthrop Professor of English and Cultural Studies at The University of Western Australia. His publications include *Natural Law in English Renaissance Literature* (1996), *Natural Rights and the Birth of Romanticism in the 1790s* (2005), *Pacifism in English Poetry: Minstrels of Peace* (2008) and *John Keats: A Literary Life* (2010). He has been President of the Australian and New Zealand Shakespeare Association and is a fellow of the Australian Humanities Academy.

Charles T. Wolfe is a Research Fellow in the Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences and Sarton Centre for History of Science, Ghent University, and an Associate of the Unit for History and Philosophy of Science, University of Sydney. He works primarily in history and philosophy of the early modern life sciences, with a particular interest in materialism and vitalism. He has edited volumes including *Monsters and Philosophy* (2005), *The Body as Object and Instrument of Knowledge* (2010, with O. Gal), *Vitalism and the scientific image in post-Enlightenment life-science* (2013, with S. Normandin) and *Brain Theory. Essays in Critical Neurophilosophy* (2014), and has papers in journals including *Dix-huitième siècle*, *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences*, *La Lettre clandestine*, *Multitudes*, *Perspectives on Science*, *Progress in Biophysics and Molecular Biology*, *Science in Context* and others. His current project is a monograph on the conceptual foundations of Enlightenment vitalism. He is also the founding editor of the Springer series in History, Philosophy and Theory of the Life Sciences.

Introduction

Danijela Kambaskovic

Henry Peacham's 1577 handbook on rhetoric, *The Garden of Eloquence*, suggests that it is profitable to enliven our writing by drawing on the tendency of our thoughts to wander naturally between material and immaterial things, allowing us to use "words that do belong properly to the mind" to denote "properties of the bodie". Using this technique, a wound can be memorably described as "angrie or wofull", an eye is "pitifull" and an ear "wise" (Peacham 1593, p. 8). Our tendency to perceive our bodies and minds as inextricably linked provides today's disciplines of philosophy of mind, neuroscience, psychology, psychiatry, literary studies and history of science ("embodiment"), to name a few, with subjects for enquiry. The idea for this book came in 2010, as the proposal to form the ARC Centre for the History of Emotions 1100-1800 (CHE), led by late Winthrop Professor Philippa Maddern at my home University of Western Australia, was taking its final shape, and I became interested in the "body-mind problem" (Davies, 1995, p. 251) and the discipline of the history of mind, as well as in the questions of belief and experience, both individual and cultural.

The purpose of this book is to examine the nexus between the corporeal, emotional, spiritual and intellectual aspects of human life as represented in the writing of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance over two thousand years of Western thought, from Plato in the fifth century BC and the fourth century AD Byzantine dialogues on the soul, to the philosophical and medical writings of the early 1700s. I wanted to examine the question from as many perspectives as possible, which is why I contacted people working in very different fields and periods. In this book, scholars whose disciplines are rarely brought into conversation, agreed to consider the subject of the conjunctions of the body, mind and spirit.

In the mainstream Aristotelian tradition, the mind was seen to inhabit the body—the corporeal, sensory part that humans share with animals—and the higher sphere; the intellectual part or the soul (Kemp and Fletcher, 1993, p. 565). But the two

D. Kambaskovic (✉)

Shakespeare and Renaissance Studies at the School of English and Cultural Studies,
The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
e-mail: danijela.kambaskovic-sawers@uwa.edu.au

levels were not taken to exclude each other, but rather to work in co-operation. Early theories based on the psychology of Aristotle (*De Anima*) and Galen, located the mind in three linearly arranged ventricles of the brain, allowing humans to experience, process and remember information through three internal senses of imagination/memory, *vis aestimativa* (foresight and prudence) and *sensus communis* (the common sense) existing in three separate ventricles of the brain, and working in harmony with the five “external” senses. Other theories locate the mind, concerned with universals like language or the ability to reason logically, not in any bodily organ, but in the soul (Aquinas 1270/1937; Aristotle 350 B.C./1931; Avicenna 1030/1952, cited in Kemp and Fletcher (1993), p. 565.) There is no clear way to relate these theories to the modern-day distinctions between subconscious, unconscious or conscious mental activity; it is nevertheless clear that these theories foreshadow later discussions on the role of the different levels of mind in conscious decision making.

In the ancient Hebrew tradition, the soul was divided into three parts: *Nefesh*, the lower or animal part, linked to instincts and bodily cravings; *Ruach*, the middle soul or the spirit, which contains moral virtues and the ability to distinguish between good and evil; and *Neshamah*, the higher or super-soul, which separates man from other life forms. This part is linked with the intellect and allows the awareness of the existence and presence of God. According to the Kabbalah and the Hebrew mystical tradition, every human is born with least one element in their soul; with the proper study a person can eventually develop two higher levels of the soul. The tripartite division is reminiscent of the Freudian division into id, ego and superego (Ableson 1913, pp. 155–173, especially p. 159). The book “Ra’aya Meheimna” (part of the *Sefer ha-Zohar/The Book of Splendor*) (Matt 2004–2012), a later addition to the doctrine, posits that there are two more parts of the human soul, the *Chayyah* and *Yehidah*, functioning as extensions of the functions of *Neshamah* (the higher soul), attainable only through religious dedication considered to represent the most sublime levels of intuitive cognition within the grasp of very few individuals (Scholem 1974, pp. 157–158).

Plato believed in different types of the soul (Phaedrus 271d) all with a fragile connection with the body (Laws 8.828d) in which it is imprisoned (Phaedo 81 sq, Phaedrus 250c). The view that the soul and body separate after death (Crat. 403b) was another view open to consideration in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. In the fifth century, St Augustine describes the soul as an immaterial substance made in the image of God, consisting, nevertheless, of memory, intellect, and will. In Renaissance Italy, Lorenzo Valla upholds the view that the soul is an incorporeal substance, allocating the question a separate chapter of his *Repastinatio dialectice et philosophie* (1439). Valla rejects the idea that we have different types of soul (vegetative, sensitive, imaginative, intellectual) on the grounds that this would indicate a plurality of souls (Valla 1982, pp. 59–73, 408–410, and 418–419), and on the grounds that locating the soul in various areas of the body would make it material, not immaterial, both of which ideas he considers contradictory to Christian doctrine.

The first section, *Conjunction 1: Text and Self-Perception*, focuses on the creativity and reception as loci of the conjunctions. Graeme Miles’ “Body vs. Soul, Text vs. Interpretation in Michael Psellos”, Chap. 2, addresses the Byzantine belief

in the division between the ‘higher’ and ‘animal’ parts of human beings, locating the specific difference between the two in our verbal faculty. In Chap. 3, “Murdering Souls and Killing Bodies: Understanding Spiritual and Physical Sin in Late-Medieval English Devotional Works”, Philippa Maddern looks at the conjunction between body and soul from the questions crucial from late medieval perspectives: the question of whether the body or the soul has dominance over the other, and a discussion of the soul’s “powers and capacities” [*myztes and vertues*], revealing that the soul had aspects which we would, today, associate with both mind and body. In Chap. 4, “‘Adam, You are in a Labyrinth’: The First-Person Voice as the Nexus Between Body and Spirit in the *Chronicle* of Adam Usk” Alicia Marchant interrogates the important role of the first-person narrative in creating a conjunction between body and soul by following the writing of a late-Medieval chronicler Adam Usk who chronicles external events simultaneously with chronicling his sensations and emotions. Richard Reed explores a similar division in Chap. 5 (“The Thin End of the Wedge: Self, Body and Soul in Rembrandt’s Kenwood Self-Portrait”), introducing the notion of the “enduring” (spiritual) and the “instrumental” (bodily) self that the artist seeks to immortalise in auto-portraits.

The second section of the collection finds the nexus between body and soul in emotions. In Chap. 6, “Grief and Desire, Body and Soul in Gregory of Nyssa Life of Saint Macrina”, Michael Champion identifies grief and desire as conjunctions of body and soul. This may at first seem counter-intuitive, as the early medieval wont was to honour *Apatheia*, the absence of passions, which makes humans like angels; *apatheia* is preferred in Stoic as well as Christian contexts, and is sometimes proposed as a characteristic of God; but in his writing, Gregory of Nyssa conspicuously values desire, passions, grief and attachment, and justifies them eschatologically. By arguing that it is the passion of insatiability which makes it possible to enjoy the Divine, and that, without it, there would be no interaction with God, Gregory creates an original theology which rehabilitates an emotion that others consider a weakness what others consider a weakness. No less importantly, Gregory also introduces the discussion about the difference of the ineffable, inexpressible qualities and words which are used to describe them.

Robert S. White’s “‘Variable Passions’: Shakespeare’s Mixed Emotions”, Chap. 7, explores Shakespeare’s writing on strong emotions accompanied by unexpected bodily reactions. Plato provided a the contradictory and disturbing symptoms of love madness as early as the fifth century BC (*Phaedrus* 251d)¹, and the feelings Shakespeare describes are often “mingled” a phrase often used to denote something that is mixed, but also sexually tinted or ethically suspect. Senators “mingle” tears with smiles in *Coriolanus*; Guiderius in *Cymbeline* describes Imogen in terms of emotions which “mingle their spurs together”²; and Anthony and Cleopatra become as mingled with one another as to begin to mirror each other’s

¹ “So between joy and anguish [the soul] is distraught... perplexed and frenzied; with madness upon [it], [it] can neither sleep by night nor keep still by day, but runs hither and thither, yearning for [the beloved] in whom beauty dwells. (*Phaedrus* 251d)”.

² Shakespeare (1997), *Cymbeline, King of Britain*, 2963.

characteristics³, which leads to tragedy. Bob White's concept of 'character destiny' is crucially important here: on one hand virtue is preserved by refusing to mingle and staying through to your path; on the other, it is Shakespeare's morally single-minded characters who are ethically suspect.

Daniel Derrin's "Subtle Persuasions: The Memory of Bodily Experience as a Rhetorical Device in Francis Bacon's Parliamentary Speeches", Chap. 8, is a fascinating analysis of seventeenth-century rhetoric and its ability to draw on bodily memory to evoke a passionate response. In his appeals to the Parliament, Francis Bacon often appealed to the Parliament by using bodily memory to persuade. In Chap. 9, "Lessons in Music, Lessons in Love", Katherine Wallace discusses music as a place where body and soul come together. This resulted in a dual view of music in the medieval and Renaissance periods: one, as a source of nourishment for the soul, an asset to a young woman's education and a symbol of virtue; and two, the source of the soul's corruption. As young female musicians acquire physical skill, this skill becomes equated with their skill in pleasing a lover; the increased pleasure they take in their music becomes elided with sexual pleasure, and the very symbol of their moral degeneration.

Conjunction 3: Sex is the third section of our book, examining Renaissance views on sexuality and the sexual act. William Schipper's Chap. 10, "Sex and Spirituality among the Carolingians", Chap. 10, explicates medieval interpretations of the interactions of body and soul in sexual contexts. Schipper analyses the letters of the great eighth-century educator, Alcuin of York, to his disciple, Arn of Salzburg, in the contexts of various frameworks of male esteem such as Platonic *pederasteia* (love between men in the pursuit of virtue and creative, as opposed to procreative, immortality) and Ciceronian tradition of *amicitia*, male friendship based on equality of minds, to show such frameworks are insufficient to explain the extremity of passion manifested by using strikingly physical imagery. Equally moving is Schipper's analysis of a poem embedded in Christ's loincloth in *In Honorem Sanctae Crucis*, important because it places words of sublime passion in the most physical of places, conjoining the love of God and the individual, sexualised body of the writer. Laura French's "On the Bridling of the Body and Soul of Héloïse, the 'Chaste Whore'" addresses similar concerns in examining the links Héloïse saw between her sexual, ethical and theological identities. Héloïse's abandonment of her true identity for the sake of her lover's request and social convention, argues French, raises the question not of one, but *two* different conflicts between her body and soul, each of which is in moral conflict with the other; and it a sacrifice for the sake of love causes Héloïse great moral harm. In Chap. 12, "Keeping Body and Soul Together: Jean LeFèvre and Sexuality", Karen Pratt examines LeFèvre's examination of connections between the body and soul inherent in the doctrines of the general resurrection, the superiority of virginity and celibacy over marriage and the role of sexual reproduction as a means of fulfilling God's plan for the human race. Similarly, Wim François' Chap. 13, "Paul, Augustine and Marital Sex in Guilielmus Estius' Scrip-

³ I am grateful to Simon Haines for pointing this out in our conversations long ago.

tural Commentaries (1614–1616)”, compares the influential Augustinian (Catholic) perspective that sexuality was characterized after the Fall by inordinate lust and is indicative of the original sin, with the Protestant views that marriage and sexual procreation which resulted from the original sin were instigated by divine providence, and that Adam and Eve’s sexual relationship was a facet of their original righteousness.⁴ My article “The Ageing of Love: the Waning of Love’s Power”, Chap. 11, follows Plato’s idea that love madness is a conjunction of body and soul. Although Plato proposes in the *Republic* that there is no single or harmonious good which the lower and the higher parts of the soul share, love madness—an altered state of mind arising from desire, and seen as the gift of the gods as it leads to creation—seems to describe this nexus in *Phaedrus*, Plato’s later work. I have suggested that the epistemological value of the notion of love has waned over the centuries under the influence of societal processes which can be associated with negative views of love promoted by religion, medical treatises describing above as an illness and the misogyny of patriarchal societies. In Chap. 15, “Quaint Knowledge: a Body-Mind Pattern across Shakespeare’s Career”, Laurence Johnson links epistemology with sexuality by mapping the fortunes of the intriguing and multivalent word “quaint” (with “cunt” as one of its meanings) in early modern discourse.

The fourth and final section, *Conjunction 4: Material Souls*, engages with the way our bodies can leave traces of our minds behind. Manfred Horstmanshoff’s Chap. 11, “Tears in Ancient and Early Modern Physiology: Petrus Petitus and Niels Stensen”, provides fascinating insight in the epistemology of tears perceived as the “link between inner and outer worlds” in the work of medieval and Renaissance medical writers. In his “Alchemy and the Body/Mind Question in the Work of John Donne”, Michael Ovens posits that Donne’s alchemy is meant to mediate between Neoplatonism and Christianity in a way that is analogous to the role perceived in the early modern period to be played by the spirit mediating between body and soul, and explains Donne’s use of the notion of ‘quintessence’ (a pure form of a metal, which can be diluted but not degraded) as analogous to love. In Chap. 18, “Among the... Senses... Proud Most Sure’: Ethics of the Senses in Early Modern Europe”,

⁴ John Milton in building the characters of Adam and Eve in *The Paradise Lost*: Milton’s Adam and Eve show unselfconscious sexuality and desire to have children before the Fall (Book 9, pp. 205–207), and damaging desire after the Fall (Book 9, pp. 1020–1060); and Adam’s fall is represented as his choice of Eve before God—and, fascinatingly for a writer who was a Puritan, presented as an act of free will. The moment of the Fall, the actual tasting of the fruit of knowledge, does not come until line 999, much later in the same Book:

How can I live without thee, how forgo
 Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joined,
 To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
 Should God create another Eve, and I
 Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
 Would never from my heart; no, no, I feel
 The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
 Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state,
 Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.

(Milton 2006, *Paradise lost*, Book 9, pp. 907–916).

I examine the ethical and epistemological interpretations of the work of the five senses in literary and medical writing in the Renaissance, particularly the way the place that perception by means of individual senses is given by different thinkers in the building of their philosophies of mind, philosophies of the world or individual theological systems. Charles T. Wolfe's and Michaela van Esveld's Chap. 19, "The Material Soul: Strategies for Naturalising the Soul in Early Modern Epicurean Context" explores, under an 'Epicurean' heading, the concept of "material soul" as indicative of a non-dualistic tradition of thinking about soul and matter. While we are more familiar with the dualistic approach to the soul which many term 'Cartesian', arguing that the division between body and soul originated with Descartes, the Epicurean concept, deriving from Epicurus and Lucretius and reprised in expanded and ever-evolving forms by Gassendi, the anonymous manuscript *L'âme matérielle*, Guillaume Lamy, La Mettrie and Diderot, shows that materialists did not have to reject the existence of the soul, but could instead 'materialise' it.

The collection I am offering to the reader offers a fresh reconsideration of ideas on the body and soul as emerging from the research of a number of authors working in a different fields, in an attempt to unite ways of thinking belonging to a number of diverse disciplines under the same conceptual roof.

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Part I
Text and Self-Perception

Living as a Sphinx: Composite Being and Monstrous Interpreter in the ‘Middle Life’ of Michael Psellos

Graeme Miles

a third life ... like a beast and like a human being and like a god. (Michael Psellos, Philosophica Minora 1.44.50–1.44.51)

One of the most characteristic traits of Michael Psellos’ philosophy is its capacity for finding middle ground, for accepting and balancing apparently contradictory demands¹; it is this tendency which leads to some of the most striking moves in his treatment of the relationship of body, soul and intellect. In what follows, I shall be concerned with a group of related oppositions: between body and soul, text and meaning, literary form and philosophical (or theological) content. Psellos demonstrates on many occasions a remarkably positive valuation of the body, and an enjoyment of text which is described in intensely bodily terms. His understanding of the human being as a composite of unlike parts is important to his views on reading and interpreting; since the interpreter is a being of this sort, his/her responses to text are also multiple and composite. Allied to this sense of the activity of the reader is a striking, and remarkably modern-sounding view of the reader as creator rather than discoverer of meaning.

In so far as Michael Psellos (c.1018–1080) is known to a broader audience, it is mostly for his historical work, the *Chronographia*. His intellectual activity was, however, extraordinarily various.² Far less well known are his numerous philosophical and theological works, the majority of which have only been properly edited in the last few decades (Duffy 2006, pp. 1–12).³ Many of these texts remain untranslated into modern languages. Yet for the transmission, and indeed the revival of the Platonic tradition in the eleventh century, Psellos is a vitally important figure. As

¹ There is a growing recognition of this tendency in Psellos’ thought: Jenkins (2006), pp. 131–151.

² For an invaluable bibliography of Psellos’ works see Moore (2005).

³ Some provisional thoughts on Psellos’ philosophy are offered by O’Meara (1998).

G. Miles (✉)

School of Humanities, University of Tasmania, Tasmania, Australia

e-mail: Graeme.Miles@utas.edu.au

both writer and teacher, Psellos played a leading role in the intellectual life of his era. Indeed, it is not too much to claim that he is a major figure of European intellectual history more broadly, passing on, and contributing to, a tradition which would later be transmitted to western Europe (Duffy 2002, pp. 139–156).

Psellos may be an understudied author, but he is an appealing one, and the secondary literature is growing.⁴ Among the questions to which Psellos repeatedly turns are the relationship of body to soul and intellect, and the composition of human beings out of apparently unlike parts. These parts are the traditional ones of Neoplatonism: body (σῶμα), soul (ψυχή), intellect (νοῦς), and, in a sense, the One (τὸ ἓν), the source of all being. The exact nature of Psellos' philosophical orientation has again become an open question in recent scholarship on his work (Kaldellis 2007). It is immediately evident to any reader of his philosophical and theological writings that Psellos is intimately familiar with late antique Platonism (Neoplatonism) in general, and Proclus (c.AD 410–485) in particular, whose thought is a constant presence in Psellos' works. Psellos is exact and competent in his use of Neoplatonic terminology, and knows the works of the earlier Neoplatonists, Plotinus and Porphyry (O'Meara 1998). However, as Kaldellis has aptly remarked: 'Psellos ... proves that he was no orthodox Platonist. But of course, neither was Plato' (Kaldellis 1999, p. 164). A full account of Psellos' philosophy is a much larger undertaking than the present chapter, but it is worth noting at the outset that for Psellos there is no radical break between the Platonism of Plato and the Neoplatonic tradition. The term 'Neoplatonic' is, after all, a nineteenth-century one, and the attempt to disentangle Plato himself from later Platonism is a modern undertaking. That is not to suggest that the effort to clarify the nature of Psellos' Platonism is not worthwhile, merely that for him, it is a continuous tradition, and that I will consequently refer both to his Platonism and his Neoplatonism.

In addition to his philosophical study, Psellos is equally well schooled in rhetoric, and speaks often of his combining philosophical with rhetorical and other studies. To take one example among many, in his *Letter to Keroularios* (52–60) he couples 'purifying his tongue by the sophistic arts' with the study of philosophy (Psellos 1990). Despite his clear admiration for his favourites among the ancients, he frequently shows real independence of mind. I should state at the outset that while I accept the traditional portrait of Psellos as a Platonist, he must be regarded as a highly unorthodox one; within a conceptual framework derived from late-antique Neoplatonism he is able to develop arguments of a markedly different tendency.

I base my discussion primarily on Psellos' philosophical works, especially the *Philosophica Minora*, though it will be helpful at times to make reference to other texts, in particular some of the *Theologica* and his letters.⁵ The character of the *Phil-*

⁴ Among recent contributions see Barber and Jenkins (2006); Kaldellis (1999, 2007), pp. 191–224; Ljubarskij (2004). Still valuable, despite appearing before many of Psellos' works were available, are Zervos (1920), and Tatakis (2003), pp 129–187. The series of English translations of Psellos promises to render his work accessible to a larger audience; the first volume is Psellos (2006).

⁵ I cite throughout from the recent Teubner editions of the texts: Psellos (1989a) *Opuscula Logica, Physica, Allegorica, Alia*; Psellos (1989b), *Michaelis Pselli Theologica I*; Psellos (1992); Psellos (2002). Other editions of individual works will be noted as appropriate. I have in general para-

osophica Minora varies: while some are really just paraphrases or assemblages of ancient sources, reported *verbatim* in response to particular enquiries, others show considerably more freedom in their treatment of the questions raised. The recent editors of these texts, by tracing the sources quoted or echoed, have laid an invaluable foundation. Nonetheless, a great deal of interpretive work remains to be done, as they themselves indicate.⁶

There are two reasons for my focus on the *Philosophica Minora* in particular. The first is concerned with the requirements of the present volume: it is in these short philosophical texts that Psellos approaches issues of the body and its relationship to the non-physical parts of the human composite most directly, and it is also here that we can find several instances of Psellos at his most original on these topics. Secondly, a great deal remains to be said about these intriguing texts, as serious work on them has only just begun. The close engagement with specific texts and with particular issues within those texts is what is most needed before a full appraisal of his thought will be possible: it is in engagement with the details of Psellos' thought that the next steps towards a fuller appreciation of his place in intellectual history should be taken.

Psellos, as one might expect of a writer engaging with the Platonic tradition, turns often to consider the relationship of body and soul. For Psellos, a human is a composite being, able to operate on several ontological/psychological levels. Given the Neoplatonic inheritance to which I have been alluding, this need be no great surprise, but as is always the case in 'Later Greek' thought (whether late-antique or medieval), it is in the ways in which this tradition is received, moderated and altered that its liveliness and interest are to be found. What is most remarkable in Psellos is his acceptance of the human composite as a whole. One can indeed speak of a 'rehabilitation of the body'.⁷ This is not to say that such a positive valuation of the body is entirely without precedent, either in the Neoplatonic or Christian traditions, but he is nonetheless remarkably independent and prone to accentuate the more open-ended and world-affirming sides of the Platonic tradition. Most characteristic of Psellos' thought regarding body and soul (and, indeed, on many topics) is a sort of hovering in between, a willingness to accept the inconsistency and multiplicity of human existence. He regularly avoids the extreme and dogmatic, and shows a real openness to varying points of view, even when they seem to be in contradiction. Certainly, this can lead to self-contradiction or ambivalence, as will be apparent in

phrased rather than translated these texts for the sake of conciseness. On occasion I transliterate as well as translate some key terms, where this might prove helpful, or is unavoidable. In citations of the second volume of the *Philosophica Minora*, I give the number of the *opusculum*, the page number and the line-number of the page on which it appears, as the line-numbers of the extracts are not given. When citing the *Theologica* and the first volume of the *Philosophica Minora*, I give the number of the *opusculum* and line-number within it.

⁶ O'Meara (1998), who stresses the 'caractère provisoire' of his observations on Psellos' philosophy.

⁷ As does Kaldellis (1999), pp 154–166.

the following discussion; but this same tendency can be seen more positively as an acceptance, and a reflection, of the composite nature of human beings.

Firstly three of the more conventionally Neoplatonic of the *Philosophica Minora* will help to establish the framework within which Psellos' thinking on the human composite takes place. *Philosophica Minora* 1.1 (titled *De Vita Philosophica* in Duffy's edition) is a short response to the question of what life the philosopher should choose in order to be entirely independent of other people. (A majority of these short philosophical works, incidentally, are presented as responses to questions, sometimes from groups of students, sometimes from named or unnamed individuals). Psellos' response here is that the life to choose is the noetic one (τῆν νοεράν), that is, life lived at the level of intellect. Psellos goes on to say that 'each of us is an animal and a human being and an intellect, and even, so to speak, a god' (1.1.4–1.1.5). Life in connection with the body is an animal life, but operating on a noetic or intellectual level we need for nothing (1.1.5–1.1.9). So far, this all seems fairly straightforward: the animal life or the life of the body is something to surpass in rising to intelligible reality and eventually to the One itself. There is, however, rather more to Psellos' thinking on these matters than just this. It should be noted even in this relatively conventional passage that Psellos does not necessarily imply that the noetic life is superior in absolute terms, but only that it is the life in which one needs least from others. The feasibility, and indeed the desirability of this independence is not discussed, and Psellos' critical attitude towards a cold otherworldliness in other contexts, for instance in the *Letter to Keroularios*, should make us wary of assuming that he is recommending this transcendent path without reservation.

From the Platonic texts with which Psellos shows a profound engagement, he inherits a tradition which is profoundly ambivalent on the question of the right valuation of body and soul, and more broadly of the physical world relative to the intelligible. This broader question of the best attitude towards the physical world underlies the more specific one of the right attitude towards the body and embodied existence. Most characteristic of Psellos' own thought regarding the material portion of the human composite is a willingness to accept the inconsistency and multiplicity of human existence, including its bodily component.

As we have seen, Psellos is willing to recount the standard Platonic narrative of the development of the individual philosopher towards Soul and then Intellect (and an understanding of the Forms), and away from the body. In *Philosophica Minora* 1.49 (*On the types of philosophy*), Psellos quotes *verbatim* the statement of David of Armenia, a sixth-century commentator on Aristotle (Anhaght 1983), that one is drawn to philosophy by a 'restrained madness' (σώφρονί τιμι μανία) and that a 'wise desire' (σοφὸς ἔρωσ) leads one to it (1–10). Psellos' eventual definition of philosophy in general, after giving Platonic, Pythagorean and Aristotelian definitions is that 'philosophy is transferring the soul to divine and non-material things away from this obscuring and material life by means of putting the souls and bodies of human beings in order' (224–226). This is, of course, a broadly Neoplatonic definition, and here too, Psellos follows David almost word for word. As often in Psellos' writings, we encounter the ancient notion of philosophy as spiritual prac-

tice, an ordering of the parts of oneself.⁸ Where Psellos differs here from David is in the inclusion of three words: *καὶ τὰ σώματα* ('and the bodies') (225). Rather than considering philosophy as simply the ordering of the soul, Psellos makes an important departure to include the ordering of the body. Moreover, the body is to be regulated or put in order (*κοσμεῖν*) rather than simply suppressed or transcended.

A traditional Neoplatonic narrative of ascent and a similar account of the pleasures of contemplation appear in *Philosophica Minora* 2.1 (*Of the most wise Psellos on the soul*). Here, Psellos outlines the stages of the psyche's development, whereby it turns inward to itself, then to *Nous* (the world of intelligible reality or the Forms) and finally to the One, the source of all things (p. 1.1–1.9). In experiencing the noetic, it is astonished by an incredible pleasure (*θαυμασίαν ἀγάλλεται ἡδονήν* (p. 1.6)). This short piece ends with some observations on emotions of a more everyday variety. If anyone bewails his own life (*ἀπολοφυρόμενος*), Psellos says, he does not speak from the unmixed soul (*οὐκ ἐκ τῆς ἀκράτου ψυχῆς*) but from the soul mixed with body, which is made irrational by this mixture with it (*συναλωγοθείσης* (2.1.p. 1.22–1.23)). The experience of these lower emotions, in other words, is not purely a phenomenon of the soul, but has its origins in the interaction of body and soul. Here too, Psellos reproduces Neoplatonic thought faithfully; the late work of Plotinus, *Ennead* 1.1.2–1.1.7, deals similarly, though at greater length, with the issue of the lower soul and its relationship to the body.

The nature of the irrational affections (*πάθη*) and their arising from the combination of body and soul are further discussed in another brief *opusculum*: 2.26 (*On Evil*). Here, Psellos argues that evil does not arise from body or from soul, but from parts of a human being acting outside their proper sphere of operation. Once again, Psellos is responding to a query from an unnamed individual, this time regarding the nature of evil, or more specifically 'in which things evil exists' (*ἐν τίσιν ὑφέστηκε τὸ κακόν* (2.26.p.101.1)). As O'Meara observes in his edition of this text, the wording of the question is close to that of Proclus in *De Malorum Substantia* 11.1. Here, as often in these *opuscula*, Psellos depends heavily on Proclus, on this occasion in particular on the *De decem dubitationibus circa providentiam* (Didochus 1960). Psellos tells us that some say evil arises in the irrational affections (*πάθη*) in us. His examples of these irrational affections, drawn from Proclus' *De decem dubitationibus* 30.4–30.8, make clear that it is, in fact, primarily the emotions which he has in mind here: anger (*thumos*, *θυμός*) and desire (*epithumia*, *ἐπιθυμία*) (2.26.p. 101.2). Given the model of Platonic ascent that we saw earlier, we might expect this to be the sort of position that Psellos will take himself. He says, however, that he will avoid giving too glib an answer, since we must first consider 'the depths of our mental being' (*τὸ βάθος... τῆς ψυχικῆς οὐσίας ἡμῶν*) (p. 101.3–102.1). There are, he says, two parts to our nature, one part 'in accordance with reason' (*κατὰ λόγον*), the other 'contrary to reason' (*παρὰ λόγον*) (p. 102.4–102.5). Neither is evil (p. 102.7). Returning to examples of apparent, but not actual, sources of evil in the soul, he says that anger is not an evil thing from the faculty of anger, nor desire from the desiring faculty, even when it desires the worse, as these impulses

⁸ On this understanding of philosophy in antiquity see Hadot (1995).

are irrational by their nature (οὔτε γοῦν τῷ θυμικῷ μέρει τῆς ψυχῆς κακὸν τὸ θυμοῦσθαι οὔτε τῷ ἐπιθυμητικῷ τὸ ἐπιθυμεῖν καὶ τῶν γε χειρόνων, ἄλογοι γὰρ ἀπὸ φύσεως αὐτῶν αἱ ὀρμαί). Evil arises out of incorrect relationship of the two parts. The implication is that even apparently negative emotions are not to be suppressed or denied, but should play their appropriate role, and are to be prevented only from dominating the parts of the mind which they ought not to dominate.

This understanding of the position of the body and the sensory and emotional life paraphrases Proclus' *De decem dubitationibus* 30.18–30.20; a similar thought, however, appears, and is vividly adapted to another context, in an extraordinary little note: *Philosophica Minora* 1.16ε'. The larger text to which this passage belongs, 1.16, is a series of responses and reflections on miscellaneous matters: when embryos become living beings, how some creatures become male and others female, and the reason for roosters singing at night, *inter alia*. 16ε' addresses the question of why sex seems more pleasant for those who are dreaming. Psellos' response is once again made by reference to our nature as composite beings, made up of a body and non-physical components. We have a double life (δίπτυη ... ζωή), he says, one released from the body and one accompanying the body, one irrational, one rational (163–165). 'In waking intercourse, the rational life does not entirely give the reins of pleasure to the irrational' (165–167). However, the 'horse of desire' takes charge in sleep (171–172) and the things of pleasure appear half-finished 'in crowds and suddenly' (ἀθρόως καὶ ἐξάπινα ἡμιτελῆ τὰ τῆς ἡδονῆς γίνεται (175–176). So far, this might appear an essay on the ways in which the sleep of reason breeds monsters, but the conclusion strongly implies a more positive valuation of these emotive and sensual aspects of the human composite. Because more restrained people (οἱ σωφρονικώτεροι) are more restrained in sex, Psellos says, their offspring are often born with defects, less complete in bodily power and practical skills. Those who are 'more wanton' (οἱ ἀκολαστότεροι) consequently have hardier and more able children (176–187). 'The more licentious, since they sow the female furrow with their whole strength, reap a stronger and more able crop in the cycles of the years' (186–187). The implication is that there is a time and a place for reason: not in bed, it seems, for Psellos. Within their own sphere the emotional and appetitive parts of a human being should play their role, unhindered by reason.

One of the fullest expositions of Psellos' thinking on the human composite comes in one of his allegorical readings of Hellenic myth and literature: the allegory of the sphinx (1.44). This is one of several images in his works in which Psellos presents either the human subject in general, or himself in particular, as a composite monster; for example in letter 191 (to Xiphilinos) he wonders whether he is something divine or a beast more complicated than Typho (Jenkins 2006, pp. 143–144). In the allegory of the sphinx (1.44), he begins by describing his interpretive method through an analogy with the ancient mystery cults: the curtains before the inner sancta (ἄδυστα) guarded the sacred things unseen. Psellos, with the tone of the badgered lecturer, says that the sanctum was opened once a year in the Eleusinian mysteries and the hidden things revealed. 'But you', he says, addressing a group this time, 'compel the hierophant many times in a day to tear open the coverings' (8 ff). Psellos would shrink from doing this, if the ancient mysteries had not been abolished and divine

teachings (that is, Christianity) come into power (10). So let the covering be torn from the myth of the sphinx, and let the hidden things be revealed, having a secret (ἀπόρρητον) philosophy (12–14). Psellos begins with a description of the sphinx (15 ff): the myth depicts her as a beautiful girl, but not all the way to her feet, only to the navel, from which point she has shaggy fur and the feet of a beast and a long tail, and she has a tongue which ‘speaks Attic and is Pythagorean’ (ἀπικίζουσα τε καὶ Πυθαγόρειος), and she tells riddles (17). Such is the the freak, or prodigy, or omen (τέρας) of the myth (20).

The poets can write with what licence they will, Psellos goes on, but the philosophical intellect (ὀφιλόσοφος νοῦς) does not rest with the surface meaning, but considers the allegorical meaning of the prodigy (21–22). The sphinx is nothing but a human being, put together from dissimilar parts (ἐξ ἀνομοίων συγκείμενος) (24). ‘Our existence’, he says, ‘is a thing of many parts’ (25). Some parts have to do with rational powers, in some parts we share in the irrational nature (25–26). He gives a Neoplatonic ordering of our nature: we have the One in us, then Intellect, then ‘double-natured discursive reasoning’ (διφυῆς διάνοια), and true opinion (ἀληθῆς δόξα) the conclusions of reasoning, which conclusions are all rational things and divine (26–29). And there are *phantasia* and perception and such things as need the body for their existence, which are ‘irrational and beastlike and directed towards the external’ (30). Psellos gives an Aristotelian definition of *phantasia* at *Philosophica Minora* 2.3.p. 3.4–3.7, and it is consequently not readily translatable by a single English term. The definition follows Aristotle, *De Anima* 428a12–19 closely, and makes *phantasia* a reception of sensory material prior to perception (*aisthēsis*). While *aisthēsis* makes a judgement as to whether the phenomena reported by the senses are true or false, *phantasia* receives data of both kinds. A similarly Aristotelian use of this word appears, for instance, at 2.13.p. 31.17–31.26, where Psellos is following Philoponus’ commentary on the *De Anima*.

These components of the human being are ‘distinguishable by reason’ (τῷ λόγῳ διαίρετά (31)). ‘The moulding of the human being pours all of them together and for a time they are unclear’ (ἄφανῆ) (31–32). If someone at once gains a philosophical understanding and recognises what the actually existing things (ὄντα) are, Intellect and Soul, he hates matter and turns away from the body, and closing the senses and bidding farewell to *phantasia*, he first observes Soul (ψυχῆ) in its own nature, then he goes within to Intellect, and through Intellect is united with god (32–37). So far, this Neoplatonic account of philosophic development plays up the world-denying side of the tradition, as Plotinus, for instance, often does during his mental ascents.⁹

If one stays in the world of becoming (γένεσις) and uses the senses and possesses ‘a life which is dominated by *phantasia*’ (φαντασιώδη ... ζωῆν) (37–39), he dares to enter into the life of the beasts by his choices (39). Existing in ‘becoming’ he does not believe in any of the things that really exist (40), but only in the

⁹ To take one example of many, see *Enneads* 1.6.8, where he exhorts his listeners, in Homeric language, to return to their fatherland.

things he can touch (41). At one of these extremes live speechless dogs and pigs and wild animals; at the other extreme live angels and children of god, ‘and I might say, gods’ (44–45). A great chasm separates a beast from a god (45–46), so it is necessary, Psellos says, to posit a ‘middle life’ (46–47) which some of the Chaldean oracles call ‘partly light’ and ‘partly dark’ (47–48) ‘but which I would simply call a human one’ (49).

It is in this turn to a mixed life that one can see the kind of thinking which characterises Psellos in many of his philosophical discussions, not least when he turns to problems of human psychology and the actual experience of lived existence. His impatient dismissal of oracular obscurity is very much in character: this, after all, is the same man who likened wrapping philosophy in myth to wrapping food in excrement (1.46.23–1.46.24), though he is elsewhere far more positive about myth and allegorical interpretation. It is this third life that Psellos goes on to discuss: a life, ‘like a beast and like a human and like a god’ (50–51), as neither a beast nor a god purely, but both (55). ‘So,’ he asks, ‘in which of the three lives do we think to have found the sphinx?’ (55) The life of *phantasia* (φαντασιώδης ... ζώή, a life dominated by sensation) is indicated by the animal part (59 ff). In so far as one flees from being a beast, one’s speech becomes articulate (64), but in so far as one practises a life not turned towards the divine, one’s words become confused and indistinct (64–66). The riddling and unclear language of the sphinx, in other words, is a result of the animal part of her nature. Intellect is the angel and *phantasia* the beast; one is open to intelligible reality, the other a wandering and mindless thing in itself. When these qualities are mixed in a human being, they begin to overlap with each other’s functions, so that intellect employs *phantasia* and *phantasia* thinks (74–75). When there is a battle between body and spirit, the two faculties operate in each other’s sphere (77). When the body wins, we are altogether dominated by perception (φανταστικοί); when the spirit (πνεῦμα) wins, we operate in Intellect (νοηροί). When each part rules and is ruled, ‘we’re simply sphinxes’ (80). Psellos concedes that, for most of us, staying here in the middle is the likeliest situation. The battle will go on.

What emerges from all of these short essays is a particularly human version of the Platonic tradition. Psellos brings out, in his own way, much of what is best about that tradition: the set of useful ambivalences with which it started, and in particular, the unwillingness to be overwhelmed by one aspect or another of the human composite. This is far from the emotionally disengaged (and ethically disengaged) asceticism as which late-antique and medieval Platonism is sometimes presented. Increasingly, such an understanding of the Platonic tradition is being revealed as the caricature that it is. The Platonic tradition is always transformed in the hands of its major inheritors and the contradictions are among what is most useful in it, most productive. Psellos is a great inheritor and a great transmitter of that tradition, not least in his treatment of the body and the emotions. He is willing to accept the contradictions of human existence, and on occasion even to argue that within their own territory the emotional and bodily parts of the composite have a sovereignty on which even reason should not intrude.

All of this suggests a willing acceptance of the bodily and wordly, if not quite a celebration of them. In some further texts, to be discussed below, it is possible to see such a celebration. In all of these texts, however, an ambivalence, familiar from much else in the Platonic tradition, remains, and to construct an absolutely consistent view out of Psellos' writings would be to distort the evidence. I would like to move at this point to consider Psellos' thinking on interpretation, a topic closely connected to his thinking on human beings as composed of body, soul and intellect. It is this composite creature who interprets, and Psellos shows an awareness that the composite nature of the interpreter makes interpretation itself a multifaceted process.

It has been necessary already to discuss some of the texts in which Psellos appears as interpreter of myth and text. The group of generally short essays or lectures in the *Philosophica Minora* dedicated to allegorical interpretation offer a great deal of interest for an appreciation of Psellos' attitudes to the body and the philosophical life. They also reflect on the process of interpretation itself, and the relationship between the readings which Psellos produces and the ancient sources with which he is concerned. There are important variations in Psellos' positions regarding interpretation, in particular on the point of whether the interpreter unearths or creates the meaning of the text, and on the question of the primacy of the pleasure of the text or its philosophical or theological profit. In part these dichotomies are due to Psellos' bold and inclusive character as a thinker: his tendency to find productive middle ground has rightly been much remarked upon in recent writing on his works, and it is telling that scholars approaching Psellos with very different questions and through a range of his texts have come to recognise this as a central feature of his thought.¹⁰ In his thinking on interpretation, just as in other philosophical questions, these tendencies are in evidence. More than this, however, the way in which any reader will understand the process of interpreting depends on some sense of the nature of the being who interprets. The multiple and composite nature of the self in Psellos' thought leads necessarily to a view of the reader as multiple and composite.

For Psellos, the interpretation of literary texts and Hellenic myth really becomes interesting when the literal meaning of the text is left behind. His remarks on the reading practices of Nicetas reflect this preference for the allegorical,¹¹ which can in any case readily be demonstrated from the readings of ancient literature which survive under his name. This is not to suggest that Psellos' was exclusively interested in allegorical interpretation; his comparison of the novelists Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius, for instance, engages with these texts on the level of style and plot, and does not resort to allegory (Psellos 1986, and again Wilson 1983, pp 174–177), though some medieval readers of Heliodorus certainly did (Miles 2009; Hunter 2005). Nonetheless, allegory is for Psellos an important mode of reading. In addition to the allegory on the sphinx discussed above, Psellos also gives allegorical readings concerning Hades, Tantalus and the Cave of the Nymphs on Ithaca (*opuscula* 32–48

¹⁰ Jenkins (2006); Kaldellis (1999, 2007).

¹¹ On the character of Nicetas, his relationship to Psellos and on the *Epitaphius Nicetae* see Cesaretti (1991) and the earlier translation and discussion by Wilson (1983), pp 149–150.

(‘Miscellanea et Allegorica’) in the first volume of the *Philosophica Minora*). While Psellos’ reading of the Cave of the Nymphs (1.45) follows that of Porphyry very closely, in the other allegorical readings he appears to be interpreting far more independently. In the course of offering these readings, Psellos frequently reflects on the nature of his own reading practices, often in striking metaphors. He is concerned not only, or even primarily, with interpreting the texts or myths in question, but with demonstrating a method which his students can in turn practise for themselves. Edwards plausibly sees a similar double purpose, both offering a particular interpretation and demonstrating a mode of interpretation, in Porphyry’s essay ‘On the Cave of the Nymphs’ (Edwards 1996), and Psellos even more clearly is intent on offering, and reflecting upon, a model of reading which students can immitate. At the conclusion, for instance, of the ‘Allegory on Tantalus’ (1.43), Psellos says: ‘Since we have now opened up the road of Hellenic myth for you for the first time and demonstrated the way in which one ought to interpret these things allegorically, fitting them to this measure, you too bring something similar to the remaining myths’ (Ἐπεὶ οὖν ὑμῖν τὴν ὁδὸν νῦν πρῶτως τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν μύθων ἠνοιξαμεν καὶ ὑφηγησάμεθα ὅπως δεῖ τούτους ἀλληγορεῖν, τῷ ἐνταῦθα κανόνι στοιχοῦντες καὶ ὑμεῖς τι τοῖς ἐπιλοίποις συνεισενέγκατε (1.43.120–1.43.122)).

While Psellos clearly sees the allegorical method as something which one may simply learn to apply, the exact nature of this activity is defined in two contradictory ways. On a number of occasions, there appears a fairly conventional understanding of a hidden meaning of the text. The image of the ancient mystery cults appears frequently in connection with this view, as for instance in the opening of the allegory on the sphinx cited above (1.44). Somewhat similarly in 1.3, the Egyptians are said to have concealed their teachings ‘in coffers’, leaving only the sphinx outside the walls (1.3.100–1.3.102). More negatively, Psellos speaks of the construction of allegory as concealment of philosophy in the ‘excrement of myth’ (1.46.23–1.46.24).

This notion of encoded ancient wisdom which can be revealed through allegorical reading is a widespread and important one in the Neoplatonic tradition (Lamberton 1989), but Psellos also shows on occasion a rather more striking indifference to whether this meaning was ever concealed there or intended at all. At the conclusion of 1.44 (‘Allegory on the Sphinx’), Psellos writes: ‘Whether the myth intended such a thing, I don’t know; and if I have thought out something eccentric, this too is both philosophical and Pythagorean’ (111–112). Interpretation, on this very different model, is really a transformation of the text; the interpreter makes it into something which it previously was not. This is a point which Psellos makes more clearly at the beginning of his allegory on the Homeric line ‘the gods sat beside Zeus and took council’ (οἱ δὲ θεοὶ πᾶρ Ζηνὶ καθήμενοι ἡγορόωντα) (*Philosophica Minora* 1.42). He begins with the favourite image of the bitter and the drinkable water, the latter of which is generally used of Christianity and the former of Hellenic philosophy (Duffy 1999). He moves from here to state that there is ‘another form of technical discourse’ (ἄλλο εἶδος τεχνικοῦ λόγου (1.42.5–1.42.6)), which has the power of transformation. While Moses worked this wonder (of transformation) in actions by changing his brother Aaron’s staff to a snake (*Exodus* 7.10), discourse too is able to produce change. A wise man is not one able merely to proclaim divine things ac-

ording to their own nature, but who can alter towards a more divine form things of opposed tendency (1.42.1–1.42.15). In other words, the ‘wise’ reader is one who is able not merely to elucidate worthy texts, but who can also transform apparently unworthy textual materials into a philosophically and religiously respectable meaning.

This is quite different from the attitude of late-antique Platonists, and from the majority of allegorical readers in general.¹² Porphyry, for instance, in an essay which Psellos clearly knew well, is much concerned with arguing that his reading of the Cave of the Nymphs is the right one, on the grounds both of Homer’s own authority and of the reading’s complexity and coherence (*De Antro Nympharum* 36). In part, Psellos’ quite different position is a defensive one: it serves to make Psellos’ use of pagan learning acceptable, and gives him an opportunity to protest (too much?) that he is one of ‘us’, the Christians, not those pagans, whose views differ from the true, Christian view more than the Mysians differ from the Phrygians (1.42.11–1.42.15).¹³ In this attitude to interpretation, Psellos’ pragmatism and acceptance of uncertainty appear once more. More than this, there is also a celebration of the application of ingenuity. Again, it is not the reading resulting from the application of the allegorical method which is so important, but rather the process of producing it as a philosophical exercise. Moses is in this respect too an apt choice of paradigm, as the episode of his transformation of staff into snake is part of a demonstration of closeness to divine power and of superiority over his rivals, the pharaoh’s magicians. In Moses’ case too it is the act of transformation rather than the end result which is the point: producing a snake is not for the purpose of having a snake, but for demonstrating the divine power with which Moses is in contact.

In his thinking on body and soul, Psellos argues that the most practical approach is to reconcile the two, maintaining the composite in good order; likewise in his thinking on text and interpretation, he does not want us to concentrate only on the ‘higher things’ which texts may suggest, but on the action of transforming the written words into ‘something more divine’. In both cases, there is a celebration of tension, even contradiction, and of process.

A further important move in Psellos’ representation of interpretation is made in the brief conclusion to 1.44: an implicit likening of the interpreter and the sphinx. This suggestion is made by the closing allusion to ‘Pythagorean’ speech. Earlier in the essay (or lecture), this was a characteristic of the sphinx (1.44.17), now it is transferred to the interpreter himself: while the sphinx has ‘an Atticising and Pythagorean tongue’, the interpreter has produced a reading which is ‘philosophical and Pythagorean’. Most immediately, this remark about Pythagoreanism reminds his readers or listeners about the nature of the dense paragraph which has just preceded on the numerical symbolism of the sphinx’s riddle, which saw in it a veiled allusion to the progression towards wisdom with age, moving from the ‘purely bodily and elemental’ stage of childhood to the stage of adulthood and hovering

¹² The bibliography on allegory is enormous. For a broad overview see Whitman (2000).

¹³ For the proverb see Leutsch and Schneidewin (2010), 1.377. Psellos’ use of the proverb here seems to imply that he understands it to mean ‘a great distance apart’, but it is usually used of things which are hard to separate.

between mental and physical life, and finally to the dominance of the spiritual/intellectual in old age (1.44.90–1.44.110). By suggesting, however, that the speech of the sphinx and the interpreter are similar, it also raises the question of the nature of that interpreter.

If the object of interpretation is the sphinx and her riddle, the interpreter ought to be Oedipus, whose proper subject in the end was, of course, himself. The core of the Oedipus story, from the foundational version of Sophocles onwards, is a drama of interpretation, in which Oedipus, who had become king of Thebes by solving the riddle of the sphinx, traces the clues to find the killer of King Laius, only to discover that he himself is the murderer. Our interpreter, like Oedipus, has found himself in his act of inquiry: both in the sense that he has found the image of the sphinx to be the image of man (which was the solution to the sphinx's riddle), and also in that Psellos has arrived at an understanding of the sphinx as human being/ composite which is similar to his own self-representations elsewhere as a composite monster, as for instance in letters 160 and 191 (Kurz and Drexler 187.12–187.16 and 217.28–217.29). This sphinx does not merely convey a riddle about the nature of humanity, but is herself the image of humanity. Since Psellos both defines humanity in general as composite, and describes himself in particular as a person acutely aware of a composite and conflicting nature, he is able to recognise himself here in his object of interpretation in a double sense: both as a human being, and in particular as the multifaceted Michael Psellos.

To return to the first and broader of these self-recognitions: our interpreter, as an ordinary human being, is a sphinx. This implies not just a particular way of being, but also a manner of interpreting, embracing both the earthly and imperfect text and the transcendent meanings produced through its interpretive metamorphosis. A further, and related, duality appears in Psellos' shifting between the literary and rhetorical pleasures of the text and its philosophical/theological content. Psellos often shows a lively enjoyment of the literary and rhetorical aspects of the texts that he interprets, both pagan and Christian. In a speech on the works of Gregory of Nazianzos, in whose works Psellos had a keen interest, he describes being captured by the charm of the text, and filling with kisses the author who has transported him. Returning to the meaning, he laments 'the addition as a deprivation', that is, the surface, aesthetic beauty which had captured him now seems a mere distraction from the intelligible beauty.¹⁴ No final 'right' perspective is imposed on this duality, but as with the image of the sphinx, the tensions are fundamental to the nature of the imagined human being and the imagined reader.

Just as Psellos was willing to embrace the material as well as the intelligible parts in his thinking on the human composite, he shows a parallel, and related willingness to enjoy the purely aesthetic aspects of texts as well as their philosophical or theological content. This aesthetic enjoyment, moreover, is expressed very much in sensory and bodily terms: his pleasure in Gregory's writing is 'a springtime in the rosegarden of his words' in which he is 'carried away by the senses' (Papaioannou

¹⁴ For the text: Mayer (1911), lines 46–59, p 49. For an insightful discussion of this piece: Papaioannou (2006), pp 107–109.

2006, p. 109). This double beauty which Psellos celebrates as a reader, combining the excellence of Plato and Demosthenes, and beauty of expression with beauty of thought, is also what he recommends, and attempts to practise, as a writer (*Theologica* 1.19.81–1.19.93). As both reader and as writer, in other words, Psellos perceives separate, yet interwoven, pleasures of the text, corresponding to the parts of the human composite which perceive them. Elsewhere in his critical writing, Psellos regards the text as a kind of animal, and Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* in particular as a monstrous yet beautiful beast,¹⁵ whose complexity makes it difficult for the reader to take in. Psellos finds, in other words, similar characteristics of composition and complexity in reader and text, and most of all in himself.

Much of the framework of Psellos' thinking, as it is presented in his lectures and other works, is traditional: the distinction of the sensible and the intelligible, the human being as a composite of unlike parts, the Platonic progression from perception to true knowledge of the timeless and non-spatial. Yet within this apparently conventional structure, the most important moves which Psellos makes are strikingly his own, in particular, his appreciation of the bodily and material parts of the human composite and his celebration of the fact of composition in itself. Few have been as pleased to be composite creatures as the Psellos whom we encounter in his varied writings; he shows a clear-eyed acceptance of the sphinx-like nature of human beings, and consequently of the reader/writer as a sphinx interpreting and producing composite riddles.

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Murdering Souls and Killing Bodies: Understanding Spiritual and Physical Sin in Late-Medieval English Devotional Works

Philippa Maddern

One of the most puzzling aspects for modern readers of the early fifteenth-century *Dives and Pauper* text on the Ten Commandments is its tendency to elide any distinction between spiritual and physical wrongdoing. For example, fully one third of the author's treatise on the injunction 'Thou shalt not kill' comprises a lengthy diatribe against flatterers, slanderers and backbiters, those who set a bad example to others, or encourage them in sin and folly, or trap them into false oaths, and clerics who fail to censure mortal sin committed by their parishioners (Barnum 1980, pp. 1–57). Since these sins, however grave, constitute spiritual shortcomings rather than physical violence, what place do they have in a didactic text against murder and manslaughter? Why should the author equate spiritual sins with physical homicide?

Our failure to understand this apparent category-confusion reflects our ignorance of the perceptions of soul/body distinctions and relationships in late-medieval English-language texts. What do we know about them? The answer, unfortunately, is 'very little'. Fine scholarly analysis has been carried out on the subtle Latin scholastic philosophies of soul and body in the high middle ages, and on their outworkings in Continental devotional practice (Bynum 1991b, 1995; Wopke de Boer 2011). But whether, or how, these perceptions were conveyed to lay audiences through the medium of late-medieval vernacular literatures remains a surprisingly underdeveloped topic. Furthermore, as I shall show, a survey of late-medieval vernacular reveals intriguing anomalies in accounts of souls and bodies in this period; instances where souls seem to behave as if they were bodies and *vice versa*, or cases where soul/body distinctions seem to be altogether elided.

The only significant corpus of scholarship on the question of soul/body relationships centres round versions of the 'Debate between the Soul and the Body'. Works in this genre, in both Latin and vernacular versions, portrayed body and soul at

P. Maddern (✉)

ARC Centre for the History of Emotions 1100-1800, The University of Western Australia (M208), 35 Stirling Highway, 6009, Perth, Australia
e-mail: philippa.maddern@uwa.edu.au

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their point of separation (the death of the subject), and have apparently fascinated English readers from Anglo-Saxon times to the twenty-first century.¹ But descriptions and narratives of body and soul in the wealth of other late-medieval English vernacular literature—encyclopaedias, theological, devotional and didactic tracts, sermons, poems and plays—remain almost completely unregarded.

Yet whatever else defined a human being in the minds of late medieval English vernacular writers, one thing was certain. Each individual was composed of an almost oxymoronic conjunction of opposite substances—the soul and the body. We are ‘maid of twa naturis, bodely and spirituall’ [made of two natures, bodily and spiritual], one late-medieval theologian bluntly wrote (de Irlandia 1926, p. 71). Created together, bound indissolubly together as long as the body lived and reunited at the general resurrection, body and soul were nevertheless typified as related in a series of binary oppositions. The soul *was* the soul because it was incorporeal—‘of bodiless substance’, as John Trevisa termed it in his late-fourteenth century translation of Bartolomeus Anglicus’ encyclopaediac *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (Seymour 1975, vol. 1, p. 90, opening of Book 3, ‘*De Anima Racionali*’). The body *was* the body because it lacked the capacities of the soul.

Dichotomies between body and soul theoretically operated along a number of axes. In terms of the syzygies of elemental properties, (dense/subtle, acute/obtuse, immobile/mobile), beautifully set out in the twelfth century by William of Conches in his *Dragmaticon Philosophiae* (William of Conches 1997, pp. 29–30), the body was dense, the soul ‘subtle’;² the soul acute, the body obtuse; the soul mobile, the body immobile unless activated by the soul. As Trevisa’s translation has it, the soul ‘geueth lif to alle the body and gouerneth and ruleth meuynges of alle the limes’ [gives life to all the body and governs and rules the movements of all the limbs] (Seymour 1975, p. 92). In terms of their description and analysis, bodies, being densely material, could be measured and assigned length and breadth. The soul had no such physical dimensions—‘the soule is noght ... isprad in length nothir in brede in the body’ [the soul is not...spread in length nor in breadth in the body] wrote Trevisa (Seymour 1975, p. 91). Bodies were necessarily visible; the soul was ‘vns-eye with bodyliche yyen’ [unseen with bodily eyes] (Seymour 1975, p. 92).³ Unlike the body, the soul was unitary and unchanging—or, in Trevisa’s words, ‘simple in kynde he may not growe, nothir be more nor lasse on tyme than another’ [by nature simple, it may not grow, nor be more or less one time or another]. Though the soul might incorporate many powers, it was still ‘noght changeabil in his substaunce’ [not mutable in its substance], and hence could not be described in terms of either its members, or its life-stage (Seymour 1975, p. 94).⁴ The radically different

¹ For the modern fascination with this genre, from a variety of critical perspectives, see, e.g., editions in Conlee (1991); Ackerman (1962); Utley (1972); Bossy (1976); Matsuda (1997); Brent (2001); Raskolnikov (2009), esp. intro and Chap. 2.

² See, e.g., Langland, (1995), vol. 1, p. 568; B text, Passus XV l. 11: the dreamer is instructed by ‘*a sotil thyng withalle—Oon withouten tonge and teeth*’, which proves to be the soul.

³ The author claims to be quoting John Damascene.

⁴ See Books 4–6 for the author’s contrasting treatment of the different parts of the body and their development over the life-cycle.

relationship of body and soul to time and change had final consequences; bodies died and rotted, but the soul, wrote Trevisa, ‘shall not die’ (Seymour 1975, p. 92).⁵ Soul and body could even be gendered differently. As compared to each other, the soul could adopt a masculine, as opposed to the body’s feminine, persona; by long medieval tradition, as Bynum neatly puts it,

Male and female were contrasted and symmetrically valued as intellect/body, active/passive, rational/irrational, reason/emotion, self-control/lust, judgement/mercy and order/disorder.⁶

No wonder, then, that Bishop John Fisher believed that the soul and body ‘may be thought to be as brother and sister’ (Fisher 1876, p. 302).⁷ Other writers figured them as a heterosexual couple—John de Irlandia wrote that in this life the soul was ‘married and espoused’ to the body (de Irlandia 1965, p. 78).⁸

True, other gender allocations were also possible. In some Body/Soul debates, both entities were allegorised as male, in a teacher/student or foster-brother relationship.⁹ In relation to Christ, the soul could be gendered female, as Christ’s spouse;¹⁰ and in one fifteenth century Body and Soul debate text, the soul is said to have been created ‘lady and mistress’ over the body, like the protagonist of a courtly romance (Halliwell 1855, p. 22, no. IV of the Porkington MS). Yet, as Bynum noted, the male/female dichotomy of soul and body matched well such other binary distinctions between them as reason and unreason, or governor and governed. The soul was the locus of human reason. Where the body had senses, the soul had intellect; ‘as the eye is in the body so is the intellect, understanding, in the soul’ ran Trevisa’s translation (Seymour 1975, pp. 92–93, quoting John Damascene). In comparison to the body, the soul had five ‘myztes and vertues’ [powers and capacities]. The first was ‘feeling’, enabling it to acknowledge bodily sensations, and if necessary activate rightful physical desires and dislikes. Then followed ‘bodiliche wit’ [bodily wit], which interpreted corporeal impressions, such as eyesight; ‘imagination’ ‘therby the soule biholdith the liknes of bodiliche thinges that beth absent’ [by which the soul beholds the likeness of bodily things that are absent’]; and ‘*racio*, reason’, whereby the soul judged good from evil and true from false. Last and best was ‘*intellectus*, vndirstondinge and inwit’ [intellect, understanding and consciousness], by which the soul ‘knowith materles and bodililes thinges as God and angelis and other siche’ [understands immaterial and incorporeal things such as God and angels (Seymour 1975, p. 95). Bartolomeaus, through Trevisa, adds that the first three of these powers were ‘common to men and to other beasts’ (since all created things

⁵ Again allegedly quoting John Damascene.

⁶ Bynum (1991b p. 151). But note the brilliant succeeding argument on how the feminine might be revalued through association with the incarnate bodily form of Christ.

⁷ Cf. also Fisher (1876, p. 300).

⁸ See Raskolnikov (2009, pp. 20–24) for a brief survey of the long history of this association. For more detail, Bynum (1991a).

⁹ Raskolnikov (2009 pp. 24, 109–110, 117–118, 128).

¹⁰ See, e.g., Small (1862, p. 122): ‘A human soul is Christ’s spouse’ [‘*mannes sawel ess Cristes spouse*’].

have souls of some kind). It might be argued, then, that these qualities, though still spiritual, were strongly linked to physical capacities. Hence ‘bodily wit’ understood corporeal things apprehended by physical organs such as the eyes and ears. But the possession of the two higher powers of reason and intellect tended to gender the soul male, and to set it irrevocably apart, both from other animals and from the body. Through reason and intellect, the soul was nearer to incorporeal beings, such as God and the angels, ‘hauynge the ymage of God in myght of knowynge and the liknes of louynge’ [having the image of God in power of knowing and likeness of loving]. Of the two aspects of the individual, the soul was clearly:

the worthiere kynde... be the whiche man acordith with angels, for be the soule man is ihoue vp to heuenliche thinges aboute the kynde of the body [the worthier nature... by the which humans accord with angels, for by the soul mankind is lifted up to heavenly things, *above the nature of the body*].¹¹

Indeed, John de Irlandia elevated the ‘dignity’ of the created soul not only above the body, but above the heavens and earth:

for nouthire hevin, nore Erd, na vthire bodely creature may resauē, worthely know, nore luf, the hie diuinite as dois the saule of mane, maid and ordand for eternal beatitud and felicite conforme to the ymage and similitud of the hie and gloriū trinite [for neither heaven, nor earth, nor any other bodily creature may receive, worthily know, nor love the high divinity as does the soul of mankind, made and ordained for eternal beatitude and felicity and conformed to the image and similitude of the high and glorious trinity]. (de Irlandia 1926, p. 59)

No wonder, then, that the soul not only moved, but governed, the body, as a lord his servant, a husband his wife, a parent a child, or a rider his mount. In the Porkington MS version of the Body/Soul debate Body reminds Soul that at creation, God ‘—ordent the body bothe in zoughetz and age/To be thy thral, thy servant, and thi page’ [ordained the body both in youth and age/To be thy thrall, thy servant, and thy page] (Halliwell 1855, p. 21). ‘[B]y vertu of the soule the body al aboute is iruled and imeued’ [by the power of the soul the entire body is ruled and moved], wrote Trevisa, adding that the soul was:

ioyned to the body in twey maners that is to menyngē, as mevere to the thing that is imeued, and also as a schipman is -oned to the schip [joined to the body in two ways, that is to say, as mover to the thing that is moved, and also as a sailor is joined to the ship] (Seymour 1975, p. 91).¹²

¹¹ Seymour (1975, pp. 95, 90); emphasis mine.

¹² Seymour (1975) The sailor/ship analogy derives ultimately from Aristotle’s *De Anima*. For the rider/steed metaphor, see the Middle English Body and Soul debate ‘Als I lay in a winteris nyt’, in Conlee, (1991, pp. 18–39), where Body describes how he ‘bore thee [Soul] on my back’ everywhere (p. 33, l. 266), while Soul alleges that ‘With your teeth you took the bridle’, and ‘ran about and brayed madly’ (p. 31, ll. 219 and 228: ‘Wedir I yede vp or down,/That I ne bar the on my bac’; ‘With thi teth the bridel thouz lauz’; ‘renne aboute and breyd wod’). See also the examination of this steed and rider metaphor in Vogel (1948). For an adult/child metaphor, see Halliwell (1855, p. 28), where Body complains that God gave Soul power as if Body were child, obeying its master for fear of a beating; ‘as a chyld his master dothe obbaye/...for feyre he schuld be bete’.

For late-medieval writers, however, these quantum differences between soul and body served to re-emphasise their miraculously entwined identity. It was, argued John de Irlandia, a union necessary to the perfection of original creation:

efir that the hie maieste had maid the spirituall natur of angell and bodely nature of hevin and element, the waurld was nocht perfit quhil he junyt baithe the naturis togiddir jn the man [after the high majesty [God] had made the spiritual nature of angels, and the physical nature of the heavens and the elements, the world was not perfect until he joined both the natures together in the man]. (de Irlandia 1926, p. 70)

God's original plan that each soul should be united to its own body displayed itself—even in the postlapsarian world—through inalienable emotional ties between souls and their bodies, as between the closest earthly relatives and friends. In the fifteenth-century Porkington MS version of the Body/Soul debate, Soul reminds Body that in life 'I was kyn to the' [I was kin to thee], and Body responds with an account of its pain when Soul 'that was my next frend' [that was my nearest friend] was torn away at death to be sent to hell (Halliwell 1855, pp. 17, 30). In *Als I Lay in a Winteris Nytt*, Soul, having castigated Body roundly for its wickedness, nevertheless admits that 'al mi loue on the I kest' [all my love on thee I cast] ('Als I Lay', in Conlee 1991, p. 35, line 314). Bishop Fisher thought the soul and the body were bound together like siblings by 'the love and amity that is between [them]'. This tie persisted even after death:

A truth it is, the souls that are hence departed out of their bodies, have nevertheless a natural desire and appetite to be knitted and joined with them again, which thing not only the theologians witness, but the philosophers also'. (Fisher 1876, p. 302; cf. de Irlandia 1965, p. 78 (citing Aristotle))

In turn, it was the indissoluble bond between soul and body that alone constituted individual identity. Some writers evidently believed that even Christ's selfhood could not be complete while soul and body were separated. In the second Harrowing of Hell episode of the N-town plays, when Christ's soul, leaving its dead body in the tomb, descends to hell to liberate the pre-Christian faithful, the stage directions scrupulously name the character '*Anima Christi*'. Only following the (tricky!) direction to the Soul of Christ to 'cross to resurrect the body' does the character re-assume the true personal name 'Jesus'. (Davies 1972, pp. 328–330; '*Tunc transiet Anima Christi ad resuscitandum corpus*').

The concept of an identity formed of opposite but integral parts is beautifully captured in the C text of *Piers Plowman*. The dreamer interrogates *Liberium Arbitrium* (one aspect of the soul) as to its nature, and is told that it is 'a wille with a resoun/And may nat be withoute a body to bere me where hym liketh' [a will with reason/And may not be without a body to bear me where he chooses]. "'*Thenne is that body bettere then thou?*'" [Then is that body better than thou?] asks the narrator, to be answered:

...Nay, no bettere...

Bote as wode were afuyre; thenne worcheth bothe

[...Nay, no better.../But as if wood were afire; then both operate]. (Langland 1995, vol. 1, p. 569, C Passus XVI, lines 175–178)

To the alert medieval reader, no image could be more striking. Flame and wood represented opposite poles of the properties of the elements; flame, the hottest, most acute, subtle and mobile element, nearest to pure aether, wood (from earth), the coldest, densest, most obtuse, least mobile and most physical. Yet as Soul rightly understands, the *esse* of fire is the union of these opposites. Lacking either, it would be no fire at all.

The conjunction of such apparently incompatible elements allowed diverse interpretations of possible body/soul relationships. Langland's thinking and decision-making entity that nevertheless needs to be carried everywhere like a helpless infant may not seem like the authoritative mover and governor proposed to Middle English readers by Bartolomeus Anglicus via Trevisa; but both reflect aspects of the mutual dependence between body and soul (the body enlivened by the soul, yet the soul without 'hand and foot' to move itself physically) ('Als I Lay', in Conlee 1991, p. 34 l. 292).

The ancient view of soul as the locus of identity, and the body as its hated prison or despised burden, survived in the *artes moriendi* literature. 'The Art and Craft to Know Well to Die' advised its readers that according to Plato,

the bodily death of good people ... is none other thing but the ... going out, of prison and of exile, and discharging of a right grievous burden ... to wit of the body⁷.¹³

Yet this somewhat Manichean dichotomising took place alongside Fisher's and John de Irlandia's equally potent view of the identity of, and intense love between, body and soul.

Similarly, emphasising either the interdependence of soul and body, or their diametrically opposed qualities, led to differing interpretations of the significance of bodily illness. On one hand, spiritual disorder might manifest directly in the body, either metaphorically or in reality, as particularly loathsome diseases. One early fourteenth-century homily, for instance, relates leprosy to lechery and pride:

For riht als leper mas bodi
Ugli, and lathe, and unherly
Sua mas the filth of lickeri
The sawel ful lath, gastelye
And the bolning of priue prid
Es leper, that na man mai hid
[For just as leprosy makes the body/Ugly and loathsome and repulsive/So the filth of lechery makes/The soul quite loathsome, spiritually/And the swelling of privy pride/Is leprosy that no man may hide.].¹⁴

On the other, the soul's contrariety to the flesh led to the supposition of an inverse relationship between the state of the soul and the health or appearance of the body. Thus the same sermon series noted that pride in wealth or good looks:

geres it man think mar
Of his bodi, that it wel far
Than he of his sawel dos...

¹³ Comper (1917, p. 57). Cf. similarly, but without ascription to Plato, in Comper (1917, p. 6).

¹⁴ Small (1862, pp. 129–130). See also Rawcliffe (2006), esp. pp. 46 and 49.

His fairnes wtout he schawes
 To sem better than his felaues...
 The liking of his wlanc wede
 Gers him tin his sawel mede
 [makes a man think more/Of the welfare of his body/Than he does of his soul.../He shows
 his fine looks externally/To seem better than his fellows.../His liking for his splendid
 clothes/Makes him lose his soul's health]. (Small 1862, pp. 42–43)

Physical illness might be spiritually efficacious if accepted as just chastisement for sin, or warning of the likelihood of imminent death and therefore the necessity for undertaking true repentance and charitable works. Hence, as the Disciple in a fifteenth-century ‘Learn to Die’ text trenchantly remarks, well-meaning friends who attempted to cheer the sick by persuading them that their illness was not life-threatening were disastrously mistaken—‘*the frendes of the body are enmys to the saule*’ [the friends of the body are enemies to the soul] (British Library Additional MS 37049, fol. 40r). Better, as the fourteenth-century French doctor Guy de Chauliac advised, for medical advisors to encourage their patients to believe that physical illness would ensure the soul’s health—‘First, in clepyng Goddes help, he schall comforte ham and saie that this passioun or sekenesse is saluacioun of the soule’ [First, in calling on God’s help, he shall comfort him and say that this suffering or sickness is salvation of the soul] (cited in Rawcliffe 2006, p. 57).

Medical and scientific theory also found ways to bridge the gulf between body and soul, by proposing mechanisms and structures by which they operated. However single its nature, the soul, Trevisa’s translation tells us, has divisions and subdivisions; or, more properly, ‘three sorts of capacities’. The *vegetative soul*, common to plants, animals and humans, gives life without feeling; the *sensible soul*, shared between humans and animals, gives feeling; while the *reasonable soul* pertains to humans alone (Seymour 1975, p. 96).¹⁵ It was the ‘sensible’ soul—that is, in the medieval meaning of the term, that part of the soul dealing with the physical senses—that produced movement in the body, through an elaborately anatomized system of ‘wosen’ [arterial tubes], ‘veynes’ [veins] ‘smale weyes’ [small tubes], sinews, spinal cord, and bone marrow. This operation of the soul was actually located in different parts of the body—in the liver for the movement of the humors, in the heart for ‘the vertu of lif’ [the power of life], and in ‘the smale chambres of the brayn’ [the small chambers of the brain] for the power to activate muscles and so move the limbs (Seymour 1975, pp. 99–100). As a corollary, this aspect of the soul was not immortal; ‘whan the body dieth this soule dieth also, and the workinge therof failith’ [when the body dies, this soul dies too, and its workings fail] (Seymour 1975, p. 100).

Only the human-specific rational and intellective soul, ‘euerlastinge, incorruptibil, and may nozt die, [everlasting, incorruptible, and immortal], survived the cataclysmic body-soul separation at death (Seymour 1975, p. 101). But even the rational soul required some means of interaction with the body. As Rawcliffe notes, some medical theorists proposed that a process of purifying blood by air from the lungs,

¹⁵ Chaps 7–16 of Bartolomaeus Book III deal especially with the workings of the soul in the body.

and further refining and mixing it with air from the nostrils, enabled this originally corporeal substance to ascend to the brain and dwell next to the soul. This purified substance was apparently thought to be capable of transmitting information between the bodily perception of the senses and the purely spiritual faculty of reason that would interpret the data (Rawcliffe 2006, p. 67).

None of these understandings of soul and body can be termed new or original to late-medieval England. They reflected theological and philosophical discussions of human nature that had already enlivened nearly two thousand years of philosophy and theology. Aristotle's writings on the independence and immortality of the soul continued to be quoted to the end of the fifteenth century (de Irlandia 1965, pp. 103–104). Augustine specifically wrote on the nature of the soul, and devoted much of Book 22 of *The City of God* to the philosophical problems attaching to the resurrection of the body (Augustine 1998, Book 22).¹⁶ Discussions of the most correct analogies of soul-body relationships engaged scholars from the patristic period to the fourteenth century, as did debates on the nature of the risen body, its continuity with its original form and its continued relationship to the soul.¹⁷ Thirteenth and fourteenth-century philosophers and theologians debated at length how, and how much, the soul could be said to inhere in the body (did it, for instance, act as a force perfecting the body, or as a kind of Aristotelian substantial form, organising the body's naturally shapeless and disorganised matter?) (Wopke de Boer 2011). The Body/Soul debate genre itself (some scholars argue) may derive ultimately from pre-Nicean Christian Egyptian writings, and certainly enlivened Latin and vernacular text traditions from the early middle ages onwards.¹⁸

Yet a closer reading of the wide range of late-medieval English texts and references on souls and bodies discloses initially surprising anomalies in the presentation of these apparently well-understood dichotomies of the body and soul, and reveals a number of reversals and grey areas in the way bodies and souls were perceived. Sometimes—as in the *Dives and Pauper* text with which this chapter began—spiritual and physical matters were so closely equated that it seems the author made no distinction between them, in defiance of the weight of tradition that defined the physical and the spiritual as essentially different (Bynum 1991, 1995; Wopke de Boer 2011). Even more surprisingly, as I shall show, bodies and souls sometimes seemed to swap essential characteristics. In these texts, souls apparently suffer physical torment, helpless to oppose it or avoid it by reason, while bodies—even dead ones!—move independently of their souls, or engage in sophisticated philosophical debate, of which they should, by nature, be incapable. How, then, can we best make sense of, one the one hand, the drastic elision of the physical and the spiritual in devotional tracts such as *Dives and Pauper*, and on the other the representations of souls and bodies as exchanging essential characteristics?

¹⁶ See article by Karen Pratt, this volume.

¹⁷ See e.g., Bynum (1995); for a particular analysis of the long history of the horse and rider analogy, see Vogel (1948, pp. 31–36).

¹⁸ E.g. Matsuda (1997, p. 132), citing Louise Dudley, *The Egyptian Elements in the Legend of the Body and Soul* (1911). Cf. Utey (1972), esp. p. 691.

The Body/Soul debate literature is full of cases where soul and body appear to exchange essential and well-established characteristics. As Raskolnikov puts it, by the end of these dialogues, ‘the Body possesses a Soul’s capacity to reflect and to have opinions’ while ‘a Soul will proceed to hell, having apparently gained some of the Body’s faculty to suffer, to act, and most of all, to be acted on by violent means’ (Raskolnikov 2009, pp. 80 and 87–88, quote from p. 87).¹⁹ But the debates are not the only genre to display these bewildering transformations of soul/body characteristics. In a great variety of late-medieval vernacular discourses souls assume vividly corporeal characteristics, such as distinct body parts, emission of bodily fluids (blood and tears) and intense physical suffering. Stories of souls in hell portrayed them as tortured not spiritually, but in literal physical reality. John Myrc’s template sermon for Advent Sunday recycled an allegedly ancient exemplum of a man who, recovered from a near-death experience, took up extreme ascetic practices because of the terrifying vision he had seen in his coma. Guided by an angel, he had witnessed in the fires of hell:

sowles bulmyng vp and don, crying horribuly, and a noyse of fendes crying: “Sle, sle, sle, sle, sle, sle opon the broche, rost hote, cast ynto the cawdren, seethe fast yn pyche...and brymston, and hot leed! [souls surging up and down crying horribly, and a noise of fiends crying: ‘Slay, slay, slay, slay, slay, slay upon the spit, roast hot, cast into the caldron, seethe fast in pitch...and brimstone and hot lead]. (Erbe 1905, p. 5)

Similarly, in the ‘Childe of Bristowe’ tale, the good son receives a vision of his errant father’s soul:

...burning as a live coal,
The devil led him by the neck,
In a burning chain. (Anonymous 1992–1995, p. 318)

It is clear that the souls do not merely suffer these tortures, but feel them acutely, and are terrified by even the prospect of such pain. In the ‘Learn to Die’ dialogue of Add. MS 37049, the Image of Death motivates the Disciple to timely repentance by urging him to bear in mind a picture of his soul’s post mortem fate should he die unrepentant:

and so behold oft tymes thi saule amongis the brynyng coles crying O thu beste beloued of al frendes helpe thi wrecchyd saule haue mynde of me now that is in so hard prison [and so behold oftentimes thy soul among the burning coals, crying ‘O thou best beloved of all friends help thy wretched soul, have mind of me now that is in such hard prison].²⁰

Late medieval Body/Soul debates not only show the Soul weeping with fear, anguish and fruitless regret (‘By the body the spret stod and weppyd’ [By the body the spirit stood and wept]; they also recount demonic tortures inflicted on souls, itemising in gruesome detail the body-like parts the demons attack. In *Als I Lay*:

¹⁹ For another clear account of the apparent transfer of characteristics between Body and Soul in these debates, see Bossy (1976, pp. 144–163, esp. pp. 146–154). For a similar analysis of rationality displayed by the body in the Latin tradition, Brent (2001, pp. 13–18).

²⁰ British Library Additional MS 37049, fol. 40r.

Some the chaules it towrasten
 And zoten in the led al hot
 And bedin him to drinke faste...
 A deuil kam ther ate laste
 ...A colter glowende in him he thraste
 That it thoruz the herte it smote
 [Some [devils] forced open the jaws/And poured in the lead all hot/And bade him, drink
 fast.../A devil came there at last.../A sharp glowing stake he thrust into him/That through
 the heart it smote]. (Conlee 1991, p. 44, lines 513 ff)

The Porkington MS version adds that Soul was ‘dismembered’ (as if the soul had members!) with the fiends’ nails and beaten ‘full hard and sore’ with staves (Halliwell 1855, pp. 33–34; ‘*And with here naylys he was dysmemborte*’, ‘*Sume with zerdys smothe ful hard and soore*’).

It is hardly surprising that a soul liable to suffer such physical assaults should be subject also to death. Indeed much late-medieval devotional and didactic literature seems preoccupied with the possibility that the soul could actually undergo either suicide or murder, and the necessity for timely conversion to right living to prevent these final catastrophes. Thus despite Trevisa’s assurance that the reasoning soul is immortal, the Wycliffite version of the *Lay Folks Catechism* specifically warns readers against spiritual suicide—‘thou schalt not sle thyn owne sowle be consent to dedly synne’ [thou shalt not slay thine own soul by consent to mortal sin] (Simmons and Nolloth 1901, pp. 46–47). Hence the *Dives and Pauper* author’s otherwise odd classification of such sins as flattery and backbiting as homicide; he believed that they cause the death not of bodies, but of the souls both of perpetrators and victims. Flattery, for instance, according Pauper ‘sleth the soule bothe of hym that flatryth & of hym that is flatryd’ [slays the soul both of him that flatters and of him that is flattered], because lying praise itself is ‘deadly sin’, and is also perilously liable to lead the flattered to the mortal sins either of spiritual blindness and false pride or (when the lies of flattery are discovered) of despair (Barnum 1980, pp. 2–5). Literally a spiritual suicide, the flatterer is also so insidious a murderer of other souls that the flattered never realise their own danger—they ‘slepy in her synne & deyyn gostlyche withoutyn payne & nout perceyuyn her owyn deth’ [sleep in their sin, and die spiritually without pain and do not perceive their own death] (Barnum 1980, p. 5). Indeed, any who by bad example or encouragement hinder others from performing good deeds or encourage them to sin and folly are:

lymys of the fend, whiche, as Crist seith...is a manqweller from the begynnynge of the world, for...he slow al mankende bothin bodilyche & gostlyche at the begynnynge of the world’ [limbs of the fiend, who, as Christ says, is a murderer from the beginning of the world, for...he slew all mankind both bodily and spiritually at the beginning of the world] (Barnum 1980, pp. 19, 21; ‘eggyn hem to synne & folye’).

Such sins are more to be castigated than mere physical murder, because of the superiority of soul to body. As one *Ars Moriendi* writer put it:

though bodily death be most dreadful of all fearful things...yet spiritual death of the soul is as much more horrible and detestable, as the soul is more worthy and precious than the body (Comper 1917, p. 5).

Yet understanding this logic does not help us to comprehend how the supposedly ‘immortal’ soul could be said to die.

The soul’s signs of physical suffering were not, however, always or necessarily associated with hellfire and damnation; they might appear in accounts of eternal life. John Myrc, in his sermon for the feast of St. Thomas A Beckett, relates a vision of the saint’s entry into heaven vouchsafed by a particularly pious twelfth-century monk in Jerusalem who on his own deathbed saw a bishop entering the celestial courts:

wyth a huge company of angeles and of othyr seyntyts. And as he stode befor God, his hed dreppyd downe of blode of his wondes that he had [with a huge company of angels and of other saints. And as he stood before God, his head dripped down blood with the wounds that he had]. (Erbe 1905, p. 43)

Not only did these souls behave like bodies; bodies, in contradistinction to all received wisdom, sometimes acted like souls. Theology, philosophy and medicine alike adamantly maintained that at death the soul survives, while the body, until the last judgement, loses all existence and function. It cannot see, speak, listen or move; it rots, is devoured by worms, and eventually returns to the dust of its original creation. ‘Each corpse is earth’ wrote Myrc in his template funeral sermon (Erbe 1905, pp. 294–295). Yet dead bodies in late-medieval vernacular exempla and debate literature, move, speak and rise, well before doomsday, in a variety of circumstances. The Body/Soul debates portray astonishingly lively corpses, both physically and mentally. At Soul’s address they move, sometimes only lifting the head and groaning ‘as if it were sick’, sometimes (as in the Porkington MS), flinging off the coffin lid ‘Wyth gret vyolens’ (Conlee 1991, p. 27; Halliwell 1855, p. 20). Furthermore, one of the most puzzling aspects of the Body/Soul debates, often remarked on, is the extent to which Body matches, or even excels Soul in argument, employing that highly intellectual rationality which it should, by nature, never have possessed independently of the Soul. Though supposedly mute, witless, and imminently decaying, the *Als I Lay* Body anomalously argues its case at length, despite Soul’s repeated attempts to shut it up (‘Body, be still!’). In vain. The corpse continues to declaim, rendering Soul’s pronouncement that ‘thy tongue hath lost [leid] the speech’, ironic at best (Conlee 1991, pp. 27 (the body ‘*Lift vp his heued*’ from the funeral bier), 30, 42, 43–44). The Porkington MS Body lectures the Soul at length, acutely, and correctly, both on Soul’s created characteristics and its consequent responsibilities:

Reysone, mynd and wyll, God of his goodnyse
Ordent to the only, to this conclusion,
That thou schulddyst kepe thi body from confusion,
And azeynst al synne to make resistense...
Hit may not be the bodye schold be blamyte,
But only the sole that hath the soffrenté;
Thow haddyst the governans: art thou not a-schamyd?
[Reason, mind and will, God of his goodness/Ordained to thee only, to this end/That thou shouldst keep thy body from confusion/And against all sin to make resistance.../It may not be that the body should be blamed/But only the soul, that hath the sovereignty/Thou hadst the governance: art thou not ashamed?]. (Halliwell 1855, p. 22)

Indeed the whole relationship of Soul and Body in these debates seems, in theological terms, queasily topsy-turvy.

Again, other genres convey similar messages. In Myrc's sermons, dead bodies rise even more effectively than in the Body/Soul debates, to protect those who pray for their souls. Preaching on the efficacy of prayers for souls in purgatory, Myrc told the story of the pious man who, living near the churchyard, never failed to say at least a short 'De Profundis' for christian souls as he passed the graves. His diligence was rewarded when enemies attacked him, pursuing him as he fled homewards. Even in this extremity he knelt down to pray, whereupon 'all the chrych-yeorde rose full of bodyes, yche on wyth an ynstrument yn hys hond of his craft, and dryuen ayeyne his enmyes' [all the churchyard rose full of bodies, each with an instrument of his craft in his hand, and drove away his enemies]. Another exemplum relates how a crowd of corpses rose up to reproach a bishop who had suspended their local parish priest for his inability to sing any mass but the requiem, which he performed daily for the health of souls. 'Aghast' at this demonstration, the bishop promptly reinstated the priest (Erbe 1905, pp. 269–71).

To date, two explanations have been proposed for the transfer of characteristics between Body and Soul in the debate literature: the first, that these anomalous presentations are the result of the debates drawing on, and exploiting, homiletic traditions and themes from late-medieval popular devotion;²¹ the second that the debate genre itself, and the debates' purpose to produce a sophisticated understanding of self, necessitates vividly personifying, and granting voice to, both parties to the dispute.²² Yet however plausible these proposals, neither adequately explains both spiritual/physical elision *and* transfer of essential characteristics; and the first, particularly, is far more often alleged than well thought-out. Naturally a debate must have two voices. Undoubtedly the Body/Soul debates do have a didactic purpose, well served by their vivid portrayals of lively corpses and suffering souls. No doubt, too, as I have shown above, similar themes occur in the vernacular sermon literature of the late-middle ages. But then why should writers, particularly from the thirteenth-century onward, have been happy to use a debate format if it meant giving voice to a mute corpse? And why should preachers have chosen these particularly theologically dubious motifs for their homiletic purposes? Is their only aim to enliven the debates and engage readers' attention (and alarm) by grisly extravagances? What particular features of late-medieval devotion might produce these narrative effects and why? Ackerman's survey of late-medieval treatises and sermons effectively shows that representations of controversy between bodies and souls, and references to such themes as the need for confession, 'the hideousness of the rotting corpse' and the delusive pride of life were common; but his much less detailed narrative of broader late-medieval devotional concerns is of little help in

²¹ For assertions of the homiletic origins of the genre, see, e.g., Utley (1972, p. 691); Matsuda (1997), pp. 130–146 and 257–258); Reichl (2000, p. 228). For the debates and popular devotion, see Ackerman (1962). Ackerman is almost invariably cited in this context—see, e.g., Raskolnikov (2009, p. 110).

²² Raskolnikov (2009, esp. pp. 4–6); Matsuda (1997, p. 254).

understanding why they should have been so, or how anomalous and intertwining narratives of body and soul might have allayed or contributed to those concerns.²³

I argue that we cannot properly understand these intriguing representations of the changing relationships between soul and body without setting them in the context of a much grander, yet very widely accepted, late-medieval narrative of the salvation history of all humans. It is, after all, a mistake to assume that late-medieval vernacular writers envisaged the nature and relationship of souls and bodies as unchanging throughout history, either species-wide or individual. On the contrary, at each stage of the story of humanity from creation to last judgement, and of the individual from birth through death to resurrection, the configurations of body and soul changed radically.

Following Augustine, almost all fifteenth-century theologians held that by God's intention, in the original creation body and soul were perfect, and their relationship entirely harmonious. Though body and soul were created different in nature, they were, in the beginning, united in an equal will to love and serve their creator, and in ability to manifest different aspects of perfection. Thus, in the state of innocence before the Fall, the soul was 'right perfect' in 'science and knowledge', while the body, mirroring this faultlessness, was flawless and invulnerable, not to be hurt '*nore perist jn his body, be fyre, wattir, best, hurt ore ony vthire thinge*' [nor perished in his body by fire, water, beasts, hurt or any other thing]. Indeed, according to John de Irlandia, the prelapsarian body was:

jnmortale be possibilite, and, endurand that state, he had bene translait fra paradise to hewin without sekness ore deid' [potentially immortal, and, had that state [innocence] endured, would have been translated from paradise to heaven without sickness or death].²⁴

The soul in paradise acted in perfect obedience to God's commands; and the body, created to be subordinate to the soul, likewise (it was believed) would have performed its proper duties in unstinting obedience to the soul. Hence, the theologians wrote, children would have been generated without sin; God having commanded humans to 'increase and multiply', Adam's and Eve's souls would dutifully have commanded their bodies to achieve this task; and their bodies, equally deferent to the soul's command, would undertake coition and conception at the dictate of 'reason and wit', and entirely without the 'filth' of lust (de Irlandia 1926, pp. 65–67).

This picture of a soul infallibly and always able to perceive and obey the will of God, partnered by an incorruptible and potentially immortal body which inevitably acceded to the soul's will, is at radical odds with the variance between soul and body—in characteristics, purpose and actions—described as typical of human life in this world. How did the change come about? Obviously through the Fall. According to John de Irlandia (quoting Augustine) when humans, for the first time, disobeyed God, the harmony of soul and God and soul and body was shattered. The first consequence of the Fall, he noted, was that 'the reason of man is fallen from

²³ Ackerman (1962), esp. pp. 549–551.

²⁴ de Irlandia (1926, pp. 62–64); '*sa was his saule jn sciens and knowlage...tht js richt perfir*'. How, when, and on what grounds the transfer from Paradise to Heaven would have occurred in the absence of the Fall is not made clear.

high knowledge and noble state to great blindness and ignorance', leaving it capable only of imperfectly apprehending God. It followed that in the light of its weakened command of reason, the soul was unable completely to control human will, which was henceforth inclined to follow 'desire and pleasure' rather than obey 'the bridle of reason'. The soul's troubles were compounded by the fact that, mirroring the spiritual uprising against God, the post-lapsarian flesh commenced 'the rebelliousness of the sensual appetite against reason, and of that how we are inclined to fleshly pleasure and lust...' [the rebellion of the sensual appetite against reason, and from that, how we are inclined to fleshly pleasure and lust] (de Irlandia 1926, p. 85).

In paradise, then, body and soul were noticeably more alike, with more consonant interests, than in the post-lapsarian world. The body was capable of feeling, but like a spirit, invulnerable to pain, injury, disease, ageing and possibly death. Body and soul together could delight in activities that, following the Fall, would become the sinful desire of the flesh alone. John de Irlandia, for instance, thought that sex in paradise would be of 'more delight and love than now, for... do and that work had bene meryt, obeyand to the command of god' [more delight and love than now, because doing that work would have been meritorious, obeying the command of God]; hence something in which the soul could freely join (de Irlandia 1926, p. 67). Only after the Fall did body and soul become unwilling partners, dichotomous entities, often determined to pursue opposite courses, locked in a perpetual struggle of control and recalcitrance. This battle between opposing principles, however, was very much a civil war. Both entities were bound together in one individual identity, and the body continued to reflect, imperfectly, the structures of the soul. Thus, for example, the physical sense of sight could be viewed as the corporeal version of the remaining spiritual capacity of intellection.

Hence in the long process of salvation the aim of each postlapsarian individual should be to return their soul, as far as possible, to a relationship of pure obedience to God, and their body to correct and willing subservience to the soul. Though difficult, this objective was apparently thought not impossible—otherwise what was the point of relating stories of saints such as St. John the Evangelist who had so successfully overcome fleshly predilections as to achieve a paradise-like perfection of both body and soul? According to Myrc, when unbelievers offered the saint a poisoned chalice, the venom had no effect on him. Why? Because his steadfast rejection of all lust and sin and perfect virginity of both body and soul returned his body to the invulnerable condition of its first creation. Physical resistance to poison was thus both sign and result of his corporeal and spiritual chastity, and also proof that the characteristics of the prelapsarian body could to some extent be regained by perfect obedience to Christ in this life. Myrc draws the moral:

he that hath grace to kepe hym clene yn body and sowle, thagh the fende held ynto hym venym of lechery or of othry synne, hyt schall do hym no harme; but yn the ageynestondyng of his lust, he ys a martyr before God [he that has grace to keep him clean in body and soul, even if the fiend held out to him the poison of lechery or of other sin, it shall do him no harm; but in resisting lust, he is a martyr before God]. (Erbe 1905, p. 32)

Such extreme virtue, however, was held to be rare. Fallen humans much more easily adopted the lifestyle vividly evoked in the Body/Soul debates, where the body, denying all proper allegiance to the soul, heedlessly and treacherously insisted on following its own sinful course. Soul in the Porkington MS admits that ‘I should have made resistance/Against the flesh, false and deceptive’, but submits in defence that its Body was ‘never favourable’ to Soul:

When thy conciaanse wold the have made chastessed,
With wygellus, fastynge, or with allmysded
Thow woldyst say nay...
Thow soffyrd me never to have the soffyrantté
After thi lust thou wenttust always at learge
[When thy conscience would thee have made chastised/With vigils, fasting, or with alms
deeds/Thou wouldst say nay.../Thou suffered me never to have the sovereignty/After thy
desire thou wentest always at large]. (Halliwell 1855, pp. 24–25)

In *Als I Lay* Soul succinctly accuses its Body of flagrant disobedience; ‘*With thi teth the bridel thouh lauht./Thouh didst al that I the forbed*’ [Thou took the bit between thy teeth; Thou didst everything that I forbade thee] (Conlee 1991, p. 31). Such independent initiative—unnatural to the prelapsarian body—presumably occurred only because the Fall radically disturbed both the characteristics of Soul and Body, and the relationship between them.

The theme of mutual recrimination survived even when translated into different genres. The Welsh drama ‘The Soul and the Body’, possibly composed in the late fifteenth century, preserves faithfully the interchange in which the soul accuses the body of rebelling against reasonable control, while the body objects that the soul gave bad leadership, adding only a scene in which the Virgin Mary successfully pleads with Christ to save even this unpromising duo of warring partners (Jones 1939, pp. 100–120, 238–259; edition and translation of the play).

For contentious and unlike as Soul and Body might be in life, the moment of their greatest separation (and sometimes greatest mutual antagonism) came at death, when the mortal body, together with the sensible powers of the soul that gave it life and movement, were consigned to the grave, while the soul—whatever its state of righteousness—lived on, maintaining its power to think, feel and speak. Awaiting final resurrection in the grave, the body, as Bishop Fisher pointed out, retained all its disabilities resulting from original sin and more; helpless, inert, corruptible, incapable, attacked by air, moisture and worms, ‘vile and loathly to behold’ (Fisher 1876, p. 304). If the illustration to the MS 37049 Body/Soul disputation is any guide, however, the soul, even if in purgatory, retained its incorruptible form. The text is illustrated by a horridly-grinning, half-decomposed corpse confronting a Soul risen from it, naked, but with perfectly-formed body, and even beautifully groomed hair (BL MS 37049 fol. 82r; Fig. 1).²⁵

At this moment of the dreadful rift of ideally inseparable entities, even righteous souls might suffer grief for the loss of a well-conducted body. Bishop Fisher, for instance, imagined that Lady Margaret Beaufort’s soul:

²⁵ In this dispute, unlike most others, the soul is apparently bound for purgatory rather than hell.

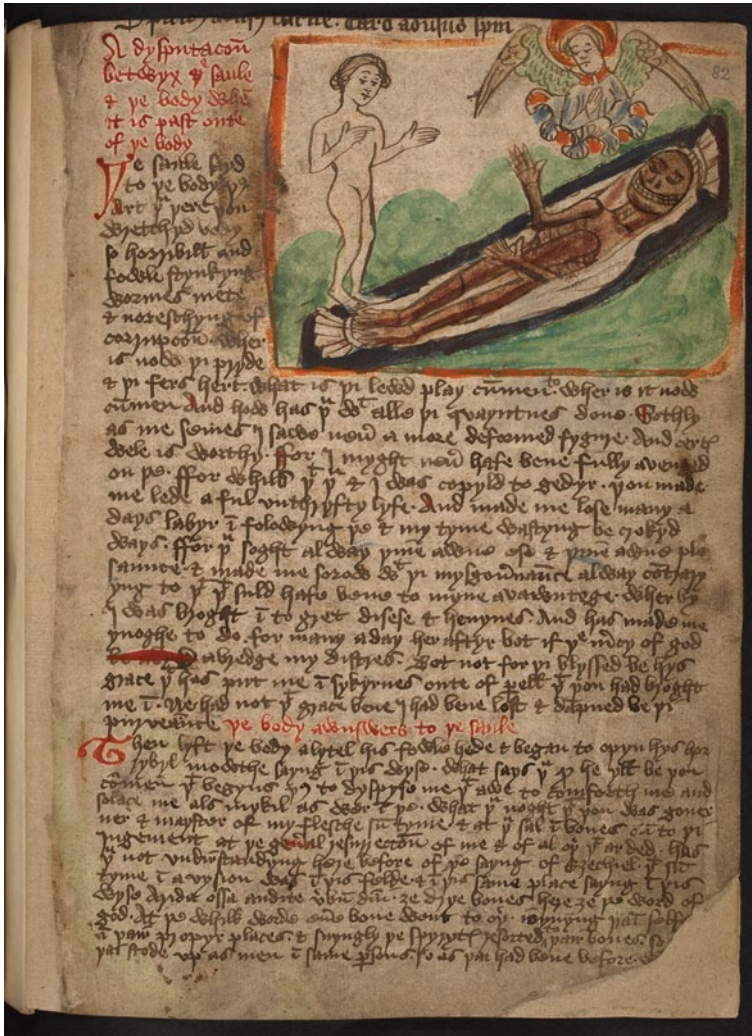


Fig. 1 Illustration to the MS 37049 Body/Soul disputation (BL MS 37049 fol. 82r). (Used with the permission of the British Library Board)

which had the body adjoined unto it in favour and love as sister and brother...might complain for the death of the body, since every part of that same body had been so occupied in the service of God before. Her eyes in weepings and tears, sometimes of devotion, sometimes of repentance, her ears hearing the word of God...[her tongue occupied in prayer] much part of the day...her hands in giving alms unto the poor and needy.

The only hope for such a soul, he remarked, was anticipating ‘that the body shall rise again’ at the last judgement; its only consolation for the long wait, that the reunion would signal the beginning of a new life in Christ; a life ‘pleasant and...

sweet', 'full of joy and pleasure' and free from the sorrow, 'bitterness' and fear necessarily attending earthly life (Fisher 1876, pp. 300, 302, 304–305).

Yet the risen body, though retaining the identity of its original individual, would not be in exactly the same form as its earthly counterpart. On the contrary, the virtuous body would not only regain some of its original paradisaical qualities, but would attain new perfections, rising:

in that condition that neither the air, nor the water, nor fire, nor knife, nor weapon, nor stroke, nor sickness shall annoy it....it shall rise bright and glorious....[I]t shall be more nimble and more ready to be conveyed to any place where the soule would have it than is a swallow....[I]t shall be [so] subtle that it shall pierce through the stone walls.²⁶

It followed that the disastrous body/soul contention arising from the Fall will be stilled forever in the life of the redeemed. As John de Irlandia wrote, on earth the corruptible body hinders the soul, but after 'the resurreccioun quhen the body sal be incorruptible it puttis na maner of impediment bot helpis the noble operacioun of the saule' [the resurrection when the body shall be incorruptible it puts no sort of impediment, but helps the noble work of the soul]. Only following the resurrection, then, will soul and body recover the true, unmarred accord originally intended for them. Then:

the saule sal haue mar ioy and plesaunce na befor for the persoune sal haue the eternale beatitud baith in saule and in the body and of that the saule sal haue gret plesaunce for it desirit befor richt gretlie the vnioun and coniunccioun with the body for that is the werray natur and perfeccioun of the saule to be vnyt wt the body
[the soul shall have more joy and pleasure than before, for the person shall have the eternal blessedness both in soul and in the body, and because of that the soul shall have great pleasure, for it desired right greatly before, the union and conjunction with the body]. (de Irlandia 1965, pp. 79–80)

Together, though each in their still-distinct ways, they would enjoy the perfect vision of God, both in His divinity and in His humanity as Jesus:

as oure saule jn eternall glore sal haue beatitude jn the sicht and intwicioune of the diuinite, sene jt is a spirituale nature, sa sall oure body & all oure wittis haue gret and merwalus felicite & beatitud jn hevin in euirlestand joy, seyand the blist sone of god ihesu jn owur humanite [as our soul in eternal glory shall have beatitude in the sight and perception of the divinity, since it is a spiritual nature, so shall our body and all our senses have great and marvellous felicity and beatitude in heaven in everlasting joy, seeing the blessed son of God Jesu in our humanity]. (de Irlandia 1926, pp. 70–71)

What of the damned? They, too, as the Body/Soul debates invariably make clear, will suffer the separation of soul and body at death, though their typical reaction is mutual aggression and blame rather than sorrow—the soul taunting the body with the loss of its worldly riches, pride and friendships and blaming it for their joint everlasting destruction, the body retorting that the blame should rest completely with the soul. The end is always the same; the body declines to corruption while Soul is dragged off to hell to experience tortures that will last till judgement day and beyond. At the last judgement, the damned, like the saved, would experience complete

²⁶ Fisher (1876), p. 304. Cf. de Irlandia (1965), p. 79.

reunion of body and soul—but to an exactly opposite fate of eternal torture. Soul, in the Porkington MS version, reminds the corpse that though in the interval between death and resurrection it is insensible to pain, when revived at the Last Judgement it will not attain the painless status of the saved body. Instead:

At the hy jugement doutles we twayne
 Schall be sore pooneschyde, we may hit not esschew;
 And suffure endles payne ever new and newe
 [At the high judgement doubtless we two/ Shall be sore punished,
 that we may not avoid,/ And suffer endless pain, ever renewed]. (Halliwell 1855, p. 20)

Thus after final judgement the soul, having forfeited its original natural immortality, would literally join the body in its most typical characteristic—death. As the body rotted in the grave, perforated by worms, so the souls of the damned in hell might continue to exist; but that existence, as Augustine remarked, should more correctly be termed death than life, in the absence of God (Augustine 1998, Book 13, Chap. 2).

Viewed in the light of this grand narrative, the various late-medieval English-language discourses of soul and body, whatever their diversity or apparent inconsistency, can be read as both coherent and significant. Their authors were not ignorantly misinterpreting a more sophisticated Latin tradition, though they often rewrote it apparently with didactic purposes in mind. Nor should they be seen as mere spiritual sensationalists, creating thrilling debates and grisly exempla for the entertainment (or possibly edification) of a lay audience whose attention might be elsewhere. All their apparent anomalies add up to a self-coherent discourse. Since souls could be consigned to an eternal ‘death’ of Godless and lifeless torment, no wonder that didactic texts took care to stress that wilfully dividing oneself from God in this life by engaging in unrepented mortal sin, would lead to the death of the soul. The acknowledged fact that the Fall comprised both a spiritual and a physical sin (pride, in the case of the soul) (see de Irlandia 1926, p. 63 on Eve’s sin of pride) and entailed consequences on both body and soul, meant that in life there must be correspondences between spiritual and physical virtues and sins. Even the strange exchanges of characteristics between bodies and souls can be read as signs of the stages of salvation reached by the protagonists. The bodies rising from their graves in Myrc’s exempla to defend the prayers of the righteous merely foreshadow their eventual resurrection at the last judgement—in better shape specifically because of those prayers. Martyred souls appear in heaven bleeding from their wounds because the wounds themselves, as Augustine proposed ‘will not be a deformity but a badge of honour, and the beauty of their virtue—a beauty which is in the body, but not of the body—will shine forth in it’ (Augustine 1998, Book 22, Chap. 19, pp. 1149–1150). Similarly, the sufferings—however apparently corporeal—of souls in hell or purgatory were, for fifteenth-century writers, a well accepted theological necessity; central, indeed, to the doctrine of purgatory. As Bynum notes, ‘preachers, hagiographers, and schoolmen saw nothing fundamentally inconsistent in depicting the bodily tortures of disembodied spirits’ (Bynum 1995, p. 281).²⁷ For how were

²⁷ She adds, ‘although they sometimes admitted it was odd.’ The whole of her Chap. 7, “Somatomorphic Soul and *Visio Dei*: The Beatific Vision Controversy and its Background” is relevant.

souls to be refined after death, and made worthy to receive the full beatific vision in eternal salvation, unless they retained a capacity for suffering like that of the body?

Indeed, the reversal of roles of Soul and Body in the debate literature—the soul distraught with fear of imminent physical torment, the body preternaturally vocal and rational—may vividly evoke the fundamental wrongness of this moment in the history of a person’s salvation (or, in this case, damnation). It is important to remember that these debates almost invariably take place between the two parts of a *damned* individual; only the short prose Additional MS 37409 version has the Soul in purgatory, and none present the moment after death of a righteous individual, bound for heaven after the shortest of purgatorial stays. Body and Soul in these circumstances have squandered their chances of repentance and right living, and in doing so have disastrously re-shaped their relationship. They do not love and care for each other as souls and bodies should; they have not worked together under the leadership of the soul; in life, the body was consistently rebellious and high-handed towards the soul. No wonder then that their relationship at the moment of death realises in hard-edged detail the state of the individual as compared to what was intended for them in the first creation. Soul and Body display bitter rancor towards each other that mirrors their divided loyalties in life. Like the first humans at the Fall, these individual’s souls on earth followed their own priorities rather than the purposes of God. No wonder, then, firstly that they could not bring their living bodies to obedience, and secondly that they now find their place as the guardian of eloquence and reason usurped by dead bodies. Yet Body’s unnaturally rational arguments, unlike the powers of reason properly owned and used, cannot act to snatch salvation for the damned individual. They operate only as a sign of a thoroughly dystopic inversion of the state of the ideal individual.

Late-medieval vernacular English narratives, then, surrounding the account of the soul-body relationships of any one individual in life and death with the inter-connecting, but much grander, narrative of the salvation history of all humankind, provide a rich, complex, subtle and flexible discourse on the many variants of human soul-body relationships and of the significance of each of these variants as stages in the salvation of each individual. No use for the *Dives and Pauper* author to castigate only physical violence under the rubric of the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’; no human could be saved without extirpating also the spiritual sins giving rise to, or even equating to, physical violence. As Pauper is quick to inform Dives, merely having a ‘herte consentynge to [someone’s] deeth’ is to break the commandment, as is slaughter ‘with our tongue’, by lying, bearing false witness, slander, or flattery. Since the soul was perceived not only as an essential, but the better, part of the individual’s identity, these sins were not mere metaphors for physical violence. Killing the soul had more devastating and long-lasting results than killing the body; no wonder it attracted such detailed attention and censure from the writers, and was treated as being on the same, or an even more intense, level of ‘reality’ as attacks on the body. In this frame of understanding, spiritual slayers were not just *like* murderers; as *Dives and Pauper* puts it, ‘*bachyteris & wyckynd spekerys ben manquelleris*’—backbiters and wicked speakers *are* murderers (Barnum 1980, p. 1; my emphasis).

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‘Adam, you are in a Labyrinth’: The First-Person Voice as the Nexus Between Body and Spirit in the Chronicle of Adam Usk

Alicia Marchant

In 1406, the Welsh-born chronicler Adam Usk found himself in a precarious position. The earl of Northumberland, Henry Percy (d.1408), who was exiled in France, offered Adam a clerical position which, if accepted, would have afforded Adam Usk an opportunity for promotion, but also allied him with a rebel movement.¹ Adam records English king Henry IV’s anger at the news of this offer, and it eventually tarnished the chronicler’s reputation in England, making it impossible for him to find employment.² It is at this moment in his chronicle narrative that Adam Usk comments:

But God visited my heart, and I thought, ‘Adam you are in a labyrinth. Put your trust in God’. (Usk 1997, p. 215)

Adam Usk’s chronicle is interesting in several respects, but perhaps most unique of all is the presence of Adam’s own observations concerning his body and spirit scattered throughout this record of world history. The quotation above provides arresting insight into Adam’s consciousness and spirituality: Adam believes that he can communicate directly with a benevolent God who advises and guides him at the desired moment. Only God can resolve Adam’s dilemma and alleviate Adam’s physical and mental anguish: Adam likens his stunted career prospects to the plight of an individual venturing into a labyrinth where his strength will be tested, a metaphor for his spiritual trial. Throughout his chronicle, we hear Adam’s voice recording his thoughts and communicating directly with God, as with the reader. It is the voice of an author acutely aware of his own individuality, as well as his position within broader, political and cosmological contexts. From his writings, Adam Usk emerges as a highly articulate writer and a master of the full range of narratorial modes made available to him by earlier first-person genres such as the confession and the public letter.

¹ For further discussion of the Percy rebellions of 1403–1408 see Bean (1959), pp. 212–27; McNiven (1979–1980), pp. 498–530.

² For instance, Adam records in his chronicle, ‘because I was frequently in contact with them, King Henry was stirred to even greater fury with me when he heard about it’. Usk (1997), p. 215.

A. Marchant (✉)
The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
e-mail: alicia.marchant@uwa.edu.au

The mode of narration through which Adam communicates his insights is highly unusual for medieval chronicles, particularly those of the High Middle Ages. While other fifteenth-century chronicles employ covert forms of narration in which an effaced and impersonal narrator presents a chronological narrative, in Adam's chronicle there are frequent moments of overt and direct narration utilising the first person singular to indicate opinion, record mental processes, solicit the reader's pity, provide detailed accounts of personal experiences and claim a direct connection to God as a way of validating his interpretation of events and associating himself with the Biblical Adam. Adam often employs strategies of internal focalisation, such as internal monologues and accounts of dreams, to illuminate his narration of world events. His subtle use of these varied and complex modes of narration results in an identifiable corporal and spiritual narratorial presence: once the usual heterodiegetic distancing of chronicle narratives has been breached, the narrator emerges as an embodied and ensouled presence in his text. In this chapter, I seek to establish the significance of Adam Usk's intrusions into his chronicle of world history and his self-representation as both as an embodied being (a body travelling in the world he chronicles) and as a spiritual being able to experience direct communication from god. By outlining the fundamental difference of Adam's style in relation to that of other chroniclers of the period, I ultimately suggest that Adam's complex narrative voice reflects the organic inter-relationship of physical and spiritual aspects. This relationship informs the elements of the chronicle's narrative frame, becoming a symbolic reflection of the textual world into which Adam injects himself.

Adam Usk Imagines the World: Chronicle Narrative, Labyrinths and *Mappae Mundi*

While the image of Adam Usk within a labyrinth conveys the sense of confusion and disorientation of this vocal chronicler faced with yet another hardship, labyrinths were polysemous and could be seen to represent various experiential contexts. The imagined walk through the twists and turns of a labyrinth from its entry point to the centre could act as a simulacrum of travel and pilgrimage³, offering possibilities for meditation and contemplation. The thirteenth-century labyrinth at Chartres appears to have been a simulacrum for pilgrimage to the holy city of Jerusalem (Connolly (2005), pp. 285–314 and figs. 134–148); similar labyrinths built into the mosaic floors of Cathedrals of Amiens and Reims, to name but a few, were also spaces where people could physically walk to enact the emotions of pilgrimage (Fig. 1).

Labyrinths were, then, spaces where an individual could enact an imagined journey, whether to reach a designated place or to enact following the right path in the world, affording the means for an individual to explore some of the larger philosophical questions of life, such as predestination and free will. The labyrinth

³ For a full discussion of the various uses and interpretations of medieval labyrinths, see Kern (2000), esp. pp. 146–148.

Fig. 1 The Labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral, France. Thirteenth century



represented the material realities of the world, and was a space in which individuals had to negotiate the path to redemption, through the avoidance of sin and a 'trust in God'. A unicursal model without alternative routes, the disorientating twists and turns of the medieval labyrinth were a way of exploring the process of life from birth (entry) to God and judgement (centre), with the many challenges of life and temptations along the way (Kern 2000, p. 146). For Adam Usk, awareness of his position within an imagined labyrinth allows him to place and so comprehend his hardships within a wider understanding of sin and redemption; although he suffers several material setbacks in the course of his travels, he makes a spiritual advance. He believes he will triumph over adversity.

Chronicle writing performed a similar function in the life of Adam Usk: it enabled him to imagine himself within the material world and reflect on his individuality in a cosmological context. Like labyrinths, chronicles provided a narrative representation of, and a blueprint for, the ethical workings of the material world. Chronicles documented the world's history with the intent of providing an accurate reflection of the totality of the world. Many chronicle narratives begin at the creation of the world as outlined in *Genesis* and recorded the world's progress towards its inevitable end. The purpose of this was to document humanity's progress towards judgement and divine salvation, in the light of the fall of humankind in the Garden of Eden (See Reeves (1980), esp. pp. 269–287). The chroniclers' role was to observe the world and to record events deemed important to this progress. Events of national and universal importance, as well as natural and supernatural phenomena such as the sightings of comets and devils, were considered key to understanding the world and humanity's place within it.

The semantic link between labyrinths and chronicles becomes easier to understand when we remember that the Middle Ages considered cartography and history to be inextricably linked. As Evelyn Edson has documented, there was a long tradition of cartography in medieval Western Europe and of chroniclers utilising

maps⁴. I propose that the ways in which the material world was conceptualised in maps is important to an understanding of chronicle narratives and particularly to appreciating Adam Usk's unique form of narration. Because it was a record of all of humanity's quest for salvation, a chronicle narrative historically encompassed all of the known world in a way that a map encompasses it spatially. Maps were often found in medieval chronicles. Chroniclers such as Otto of Freising (d. 1158), Matthew Paris (d. 1259), and Ranulf Higden (d. c. 1363; Fig. 2) included maps of the world, *mappae mundi*, in their historical texts, which served as visual accompaniments to the chronicle narrative. What is displayed on the *mappae mundi*, and likewise in chronicles, is the collective history of Christian humankind; excluded are non-Christian histories and regions, other than some classical history. Non-Christian events and peoples are included only when they are seen as relevant in the context of salvation history.

Adam Usk's chronicle contains a version of Ranulf Higden's fourteenth-century *mappa mundi*, taken from his vast history the *Polychronicon* (Fig. 3); this inclusion shows that Adam was aware of the cosmological element implicit in the structure of his chronicle narrative. Higden was a monk from the Benedictine Abbey of St. Werburgh's in Chester. Comparisons with Higden's *mappa mundi* show Adam's version to be schematic, relying much more heavily upon a sequential pattern of labels, rather than the geographical outline provided in Higden's version⁵: for instance, the Mediterranean Sea, so prominent in Higden's version, is not present in Adam's copy. Other landscape features including rivers, such as the Nile and Euphrates, are present on both maps, although in Higden's version these are illustrated and brightly coloured. In Adam's version, some mountains, such as the Alps, are illustrated. Both maps depict numerous places of importance in human history, biblical and secular. Common to Adam's version and the original map is the representation of the old empires of Parthia, Assyria and Babylonia which are labelled in the Middle East. The Red Sea is also represented, with a notation as to where the Israelites crossed. Higden's version is much more elaborate; the Red Sea is literally coloured red, and marked with a gap where Moses and the Israelites crossed. Places of religious importance to the more contemporary era, such as Rome, are represented. Where the maps differ is in the detail provided; Higden provides numerous illustrations on his map, such as his depiction of Noah's Ark lodged on the top of Mount Ararat. (Fig. 4) Adam's version is a simplified and less expensive production, that retains the important elements.

Mappae mundi provide a meaningful geo-spatial frame in which events of human history are represented visually alongside natural features of the landscape. Common to both chronicle narrative and medieval cartography is the importance of biblical events to their structural arrangement. As the Holy Land is of central importance, maps were oriented with Asia at the top to emphasise the importance

⁴ Edson (1997), esp. 'Maps in Medieval Histories', pp. 97–131. For further discussion of the medieval cartography see Kupfer (1994), pp. 262–288; Hoogvliet (1998), pp. 25–46; Woodward (1985), pp. 510–521.

⁵ For a further discussion of Higden's map, see Taylor (1966), esp. pp. 63–71.

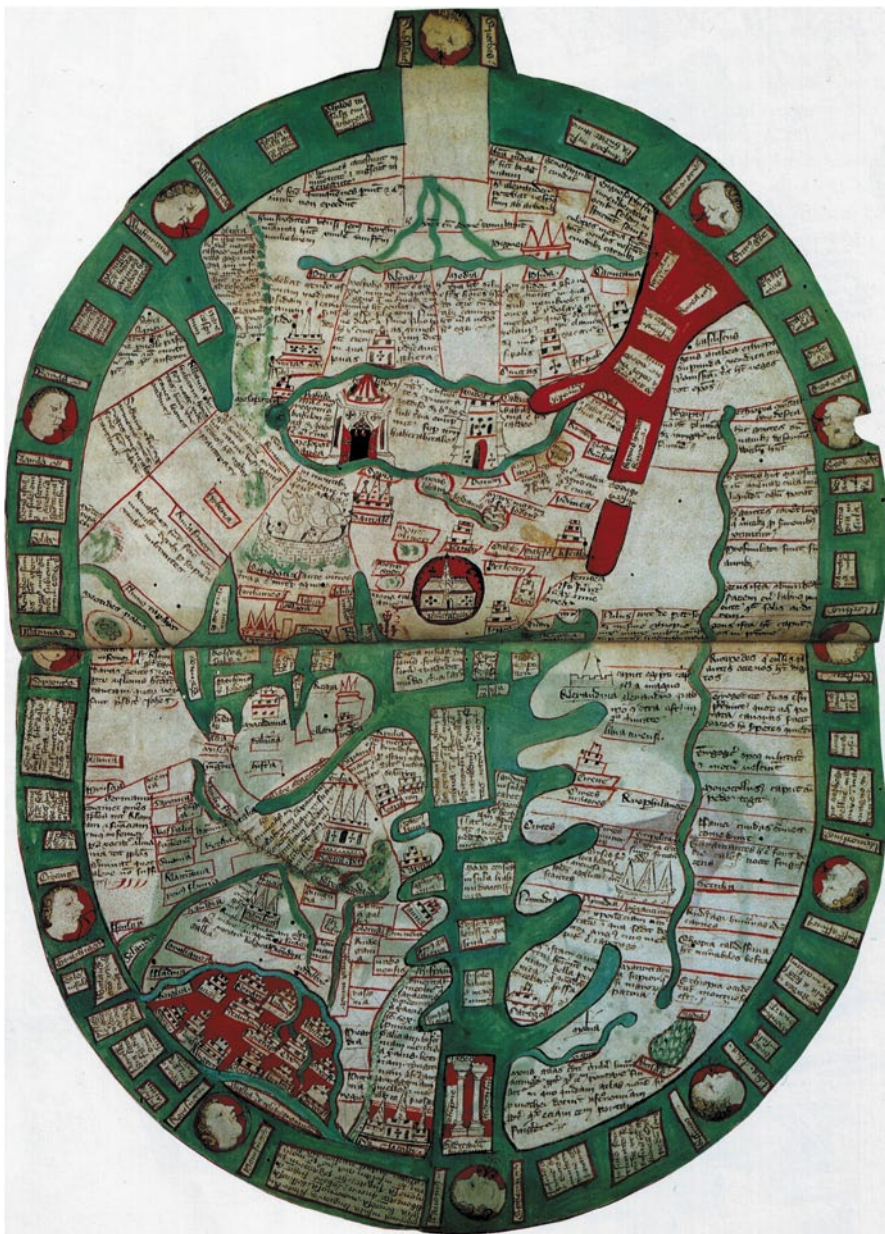


Fig. 2 Ranulf Higden's *Mappa Mundi* (Polychronicon, B.M. MS. Royal 14.C.ix. ff.). Late fourteenth Century



Fig. 3 Adam Usk's copy of Higden's *Mappa Mundi* (British Library, Additional Manuscript 10, 104, Folio 8r.) Fifteenth century

of the location of events described in the Old and New Testaments for human history and geography. It was in the east that earthly paradise, where Adam and Eve once lived, was thought to be located (Scafi 2006). Indeed, in Adam Usk's version 'Paradise' is clearly labelled at the very top of the map, while in Higden's version it is a designated, but unfilled and unlabelled space. Jerusalem is centrally placed in both maps; in Higden's version this is emphasised via the use of colour and il-



Fig. 4 Ranulf Higden's *Mappa Mundi*: detail the Holy Land. Late fourteenth century

illustration, and the centrality of Jerusalem has parallels with the labyrinth on the floor of Chartres Cathedral. Indeed, scholars have pointed to a connection between the meditative uses of the labyrinths and the *mappae mundi*, citing particularly the presence of a labyrinth on the thirteenth-century Hereford Map's (c. 1290) depiction of Crete (Connolly 2005, pp. 296–298).⁶

The Holy Land has an important structural place in Adam's chronicle narrative. It was here that Christ was born in AD 1 the locus for the measuring of time as well as space. The importance of time and chronology in structuring chronicle narrative was recognised and documented throughout the middle ages.⁷ For instance, as Gervase of Canterbury (d. c. 1210) explains,

A chronicle ... reckons the years, months and Kalends from the Incarnation of our Lord, briefly tells of the deeds of kings, and princes which happened at those times, besides recording any portents, miracles or other events. (*The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury* 1879–1880, Vol. 1, p. 87)

Adherence to a chronological organisation was a fundamental generic marker, as is acknowledged by the term 'chronicle' itself, taken from the Greek term for time, 'χρόνος' (khronos). There are a number of strategies used to reckon time in chronicles; frequently each new year is signalled in the narrative by the phrase 'Anno Domini 14[...]'], and then events of the year are narrated sequentially in order of their occurrence and are arranged into discrete paragraph entries. In most cases, new

⁶ For further discussion of the Hereford map, see Reed Kline (2001).

⁷ For instance, see the discussion by Chris Given-Wilson (2004), pp. 113–127.

events are introduced via a temporal expression, such as ‘meanwhile’, ‘at the same time’, ‘this year’. The life of Christ was central to salvation history, and the application of a chronological sequence, coupled with temporal markers, provided a clear link between events of the Bible and individuals of the contemporary era. The arrangement of the narrative in chronological fashion reflected a historical reality, with events documented one after the other connected only by their proximity in time.

Finally, chronicles also have an inbuilt cosmological structure, which adds to the significance of the chronicle as Adam’s choice of genre to write. Chronicles, like *mappae mundi*, reflect a belief in the world as a place infused with spirituality, a reflection of God, and a place of salvific significance. Creating *mappae mundi* and chronicles were considered spiritual endeavours, informed in all respects by their creators’ interest in the divine plan. All these generic characteristics of chronicles provide an important structure in which Adam Usk can represent himself as an embodied and spiritual being travelling in the world.

However, the presence of the narrator as an embodied and ensouled individual dramatically alters the nature of the chronicle form to the point where the genre can lose its fundamental generic determinants and be turned into something fundamentally different.

‘Be Tolerant, Reader’: The Unique Narrative Positioning of Adam Usk

Chronicles are, by generic convention, unemotional and impersonal narratives of worldly events, highly structured in a seemingly simple chronological arrangement. They are characterised by a narrative that is objective (rather than subjective) and formulaic (rather than free). For instance, when recording the capture of Edmund Mortimer by the Welsh rebel leader Owain Glyndŵr in 1402, chroniclers use language that constructs their own position as covert and unobtrusive. The author of the *Dieulacres Chronicle*, writing sometime around the year 1413 at Dieulacres Abbey in Staffordshire, records:

In that same year, on the day of the feast of St Alban in the place which is called Pillith, the Welsh deceptively surrounded the English, killing one thousand five hundred of them, and when Edmund Mortimer had been captured, deceived, so it is said, by his own family, and having been converted to Owain’s cause, he married his [i.e. Owain’s] daughter and continued for a long time in the same error in working with that man.⁸

The *Continuatio Eulogii*, composed sometime before 1428, possibly by a Franciscan monk based at Canterbury, records of the same event:

⁸ All translations from the Latin are my own. ‘Eodem anno in die sancti Albani in loco qui dicitur Pilale Wallici fraude circumvenerunt Anglicos interficientes ex eis mille quingentos captoque Edmundo le Mortimere a sua familia, ut dicitur, decepto et cum Owyno converso eius filiam desponsavit et in operatione istius cronice in eodem errore perseveravit.’ *The Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey 1381–1403* (1930), pp. 176–177.

Moreover in this year, Owain Glyndŵr captured Edmund Mortimer, when many Englishmen from the marches of Wales had been killed. And the King assembled an army and crossed into Wales, where, when very great storms in September, of thunder, heavy rains and hail prevented them from riding, many of the army even died of cold.⁹

Although the information that is presented varies between the two chroniclers, the method of narration used is similar: both chroniclers employ a third-person mode of narration and a combination of past tenses. This is the usual mode of chronicle narration and establishes an authoritative narrative voice, though one without obvious personal characteristics. The use of third-person narration and of imperfect or other past tenses allowed the authors to construct distance between themselves and the material that they recorded. The narrative is consistently heterodiegetic (where the narrative voice is outside of the world described in the text), empirical and impersonal.¹⁰

By marked contrast, Adam Usk narrates the capture of Mortimer in the following manner:

On the feast of St Alban, a fierce battle was fought near Knighton in Wales between the English under Sir Edmund Mortimer and the Welsh under Owain Glyndŵr, in which as many as eight thousand persons died miserable deaths before Owain emerged victorious. And it grieves me to relate that this Edmund, my lord, by whose father, the lord of Usk, I was supported at the schools, was by the fortunes of war taken captive. (Usk 1997, pp. 159–161)

In his account of Mortimer's capture, Adam relates an emotion that he experienced, and provides a personal connection between himself and the narrative subject, further emphasised through the use of first person narration, making Adam a participant of the events. This extract, and Adam's composition more broadly, is marked by the presence of a narrating ego turned into a character in the narrative.

Adam relates a great deal of personal information in his chronicle, and, although he does employ the more usual covert modes of narration, these occur between moments of overt narration in which the narrative is focalised through Adam's point of view, creating a sense of immediacy. Adam was born in South Wales sometime around the year c.1352. He refers in his chronicle to 'Usk, my birthplace' (Usk 1997, p. 119), and describes several childhood experiences around the town of Usk, such as seeing a two-headed calf.¹¹ Adam Usk also records that he studied canon and civil law at Oxford, and was then attached to various patrons including the

⁹ 'Hoc insuper anno, Audoenus de Glendour cepit Edmundum de Mortuo Mari, multis Anglicis de marchia Walliae interfectis. Et Rex congregato exercitu transivit in Walliam, ubi, prohibentibus maximis tempestatibus in Septembri tonitruorum, imbrium, et grandinis, equitare non potuerunt, et multi de exercitu frigore mortui sunt.' *Eulogium (Historiaum sive Temporis): Chronicon ab Orbe Condito Usque ad Annum Domini M.CCC.LXVI., A Monacho Quodam Malmesburiensi Exaratum. Accedunt Continuationes duae, Quarum una ad annum M.CCCC.XIII. Altera ad Annum M.CCC.XC.* (1967, p. 394).

¹⁰ See Genette (1980).

¹¹ Adam records, 'at about this time [in 1399], there was born at Usk a calf which had two necks, two heads, four eyes and four ears; I remember seeing a similar one, which had been aborted, in my youth, in the parish of Llancayo, in the house of a women called Llugu the daughter of Watkin.' Usk (1997), p. 87.

Archbishop of Canterbury, where he practiced law and wrote his chronicle.¹² His patrons gave him access to the royal court, and so Adam provides a detailed account of events of significance in England and is particularly concerned with events surrounding the English king.

In addition to recording events of national importance, Adam records events that occurred to him and directly around him. The intimacy of Adam's authorial voice also enhances his "presence" as an embodied character in the text. Both his proximity to important events and the immediacy of his style have a notable impact on what is recorded and on the overall effect of the text between two passages he wrote in "covert" third-person to discuss legal decrees debated at a session of the English parliament in 1401:

I knew a monk from the Charterhouse near London who, despite voluntarily abstaining from all kinds of sustenance for an entire fortnight, was perfectly fit and strong. Whereupon the prior of the house, for which I acted as counsel, consulted me as to whether, should he die as a result of this, he would be entitled to the benefit of a church burial. (Usk 1997, p. 127)

Here, the level of authorial intervention is evident both in the presence of the narrator constructed through immediacy of style, and in the selection of the material on which the author is knowledgeable. This was clearly an event personally experienced by Adam and reflecting his expertise. This entry appears quite out of place within Adam's primary discussion on parliamentary matters in which it is couched, and indeed in the broader narrative which sought to document events of national and international importance. In Adam Usk's chronicle the constructed distance between the narrator and the historical material, crucial to the establishment of an appearance of objectivity in the chronicle form, has collapsed, but the sense of immediacy and vitality has increased.

Close analysis of Adam Usk's narrative reveals that the broader subject of the chronicle is, in fact, Adam himself and his engagement with the world, and that this concern is couched, almost concealed, within the parameters of the chronicle. This is particularly the case for the second half of the chronicle, in which Adam Usk is the central protagonist. The turning point occurs in 1402, when Adam Usk leaves England and travels to the Continent, heading for Rome (Usk 1997, p. 153). It has been suggested that the impetus for Adam's sudden departure from England was the result of legal problems; he was accused of stealing a horse.¹³ Regardless of the cause, Adam Usk travelled widely for nine years, and provides descriptions of his journeys within his chronicle narrative (Given-Wilson 1997, p. xxiv). He provides details of his route, names the numerous towns and castles he encounters and his

¹² For instance, Adam states: 'And now, O God- you who have, in your infinite mercy, permitted me to complete with honour and profit my studies at Oxford, the three year course for my doctorate there, and thereafter my seven years in office as an advocate in the court of Canterbury.' Usk 1997, p. 153.

¹³ See James Hamilton Wylie in his *History of England under Henry the Fourth, (1884-1898)*. The Pardon Rolls record that Adam was granted a pardon in 1403.

journey through the Alps, detailing his personal discomfort: Adam's chronicle becomes what we would today call a travel narrative:

I was carried in an oxcart, almost frozen to death from the snow, and blindfolded to stop me seeing the perils of the journey... (Usk 1997, p. 155)

Descriptions of discomfort make it impossible to forget Adam's body; as a traveller in the world he chronicles, Adam is an embodied being. Further, as he moves across Europe, the narrative becomes centred on the events occurring in the location of his body. For instance, when in Rome Adam records the invasion of Hungary by Ladislas, the king of Naples (Usk 1997, p. 159), and describes various embassies to the Pope, including ambassadors from the emperor of Constantinople (Usk 1997, p. 199) and two Christian men from India (Usk 1997, p. 191). As he has left England behind, his interest in events in England wanes; for five years between 1408 and 1413 not a single event is recorded that has to do with English events and politics (Given-Wilson 1997, p. lvi). The focal points of the narrative shift along with the chronicler's physical movements around Europe, and Adam's corporality becomes incorporated in his narrative. Adam himself becomes a central and determining narrative point.

By way of personal opinion and interpretation, Adam Usk's consciousness also becomes another determinant of the direction the narrative takes. Like other chroniclers, Adam describes the natural phenomena of the world: a calf born with two necks, two heads, four eyes, and four ears (Usk 1997, p. 87), a boy born with one eye, and the yokes of five eggs suddenly transformed into the shape of men's faces.¹⁴ Adam also describes the appearance of a comet in 1402:

During this journey, firstly at Cologne and then all the way as far as Pisa, I could see both at night and during the daytime a fearsome comet, which moved ahead of the sun, spreading terror throughout the world, among both the clergy, who are the sun, and the knighthood, who are the moon, and foreshadowing the death of the above mentioned Duke [of Milan]-who did in fact die soon after this. (Usk 1997, p. 155)

Adam's contemporaries in England offer markedly different accounts from Adam; the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, thought to have been produced at the Abbey of Evesham sometime before 1413, states:

A comet was seen in the west in this year, around the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Mary, which remained on and off until Easter.¹⁵

Although describing the same event, the two narratives are markedly different in style. The first acknowledges that comets are not merely neutral objects, but loaded with significance: sent by God, they were signs of imbalance and disturbance in the natural equilibrium of the cosmos and connected to rebellions, impending war,

¹⁴ Adam Usk writes 'During this parliament, two valets of the king who were dining in London found, in five eggs which were served up to them, the exact likeness of men's faces in every detail, the white having congealed and separated from the faces above the forehead in place of hair before passing down the jowls to the chin; one of which I saw.' Usk 1997, p. 79.

¹⁵ 'Stella comata hoc anno circa festum Purificacionis beate Marie in occidente visa est, que interpolatim duravit usque Pascha.' *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, (1977), p. 172.

death, famine and plague.¹⁶ Adam feels that these ambiguous portents require his personal interpretation in the light of specific events, which is presented in the form of a fulfilled prophecy, placing Adam in the role of a seer. By contrast, the other example from *Historia Vitae* is observed and recorded by an impersonal and effaced narrator, who does not feel the need to explicate the meaning of the comet directly. Instead, the comet's significance is presented subtly through the use of the directional point of 'west' as well as through a paratactic arrangement of the surrounding material: immediately preceding the comet in the *Historia Vitae* is a description of the king's lack of resources to help English custodians protect the castles of Wales from the Welsh rebels, and immediately following is a record of the capture of Reginald Lord Grey by Owain Glyndŵr.¹⁷ The entry on the comet is completely surrounded by expressions of discontent against the English king Henry IV, and it is not a great interpretive stretch to assume that this comet is related to future rebellions, most likely to occur in the west.

Adam Usk is not alone in stating the comet's significance directly, but this is done using covert, 'objective' narration. The aforementioned *Dieulacres* chronicler, for instance, states:

Around that same time a comet star appeared in the northern parts of England. This comet turned its sparks towards Wales; and certain people consider the said comet to have predicted the battle of Shrewsbury.¹⁸

Here, the chronicler connects the comet specifically to Wales and the battle of Shrewsbury (1403); but by pointing to a third party ('certain people'), the chronicler is able to provide an authoritative interpretation of the comet, without assuming direct address or an overtly narrative voice. By contrast, Adam's comet narrative provides multiple examples which clearly show how central Adam's narrative voice

¹⁶ For example, in his seventh century text *De Natura Rerum* or *On the Nature of Things*, Isidore of Seville (d.636) in Chapter 71 'On the names of Stars' gives the correct Greek etymology that 'a comet is so called because it spreads light from itself as if it were hair. And when this kind of star appears it indicates pestilence, famine or war.' From Edward Grant, ed., *A Source Book in Medieval Science* (1974), p. 16. As is described in the chapter 'Of the fyre and of the sterres that seme to falle' (Chapter 30) in Caxton's *Mirroure of the World*, comets were regarded as out of place phenomena; 'sparkles of fyre' were created when there was a movement from the region of fire into the earthly sphere. *Caxton's Mirroure of the World* (1913), p. 122.

¹⁷ For instance the comet follows directly the passage: 'In this year, when the king was at Worcester, he was discussing with his council what should be done against the aforementioned Owyn Glyndor and those who attached themselves to him, and whether the king himself in his own person ought to set out into Wales for that reason. At length it was decided that the king should first appoint sufficient guards in the castles and other fortified places of Wales, and return to London.' (Hoc anno, dum esset rex apud Wigorn, pertractabat cum suo consilio, quid contra predictum Owynum <Glyndor> sibi que adherentes agendum sit, et an ipse rex in propria persona ea vice in Walliam proficisci deberet. Tandem ad id uentum est, ut rex, ordinatis prius custodibus sufficientibus in castellis et aliis fortitudinibus Wallie, London rediret.) *Historia Vitae* (1977), pp. 171–172.

¹⁸ 'Circa idem tempus stella comata apparuit in borialibus partibus Anglie. Que comata sintillas vertebat versus Walliam; et quidam estimant dictam cometam pronosticare bellum Salopie.' *The Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey 1381–1403* (1930), p. 175.

is to the style of his narrative. To begin with, by using the first person and saying 'I could see', Adam cements his position as an eyewitness observer of the comet. This is also the case with many other phenomena recorded in Adam's chronicle; Adam constructs himself as an eyewitness of yolks morphing into men's faces (Usk 1997, p. 79) or a two headed cow, and remarks that 'I remember seeing a similar one ... in my youth' (Usk 1997, p. 87). His interpretation of the comet as forewarning the death of the Duke of Milan is directly related to his position as a traveller on his way to Italy: he viewed the comet somewhere between Cologne and Pisa in March 1402. (Usk 1997, pp. 153–155)

However, one of the most remarkable aspects of Adam Usk's interpretation of the comet is his voice which assumes absolute authority as the interpreter of the meaning and significance of signs, and his confidence in his ability to be the only one who can interpret such signs correctly. Adam conflates chronology by directly connecting the sign (the comet) with the death of the Duke of Milan, stating that he 'did in fact die soon after this'. The conclusion is presented in a fashion that renders the information indisputable. The *Dieulacres* chronicler also directly connects an event (namely the Battle of Shrewsbury) with the sign; however connection is not made with such absolute and resolute authority as it is by Adam Usk. The *Dieulacres* chronicler's reference to 'certain people' who 'consider' ('estimant') the sign: this provides the narrative with the appearance of objectivity and narratorial distance. Adam, on the other hand, becomes central to the narrative in his outright rejection of any other possible reading of the comet's meaning; his interpretation, he stresses, is the correct version. Adam provides further evidence: the 'clergy' and the laity (as represented by 'knight hood') react with fear and trepidation at the sight of the comet due to their inability to correctly read and understand what the comet foretold. It would appear that Adam Usk is the only individual in the world who has the ability to decipher and interpret important signs correctly.

While Adam does construct a meaningful world in the chronicle narrative, the sources of this meaning have shifted dramatically. Chronicle narratives were arranged to have chronology at their core; time sequence was a means through which the continuity of narrative was constructed. However, Adam presents a narrative in which the recounting of events in chronological sequence ceases to be the primary concern; instead, it is the author's consciousness that becomes the determining factor. Uniquely, Adam as the author determines what order the events will be recounted in, seeking to construct a version of events determined by his notion of "truth", rather than chronology. Adam writes in his narrative for the year 1385:

Be tolerant, reader, of the sequence of years in which I have narrated events up to this point, for I have simply set down from memory what I saw and what I heard, with more thought for the truth of what happened than for the order in which it happened. (Usk 1997, p. 18)

Here, with its notable direct invocation to the reader, Adam apologises that his narrative does not adhere to the conventional chronological recounting of events, rather arguing that his memories, and his organisational principles imposed on the chronological narrative, were a more accurate reflection of events than that which a sequential narrative could provide. This is an important shift, as the locus of the

text's meaning and significance moves to the author's consciousness. It is Adam himself who determines the 'truth of what happened', and, indeed, promotes it as "truer", and therefore preferable, to the traditional sequential recounting of events.

Adam's consciousness becomes the central principle around which the narrative of his *Chronicle* is constructed. This can be seen in the examples of internal focalisation in which historical events are juxtaposed with personal experiences or put in the context of internal monologues or accounts of dreams. On seeing a papal procession, including horses and boys with olive branches crying 'hosanna' in Rome in 1406, Adam records:

My eyes have seen many things, but never has my ear heard the like of this; there were, in truth, many occasions when the compiler of this present work thought such thoughts to himself.

While the papal procession is described in vivid detail, its conclusion, narrated here, focalises the event through Adam's viewpoint. It is not enough here to use "I saw" and "I heard"; the chronicler takes his description a level deeper and positions what he is seeing and hearing in relation to his feelings. Similarly, when referring to the Byzantine Emperor's request for aid against the threat of Muslim invaders in 1400, Adam says, 'I thought to myself how sad it was.'¹⁹ The aforementioned image of Adam in a labyrinth provides another example:

He promised me promotion to high office if I went with him. But God visited my heart, and I thought, 'Adam you are in a labyrinth. Put your trust in God'. (Usk 1997, p. 215)

It is significant that Adam quotes his own inner thoughts in the same way in which he quotes the direct speech of other individuals throughout his chronicle. Adam's consciousness become an integral part of the history that he narrates. These techniques are very effective in enhancing the perception of the veracity of each event described, making it well-nigh impossible to dispute first-hand experiences embedded within historical accounts.

Adam achieves a similar purpose by embedding four dream visions into his chronicle narrative and presenting each as fact. These dreams are, like the account of the comet, prophetic of an event; three of these dreams are related to the deaths of various individuals, including Pope Boniface IX in 1404 (p. 181). In another dream, Adam predicts the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Arundel:

I had a vision of his death ... whereupon, awakening, I realised that we would henceforth be parted from one another, and with sadness in my heart, I said a mass for his soul. I was later informed of his death. (Usk 1997, p. 249)

This particular dream concerns a very personal event, as Archbishop Arundel was Adam's patron. The expressions of sadness and loss invoked by the dream, which later become a reality, provide significant insight into Adam's emotions, but also into the way the representation of these emotions serves to enhance the quality and immediacy of the narrative of the historical event that it purports to describe.

¹⁹ Adam's full sentence runs: 'I thought to myself how sad it was that this great Christian leader from the remote east had been driven by the power of the infidels to visit distant islands in the west in order to seek help against them.' Usk 1997, p. 121.

The final dream Adam records likewise deals with materials that were important to the chronicler. When, in 1401, Owain Glyndŵr caused considerable concern for the English government in Wales, a series of decrees were put forward that were anti-Welsh, including limiting Welsh residency in England. Adam argues that he had a sense of foreboding which warned him that such decrees would be put in place:

As God is my witness, the previous night I was roused from my sleep by a voice ringing in my ears saying 'The plowers plowed upon my back' etc., 'The righteous lord' etc., as in the psalm, 'Oft did they vex me'. As a result of which I awoke with a sense of foreboding that some disaster might occur that day, and in my fear I committed myself to the protection of the Holy Spirit. (Usk 1997, p. 127)

By including accounts of his dreams into the chronicle, Adam enhances the impression that his consciousness plays a crucial role in the narrative, solidifying his claim to his own centrality and importance to the world events, also solidifying his position as a protagonist within the historical narrative.

Adam validates his authoritative stance further by making continual references to the presence of God in his narrative, and aligning his interpretations with a divine influence. God manifests to Adam in several ways. For instance, he hears his voice in his internal monologues or dreams; he visits his heart and Adam can hear the 'voice' of God comforting him. This strengthens the authority of Adam's interpretations, as not only does he have an especially immediate relationship with God, but, through it, enjoys God's personal protection and guidance. Adam represents his interpretations of his dreams or natural portents such as the comet as superior because of his ability to connect and communicate with God. In the instance of Adam's comet narrative, he believed himself to be the sole person able to interpret the sign, while all others, most notably the clergy, were completely ignorant and reacted with fear at its appearance: Adam Usk stands in his text as the mediator of the comet's significance between God (who sent it) and humanity (who received it).

What these examples of internal focalisation techniques within the narrative reveal is the ultimate importance of representations of the author's body and mind in the text for the quality of the narrative. A narrative in which the inner workings of the author's consciousness are accessible to the reader will be immediate, fresh and convincing. Adam Usk's use of first person narration, along with other narrative strategies such as the reorientation of meaning and the narration of dreams, are indicative of the narrowing of Adam's narrative from documenting the broader history of humanity to that of events filtered through the sensual perception and consciousness of an individual, Adam Usk.

The image of Adam Usk in the labyrinth, then, can be said to signal this important historiographical shift: the chronicle is not an account of humanity, but of a solitary Adam, lost in the labyrinth as the sign for the real world, confused on his journey towards God and judgement at its centre. Nowhere is this shift in historiography more evident than in a self-image, most likely drawn by Adam Usk himself, of a fairly crudely drawn depiction of Adam, the first man, naked and 'delving' (Given-Wilson 1997, p. xxxix) (Fig. 5), provided at the foot of the first page of Adam Usk's personal copy of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*. While no doubt this figure also served as a clever *ex libris*, a marker of ownership of the book, it is sig-

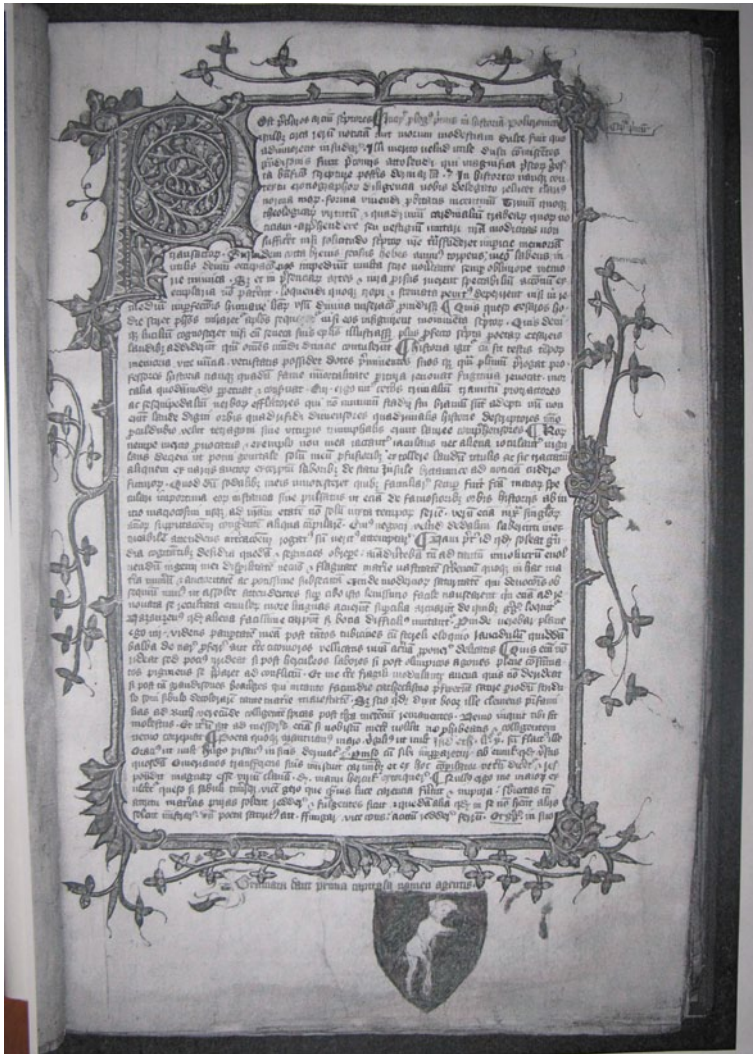


Fig. 5 The first page of Adam’s copy of Higden’s Polychronicon. (British Library, Additional Manuscript 10, 104, Folio 9r). Fifteenth century

nificant in that it aligns the individual Adam Usk with the Biblical Adam who was in direct contact with God, representing the merging of Adam’s personal history with the history of the world. The chronicle he is writing thus merges the history of the descendants of Adam the first man, with the personal history of Adam Usk.

The ‘Adam’ figure is surrounded entirely by narratives of the creation of the world; Adam Usk’s version of Higden’s *mapa mundi* immediately precedes the start of the *Polychronicon*, with the ‘Adam’ figure occurring on the first page of text. This page documents the formation of the world, and what follows is an ex-

tremely large and detailed world history, which Adam Usk himself extended with the addition of his own chronicle. Adam Usk intended his chronicle to be a continuation of the *Polychronicon* and so affixed the only copy of his chronicle to his manuscript of Higden's *Polychronicon*, enacting a literal as well as a symbolic intertextual conjoining of the two narratives.²⁰ The historical timeframe covered by the *Polychronicon* and Adam's *Chronicle* is significant; the *Polychronicon*, like many medieval chronicles, begins with the formation of the world as described in *Genesis*, and ends between 1327 and 1352 depending on the version,²¹ while Adam's chronicle covers the years 1377–1421 (Gransden 1982, pp. 43–45; Taylor 1966, pp. 39–45). The simple image of 'Adam' provides association, and indeed continuity, between the earlier *Genesis* narratives and the latter composition written contemporaneously by Adam Usk.

Adam Usk's self-identification with Adam the first man stresses his own nature as an embodied and ensouled being, a sinner and sufferer, but is also an assertion of authority. In the figure of 'Adam' the chronicler links himself directly to Original Sin, the fall of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, a sin inherited by all humanity. Adam Usk casts himself as the unfortunate inheritor of Adam's fall, but also a man who has a personal relationship with God and author of his own destiny. His work as a chronicle writer can be aligned with delving, the important work of cultivation and growth and linked to the most important narrative of all: the divine creation of the world.

The chronicle narrative can be read as a record of communication between Adam Usk and God, concerning his personal journey to redemption and salvation. The immediacy of Adam's authorial voice is based on another important narrative technique associated with the use of the first person: solicitation of the reader's pity. Adam Usk's chronicle is characterised by the emphasis on his personal suffering; terms such as 'misery' ('miserie') and descriptions of his poverty are commonplace throughout the chronicle. When in Rome in 1405, for instance, Adam records that the populus rioted after the Pope's nephew went on a murderous rampage. Adam was forced into hiding and narrates:

What a day of woe and calamity and misery that this was for me, the compiler of this work: I was stripped of everything, even down to my shoelaces, and scarcely managed to escape their fury. (Usk 1997, p. 205)

Adam's poverty and misfortunes have implications for his bodily comfort; he reports on several occasions that 'I [was] hungry and thirsty'²². Directly following his escape from Rome, Adam joined the Pope; however, not long afterwards he records that he was poisoned:

²⁰ London, British Library, MSS Add. 10104. The *Polychronicon* occupies folio 9^r-154^v and Adam's *Chronicle* follows directly at 155^r and continues until 176^v. Given-Wilson (1997), pp. xxx-viii-xlii.

²¹ The short version, which Taylor described as 'CD' finishes around 1327, while the later versions, 'A', 'B', and 'E', end between 1340 and 1352. Taylor (1966), pp. 110–111.

²² Adam records in Wales: 'I hid away amongst the mountains and caves and woods and forests, hungry and thirsty, constantly afraid that I would be killed or captured or betrayed.' Usk 1997, p. 239.

At Viterbo, I, the compiler of this present work, was poisoned by the dart of the envious, as a result of which I passed out seven times and was laid out for dead ... My friends soon melted away when they saw that I had lost my worldly goods, and I was left without any means whatsoever of supporting myself. However, the pope ordered his doctor, a certain Jew called Elias, to examine my polluted urine, where, after much effort and expense, he discovered the poison, and I was, thank God, restored to health, and was reinstated to the rota along with my co-auditors- thus fulfilling the word of God, that 'Adam the man is come as one of us'. (Usk 1997, pp. 205–207)

Here, Adam Usk's bodily suffering and restoration is linked directly to the fall and salvation of humankind; the 'Adam the man' quotation is taken from *Genesis* 3:22 and occurs after Adam and Eve have eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, and just before they are exiled from paradise. Adam Usk's loss of his worldly possessions and his friends are likened to Adam and Eve's loss of Paradise. Furthermore, *Genesis* 3:22 is a point at which Adam and Eve, who previously knew peace and tranquillity in Paradise, now realise that they have experienced evil by eating from the tree, and that good and evil exist in the world. Adam Usk's experience of being poisoned and his restoration to health- he is saved by a Jew no less- is thus a spiritual awakening for Adam Usk, who becomes aware of his own mortality and fallibility, and the humanity of others.

Adam Usk views the world around him as one filled with corruption and sin; Rome is, Adam narrates, 'abandoned and full of slums, thieves, wolves and vermin, reduced to misery' (Usk 1997, p. 189). The corruption of several institutions, such as the papacy, is for Adam the cause of his dismal career prospects and lack of patronage; of the papacy Adam says, 'Rome, where everything was for sale, and benefices were granted not according to merit, but to the highest bidder' (Usk 1997, p. 161). This corruption is most likely linked to Adam Usk's account of the fear and trepidation of the clergy at the sight of the comet; they are so corrupt that they are unable to extract its meaning as this would necessarily endanger their belief in salvation. Adam is taking on a personal interpretative authority at a historical moment when the church itself was fragmentary and in a state of schism.²³ Adam Usk believes himself to have far greater knowledge of the world than the papacy and clergy; it is quite an unorthodox view which effectively suggests that Adam Usk could by-pass the more usual mode of communication with God, that provided by the Church. Instead, Adam Usk promotes a proto-Protestant mode of direct communication with God. This influence is represented as validating and poured into Adam's chronicle by means of dream visions, internal monologues and personal observations.

Adam Usk is continually perplexed that the important contemporary figures of his chronicle narrative, such as the Roman Pope, the English king Henry IV and the Welsh leader Owain Glyndŵr to name only a few, do not recognise his individual brilliance as a chronicler and a lawyer, and frequently expresses his dismay and frustration. Adam Usk records in his narrative his misery at being overlooked for promotion in England because of his Welsh birth. The revolt of Owain Glyndŵr,

²³ For further discussion of the Great Schism (1378–1417), which divided the allegiance of Western Christendom between rival popes based at Avignon, Rome and after 1409, Pisa, see Gail (1972).

which began in 1400 and ceased around the year 1415, had enormous implications for Adam in terms of promotion: he records that the Pope granted him 'the arch-deaconry of Buckingham with the churches of Tisbury and Deverill in England; the Welsh war thwarted this' (Usk 1997, p. 159). This is one of several opportunities that were offered to Adam Usk, that did not come to fruition; the ill-fated clerical position offered to him by the earl of Northumberland, Henry Percy, in 1406, was another unsuccessful opportunity. Ironically, Adam never got to enjoy the benefits of the position, although he copiously suffered the ignominy of receiving the offer. The labyrinth seems a fitting symbol of a corrupt material world in which Adam finds himself on his way to the centre and, with God's help, his personal redemption.

Conclusions

Adam Usk's style of writing in his *Chronicle* is profoundly unique within medieval historiography. Its focus on the individual perspective and application of innovative narrational modes such as the first person, solicitation of pity, accounts of emotions and dreams, prophetic episodes and direct alignment with a benevolent God, leading to a profoundly immediate and arresting chronicle narrative, is highly unusual within the chronicle form. Adam Usk makes no attempt to disguise his unconventional methods of narration; it appears, in fact, that he is very consciously setting out not to write a traditional chronicle in the expected narrative voice. If this is the case, then the question remains: what sorts of genres he might have been imitating. Chris Given-Wilson, who edited the latest edition of Adam's chronicle, has remarked that Adam's writing was 'close to a diary, and like a diary it records the author's hopes and fears as well as the events which he found noteworthy.' (Given-Wilson 1995, p. 527) While this is a useful comparison with modern-day ideas of autobiography, diaries do not exist in the fifteenth century. First-person narrative, interestingly enough, is not so easy a mode to find in fifteenth-century England and Wales; Adam was writing in an era in which there was a general absence of the sorts of writing, like letters and memoirs, that document intimate insights into the private lives and thought of individuals.²⁴ While letters and wills (documents with which Adam, as a lawyer, would have come into frequent contact) do use the first person a great deal, they do not often tell of the writer's inner thoughts. It is possible, for instance, that Adam might have looked to romance and epic as a generic guide, or to *confessio*, which drew on antique sources such as Boethius and St Augustine.²⁵ The narrative reads like a confession, with its focus on the journey of an individual towards redemption, and its documentation of the inner workings of Adam Usk's mind.

Despite the originality presented in his chronicle, Adam Usk was to have no narratological influence on the next generation of chroniclers; there is no evidence

²⁴ For a further discussion see Partner (2005), pp. 42–64.

²⁵ *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, (1949); For a discussion of Augustine see Rubenstein (2005), pp. 22–41; Boethius (2008); Davenport (2004), p. 43.

that the chronicle of Adam Usk, of which there was only one known manuscript, was circulated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Indeed, an analysis of the full manuscript of Adam Usk's chronicle has been made possible only recently. At an unknown point between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries Adam Usk's *Chronicle* was split into two distinct sections; the second section rediscovered only in 1885, at Belvoir Castle (Given-Wilson (1997), pp. xxxviii–xlii). However, evidence suggests that Adam Usk did not wish his *Chronicle* to be circulated. In his chronicles for the year 1400, he states, 'I should hate for this account of my present follies to be seen during my lifetime' (Usk 1997, p. 119). Nonetheless, Adam Usk does frequently invoke the reader, for instance, the aforementioned 'be tolerant, reader' (Usk 1997, p. 18). Such evidence suggests that Adam must have wanted an imagined posterity as an audience for his writing.

Adam Usk's decision to compose a chronicle, and to place within it his personal musings and personal history, encloses his self-representation within a generic structure that is set firmly in a world proceeding from the Fall to eventual salvation. The generic frame in which Adam's individuality is presented is a vital component of his discussion of himself, and Adam's complex narrative voice reflects the organic inter-relationship of physical and spiritual aspects which informs the elements of the chronicle's narrative frame, becoming a symbolic reflection of the real world which Adam depicts in his textual world. While Adam Usk constructs himself as an embodied and spiritual being in his narrative, by combining the first person narration with the chronicle genre provides a further and more subtle and sophisticated level of meaning to Adam's descriptions of himself. Adam's personal history and his musings become an integral part of the world history he depicts in his chronicle narrative, and his body travels in a world infused with God. Both the real world and the world of his writing are meaningful worlds that Adam Usk understands emphatically and walks in confidently in his role of an embodied and ensouled traveller.

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The Thin End of the Wedge: Self, Body and Soul in Rembrandt's Kenwood Self-Portrait

Richard Read

A few years ago, convalescing after a serious illness, I saw Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait with Two Circles* (c. 1663–1669;¹ Fig. 1) at Kenwood House, Hampstead. That the painting restored my zest for life was not the result of the empathic powers usually attributed to Rembrandt, though the mess of colours of the brushes in the artist's hand, warm against his scarlet smock and fur-trimmed tabard, was all the lovelier for the gloom of Hampstead Heath on a late December afternoon. Rembrandt's self-portraits are celebrated for capturing the angst of aging and mortality, but what struck me about this one was not the melancholic *gravitas* of the figure, but a brisker and more purposeful mood about the painting which seemed to depend on something I had not noticed on previous visits—something far less conspicuous than the mysterious circles on the background wall on which so much has been written. Once it is noticed, the dimly discernible sliver back along the upper right-hand side of the painting transforms the stationary, lozenge-shaped figure of the artist, rooted as it is to the spot with one hand to his side and the other holding brushes, from an image of Rembrandt *being* someone, to an image of him *doing* something. The shift from the passive to the active mode defines the painting's relation to the viewer and the connoisseurs who were intended to appreciate it, and makes the artist seem manly, masterly and purposeful, instead of pensive and melancholic.

A hurdle immediately presents itself to such a decisive shift in the emotion associated with the painting. According to van der Wetering, my view is likely to have resulted from the projection of false, because anachronistic, interpretation of the physiognomy represented by the painting:

A strong tendency (still) exists to read Rembrandt's states of mind and even his (assumed) thoughts into his self-portraits. This tendency has contributed to the persistent myth that Rembrandt ... 'confided everything in his (late) self-portraits, including his unhappiness and loneliness; but ... also his self-confidence and his pride and triumph as an artist.' As is well known, the history of cinematography has taught us that one is capable of reading

¹ Dating is based on arguments in Wetering (2005), p. 303.

R. Read (✉)
The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
e-mail: richard.read@uwa.edu.au

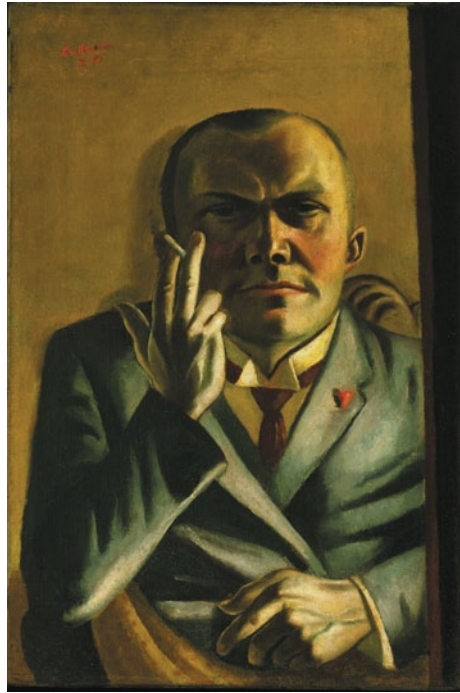
Fig. 1 Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, self portrait with two circles. Circa 1665. Oil on canvas. 114.3 × 94 cm. (With permission of The Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood House, London, UK/(C) English Heritage Photo Library/The Bridgeman Art Library)



all sorts of emotions and thoughts in an immobile face, depending on the context in which it is seen. ... it is not so much a question of reading emotions but rather the projection of 'knowledge' ... of elements of the Rembrandt myth ... into Rembrandt's face shown in repose (Wetering 2005, p. xxxix).

Such skeptical statements may serve as a warning against ahistorical and sentimentalized readings of the painting, but they begins to sound dated in view of proponents of Actor-Network Theory, who complain that 'all the objects people have learned to cherish have been replaced by puppets projecting social shadows which are supposed to be the only "true reality" that is "behind" the appreciation of the work of art... To be affected is supposed to be mere affection' (Bruno Latour, quoted Zell, n.p.). One wonders whether knowledge can ever be neatly parted from emotion, and whether to do so risks denying emotional significance to all art. Yet if respect for historical accuracy of response to Rembrandt is the cardinal requirement before an interpretation can be attempted, then we should at least acknowledge that the 'notion that painting can represent emotions and inner feeling had a long tradition by the time that Rembrandt was working' (Nash 2006, p. 192). In so far as van de Wetering's stricture loosens the conviction that the emotional expression of a painting is necessarily fixed, then it assists my thesis of an emotional transformation in our experience of the painting. My imputation of this transformation will rely on several intersecting approaches, not least an original method of comparing, across large historical intervals, what I shall call 'sliver paintings'—portraits of artists at work on paintings whose canvas or panel backs are turned against us in such a way that the actual frame crops them

Fig. 2 Max Beckmann, self portrait on yellow ground with cigarette. Circa 1923. Oil on canvas. 60.2×40.3 cm. (Gift of Dr. and Mrs F. H. Hirschland, Museum of modern art, New York, USA. (C) Max Beckmann/Bild-Kunst. Licensed by Viscopy, 2012)



into a narrow sliver of canvas or panel, of the kind that, in the case of Rembrandt's Kenwood portrait, is dimly discernible rising upwards along the upper right hand side of the painting.

To specify the emotional transformation I discover in the Kenwood portrait, I shall compare it to a superficially similar composition by a twentieth-century artist who was more than usually steeped in the conventions of older art: Max Beckmann's *Self Portrait on Yellow Ground with Cigarette* (Beckmann 1923; Fig. 2) in the Museum of Modern Art, New York. A commentator observes that 'Beckmann might at first be mistaken for a successful businessman or member of high society in his elegant gray suit adorned with a red decoration in the lapel and stiff high collar, and with his ubiquitous cigarette' (Rewald 2006, p. 82). Whereas Rembrandt's working clothes firmly associate him with the studio, Beckmann is dressed to kill and seems to look daggers at us, before we realize that he is merely examining himself in a mirror while he paints the canvas whose back confronts us as a narrow sliver down the right-hand side of the painting. But what first appears as an attitude of arrogant superiority, conforming with the agonistic stance of Modernist art towards the public, soon turns out to be 'the look': that traditional gaze of ferocious concentration that the fraternity of professional painters adopts when they capture their own appearance at work (Georgel and Leqoc 1987, p. 134).

The tradition of 'the look' reaches back through Chaim Soutine, Van Gogh, Paul Cézanne, Francisco Goya, Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, Jean-Baptiste-Siméon

Chardin, Nicolas Poussin and Annibale Carracci. All of them depict it, while a sliver back cropped by the frame overlaps their bodies as they paint. Examples by lesser-known artists can probably be found on every continent since the last century and certainly in Canada, Pakistan, Germany, Italy, South Africa, Japan, America, Britain and Australia.² The motif creates a measure of parity across the ages, as each new contributor composes their features into an attitude of focused observation that unites their profession and distinguishes them from philistines who see, but do not consider what they see. In the seventeenth century, Nicolas Poussin wrote:

... that you should know that there are two kinds of looking at objects. One is simply seeing them and the other is considering them attentively. Simply to see is nothing but naturally receiving in the eye the form and resemblance of the thing seen. But to see an object in considering it, is beyond the simple and natural perception of the form of the eye, one looks at it with a particular application as the means of best knowing this same object, thus one could say that the simple aspect is a natural operation, and that which I call the 'Prospect' is an office of reason. (Poussin, cited André Felibien, 1929 edn, p. 77)

The contrast is clearly shown by Pieter Breughel the Elder's pen drawing of *The Painter and the Connoisseur* (circa 1656), where 'the look' of fierce determination on the proud face of the artist is unforgettably distinguished from the baffled amusement of the acquisitive connoisseur peering through thick lenses, whose is hand is meanly clapped on his purse. This contrasts with the artist's exquisitely delicate and decisive grasp of his brush as he applies it to a picture surface just outside the limits of the frame. The drawing promotes the constancy of the artist's profession at a time of change when art was increasingly made for random buyers on the open market, instead of more cultivated patrons. 'Times may change, Brueghel reminds us, but the artist's job does not' (Harbison 1995, p. 17).

The artist's actions highlight another physiological attribute of the artist: the attentive 'look' guides the dexterous 'hand'. In the Kenwood portrait the hand is so fused to the brushes, the palette, the maul stick and the painting cloth that hangs beneath them that they effectively replace it. 'It is, in fact, as if Rembrandt had constructed his hand out of the instruments that it employed for painting. The hand of the painter is represented in what, following Aristotle's definition, we might call its instrumental use' (Alpers 1988, p. 22). This swiftly delineated bundle of implements is only a more extreme case of the general rule that the individuated hand joins of all dexterous painters across the ages, just as it is from 'the look' that the 'hand' self portraits by very different artists derive a shared 'accent of power and intellectual tension' as something held in common (Georgel and Lecoq 1987, p. 134).

Participation in the professional kinship of 'the look' and 'the hand' already sets limits to the individuality of Rembrandt's image of himself as we realize that, like

² For example W. G. R. Hind, *Self portrait* (1863), Canada; Anna Molka Ahmed, *Self portrait* (1939), Pakistan; Gerta Overbeck, *Self portrait at an Easel*, 1936, Germany; Massimo Campigli, *Painter and Model* (1946), Italy; François Krige, *Self portrait with Buddhist Print* (1980s), South Africa; Narashige Koide, *Self portrait with a Hat* (1924), Japan; Yasuo Kuniyoshi, *At Work* (1943), Japan; Wyndham Lewis, *Portrait of the Artist as the Painter Raphael* (1921), Britain; Barbara Hepworth, *Self portrait* (1950), Britain; Gillian Melling, *Me and My Baby* (1991), Britain; Horace Pippin, *Self portrait* (1941), North America; Fred Williams, *Self portrait at an Easel* (1960–1961), Australia; and Avigdor Arikha, *Self portrait Standing Behind Canvas* (1978), Israel and America.

Beckmann, he too exhibits 'the look' of gazing not at the viewer but at his own image reflected in a mirror, despite the fact that he has imparted to his own features an unusual degree of vulnerable intimacy by appearing to hold our gaze far longer than strangers in most cultures tolerate. The scholarly objection to the view of Rembrandt's self portraits as the quintessential expression of the shaping power of an individual 'I' created from within (Glaser, Lehman and Lubos, quoted by Wetering in White 1990, p. 18) is that it assumes an anachronistic nineteenth-century Romantic conception of the self that is alien to Rembrandt's time. Seventeenth-century subjectivity was more likely to have been understood in terms of human types (such as, in Rembrandt's case, the melancholic) whose nature was determined by the balance of the humours and reflected, for such authors as Montaigne, more in what selves held in common than in what differentiated them (Wetering, in White 1990, pp. 17–19), though this includes Michel de Montaigne's conviction that '[a]nyone who turns his prime attention on to himself will hardly ever find himself in the same state twice' (Montaigne 1991, pp. 373–377). The problem with the scholarly objection to anachronistic Romantic accounts of Rembrandt's self is that, when it comes to dating—and as everyone who has read Shakespeare knows—the so-called modern self is a moveable feast.

It is useful to consider a medley of conflicting accounts of the genesis of modern selfhood by a variety of authorities, as a way of situating our own sense of self in relation to the possibilities of pictorial selfhood available to Rembrandt. Keith Thomas cites a comment by the ancient historian Arnaldo Momigliano that 'it is my impression that Greek and Roman historians, and especially biographers, talk about individuals in a manner which is not distinct from our own' (Thomas 2009, p. 37). According to this widely appealing view the self was ever thus: its fundamental emotional and intellectual composition has never changed. John Jeffries Martin considers that a distinction between a collective and an individual self during the entire period of the Renaissance is naïve, and posits instead three kinds of self: (1) a 'communal' or 'civic' self, (2) an individual, expressive, performative self, and (3) a 'porous' self, 'open to strong influences from "spiritual" forces (through witchcraft or possession) from the outside'. All three selves would be combined in every individual (Martin 2002, pp. 210–211), but how could their discrepancies be simultaneously expressed in painting? For Joanna Woods-Marsden a modern individual self can be discerned for the first time in Renaissance self portraiture that arose from Roman conceptions of legal personhood and Christian conceptions of inner conscience. It entailed a combination of self-discovery and invention (Martin's second self) that was elaborated in written conceptions of self-fashioning with an emphasis, respectively, on public life in Machiavelli's *The Prince* and domestic life in Castiglione's *Courtier* (Woods-Marsden 1998, pp. 9–15). In these texts and in the portraits that illustrate their ideas (for example, Raphael's portrait of Castiglione), the self is proactive. It is liberated from the astrological influence that stamped fixed identity or *virtu* on the hieratic profiles of Pisanello's medals or straitened the herringbone patterns of Elizabethan portraits. As individuals began to think in terms of shaping Fortune to their own ends (Pocock 1975, pp. 36–37 and 168–169), portraits became psychological, so that Anthony Van Dyke, for example, could be brought to

England to imbue a whole social class with the suggestion of depth of character and the capacity for considered choice that would later be modified and passed down to the professional middle classes as the Cartesian ideal of ‘a human agent who is able to remake himself by methodical and disciplined action’ (Taylor 1989, p. 159).³

But Dror Wahrman is adamant in dating the beginnings of the individuated self to the late eighteenth-century, identifying its origin with a crucial shift from group identity to the ‘quintessential uniqueness that separates a person from all others’ (Wahrman 2004, p. 276). Roy Porter charts the demise of this unique self in the twentieth-century writings of the ‘anti-humanist iconoclasts’ Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault who argued for the primacy of sign systems in defining us. “‘We don’t think our thoughts, they think us’”; ourselves are constructs, bearing discourses we only think are ours. To think otherwise is myth, an overvaluation of individuality, the malignant offspring of “humanist hagiography” (Porter 2003, p. 15). In plainer terms, Wilfred McCay observes that in our own age the ‘I’ is no longer ‘the fundamental building block in our apprehension of reality, the still point in a moving world’ or ‘a unitary thing’ but ‘an ever-shifting ensemble of social roles, a disorderly venue in which the healthy ego functions less as a commander-in-chief than as a skilled air-traffic controller’ (McCay n.d., n.p.). In the history of art this finds expression in the development that Frederick Jameson charts from Edward Munch’s late nineteenth-century *The Scream* (a histrionic variant upon the pathos of Rembrandt’s figures), to Andy Warhol’s strangely affectless ‘Marilyn series’ of the 1960s. For all the ‘radical isolation and solitude, anomie, private revolt, [and] Van-Gogh type madness’ of Munch’s figure, at least it is still capable of suffering, whereas the liberation from intensely felt selfhood signified by Warhol’s simulacra ‘may also mean not merely a liberation from anxiety, but a liberation from every other kind of feeling as well, since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling’ (Jameson 1991, p. 15). A rather different approach to the self was evident in certain artists of the 1960s Italian art movement Arte Povera, who, in attempting to avoid the commodity status of the art work depending on the fixed identity of the artist, gave rise to ambitions of mutability, such as this one articulated by Michelangelo Pistoletto: “Each successive work or action is the product of contingent and isolated intellectual or perceptual stimulus that belongs to one moment only. After every action, I step to one side, and proceed in a different direction from the direction formulated by my object, since I refuse to accept it as an answer” (Pistoletto, quoted in Potts 2008, p. 172). The difficulty of sustaining this continual renewal of self through art led to a rueful admission by Pino Pascali, another member of the group, that seeing his past works gave him the “welcome confirmation ‘that when all is said and done, I actually exist’” (Pascali, quoted in Potts 2008, p. 181).

The interesting question about Rembrandt’s picturing of selfhood is whether Jameson’s affectless, decentered, contemporary self resembles or differs from

³ The concept of self-fashioning was developed in Stephen J. Greenblatt’s literary study *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (1980) from Erving Goffman’s pioneering psycho-sociological study *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). It began to be applied to art history in the 1990s, including Mary Rogers, *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art* (2000).

the selfhood that precedes the long interlude of Romantic individuality. Wahrman thinks it does, and that before the 'interiorizing and essentializing' tendencies of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century culture produced unique, inward and innate identities 'synonymous with self' (Wahrman 2004, p. 276), the fragmentation and disunity of contemporary selfhood was taken for granted by pre-Romantics (Wahrman 2004, p. xvii). On the other hand, if one grants a long period of life to the Romantic self, it seems unlikely that what followed it was merely a continuation of the period 'before the self' (Wahrman 2004, p. xvii). That would neglect the fact that the modern self is emphatically embodied, and therefore manifests different tensions than those that waged war between body and soul, immaterial and material realms, and eternal and changing qualities in the prior tradition (Taylor 1989, p. 121).

Moreover, the delicate wedge that René Descartes's seventeenth-century philosophical writings drove between body and soul to explain human consciousness introduced warring faculties that complicate Wahrman's assumption that the Romantic self in any simple sense was unified. The disengagement that Descartes required of the soul to constitute a self that was marginally independent of the body was not an impediment, but a prerequisite of subjective empathy with other selves. We need to observe other people before we can relate to them. To understand the emotional transformation enacted in Rembrandt's Kenwood portrait, the spectator must engage in an interaction between empathy and detachment that is in psychic interaction with the sitter.

The question of Rembrandt's interpellation of his spectator brings into focus the relation between Rembrandt's image of himself in the Kenwood portrait and his social image as an artist. To what extent does Rembrandt's portrait answer to social archetypes of the artist externally defined in previous art, including his own? Arguments between sociologists and psychologists persist to this day about the nature of subjectivity, including the emotions. Some argue that feelings and experiences are always 'out there' in the interactions and relationships amongst people rather than inside the individual, so there is reason to suppose that there were similar tensions of perspective in the past. One strand in social cultural theory pioneered by the Russian social psychologist Lev Semyonovich Vygostky and taken up by George Herbert Mead in America posits a constant dialogue between us and our social world, which is in turn internalized through symbolic representations of our culture. In this we are mentored through a process of guided participation into the ideas and processes of whatever culture or historical period we happen to be born into, a process that might particularly apply to an artist, such as Rembrandt, 'whose practice is peculiarly modern in its continuous oscillation between private interest and public statement' (Westermann 2002, p. 362). Before returning to the issue of whether the Kenwood portrait is best understood under the rubric of the self or the soul, I shall first pursue the external and then the internal determinants of its formation in isolation from each other before bringing them together.

Certain features of each self portrait in our anachronistic contrast between Beckmann and Rembrandt are externally determined by the artist's visual association with the tools of his trade—brushes, palette, maul stick, painting cloth, easel, sliver back in the Rembrandt—of which no single item takes particular precedence over

another. As attributes of the painter's profession, they define the artist's standing in society within a tradition that reaches back to attributes of saints: the keys of St Peter or St Catherine's wheel. In each portrait, however, the status of the artist changes in relation to his implements according to different arrangements of the formal components.

As soon as we see the sliver of the reversed canvas to the right of Beckmann, for example, we know that he is working on his portrait and looking at himself in a mirror to paint it. Semiotically, the primary function of 'slivers' is to confer presence on the body of the artist by occluding part of it. 'Presence', according to T. J. Clark, is generated by occlusion: 'everything in painting ultimately turns on the artist's success in establishing a strong, cored, convex form in and against an opposite flatness or void. And in practice this basic illusion depends on the engineering of a not-seen, a not-seeable ... The moment of maximum visual information in a picture is that at which the object goes out of sight' (Clark 1999, p. 203). We may not notice the sliver at first partly because it is too busy enhancing the artist's presence by sacrificing its own, and partly because his arresting social confrontation with us distracts us from it. The artist's snappy jacket, winged collar, tie and button hole infuse his arrogant stare with social status that is all the more powerful for making us uneasy. The very opacity and inertness of the sliver painting makes the human gaze more sentiently penetrating. The effect is not adequately explained by the circumstantial evidence of dress and attitude that shows how Beckmann had gone up in the world in the years before 1923. Rather, while his attitude is thoroughly modern, it also adverts to the traditional type of the virtuous painter, or *pictor doctus*, depicted by Rubens (Fig. 3), Van Dyke, Dou and Honthorst when they showed themselves in noble attire and lofty attitude, freed from the implements that would otherwise associate them with the physical labour of painting (Chapman 1990, p. 96).

In Beckmann's painting the power of this tradition defers our recognition of the painter's solitary self-communion with himself at work on the canvas. Indeed, when we do notice the sliver, and our communion with him is replaced by our awareness of his communion with the mirror, our earlier relationship with him is not over. Rather, a modernist 'flip-flop' effect ensures that social interaction with the high society artist alternates with his 'look' of private fixation on his mirror-image. Like some *da/fort* game, the painting first commands our presence before the artist, then banishes us so that he appears to relate only to himself. Then we find ourselves interacting with him again. The alternation is effected by deliberately puzzling incongruities, such as the omission of brush and palette from the hand nearest the sliver back. If he is not painting, then must he not be looking at us after all? And why would he risk staining his smart clothes? Yet then again the sliver back reappears, with the artist in reach of it, despite his lack of painting implements, and, if so, then perhaps he is alone again, painting his image in the mirror, with canvas reversed so that, visible now, it appears in sharp geometrical analogy with the folded back collar and lapels. Or maybe, as a third possibility, the mirror has disappeared and he is sizing us up as his sitters?

And what of the red spotted saffron yellow shawl draped over his lap (Rewald 2006, p. 82) that keeps him warm or protects his clothes or both? How does it

Fig. 3 Peter Paul Rubens, Self portrait. 1638–1640. Oil on canvas. 109.5 × 85 cm. (With permission of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria/The Bridgeman Art Library)



contribute to the overall effect of disquieting anomaly? Since the shawl is also an attribute of the artist as clown it undermines the defiance and reveals the inanity of his social posture. It also means that he is not standing in social combat with us at all, but sitting at his work with the chair back rising behind his right shoulder in the form of a carved wooden scroll (but if so why are the brush marks that constitute it so fluid and why is there no matching scroll above his other shoulder?). These contradictions are distinct from the slow, dawning change of awareness invoked by the Kenwood portrait. Their flip-flop effects explicitly expose the artificial status of the painting as a modernist construct, whereas Rembrandt enacts a transformation from a painter observing us to a painter painting himself painting. Once the change has happened, we can remember how it was before, but cannot go back to it.

To add to the complications, one might have thought that Beckmann's cigarette, ostentatiously held aloft, only sustains the first reading: the painter's haughty interaction with the viewer. It accentuates social posturing, but surprisingly it also keeps the other interpretation in play because (though Beckmann was a chain smoker), it enlists a long tradition of 'smoking painters' who—in contrast to the menial paint grinders in the background of studio paintings—but also to *virtuosi* like Rubens, liberated from their brushes—evoke 'the delights and difficulties of the art of painting'

(Brink Goldsmith 1994, p. 241) by freeing the artist not from work itself but from the disagreeable, physical side of manual work born by studio assistants.⁴

Where does the Kenwood figure sit amongst these binary indicators of externally determined professional identity? Following the Horatian antinomy of the *poeta doctus* and the *poeta vulgaris*, the counterpart of the virtuous painter is the *pictor vulgaris* of which Rembrandt made some idiosyncratic versions in earlier self-portraits.⁵ If the studio clothes and attributes of painting shown in the Kenwood portrait tacitly renounce the Rubens type of virtuoso painter, its monumental dignity has little to do with the drunken rowdiness and smoking of the *pictor vulgaris* either, for if the latter is relevant at all, 'it is recast in a positive light and applied narrowly to his professional identity' through manifest respect for his craft (Chapman 1990, p. 97).

Without recourse to smoking, Rembrandt's figure comes down with the 'smoking artist' on the thinking side of the artist's relation to menial work. Capturing himself in thought rather than in action, he resembles Velázquez, pausing from his work in *Las Meninas* (though Velázquez's brush is charged with paint) to observe and admire his monarch. But Velázquez's gaze is reciprocated by a monarch standing in the viewer's place, whereas Rembrandt gazes at a regal image of himself in the mirror, since the monumental stance and dignity of the Kenwood portrait come closest in his oeuvre to the 'princely' self portrait of 1658 in the Frick Collection (Chapman 1990, p. 97) in which the artist holds a cane that resembles a scepter. Instead of Alexander consecrating the art of Apelles by visiting his studio, the Kenwood figure is monarch of his own domain, so that if the two circles behind him signify the outlines of a double hemispherical map of the world on paper pinned to the wall (to cite only one of the many interpretations given to them), another external attribute of the artist would be the universal fame of Rembrandt's conquest of the visible world by mastery of the techniques of painting (Chapman 1990, p. 108). Making the studio an autonomous site of meaning, Rembrandt's image of his own figure conflates the roles of artist, sitter and patron (Stoichita 1997, pp. 226–228), so that a painting that might have employed an impersonal third-person mode to convey a general picture of the artist realizing work in the studio is to be read instead as an individual painter realizing his own work in a first-person mode (Chapman 1990, p. 231). While personalizing the general image of the prince, it also borrows a grandeur that expands the narrowly artistic aspect of the artist's life by associating it with the ubiquity and omniscience of a ruler.

No interpreter has more resolutely chosen to interpret the external determinants of Rembrandt's pictorial identity than Svetlana Alpers. She interprets his construction of individualized portraits as a function of the market for which he worked and the objects he manufactured for it. To the external determinants of Rembrandt's artistic identity we have examined so far—which include 'the look', 'the hand',

⁴ See Leonaert Bramer's engraving of a smoking painter in Brink Goldsmith (1994), p. 241, dating back to a series of circa 1650–1655, a decade or two before the Kenwood portrait, depicting the various professions.

⁵ For example, his *Rembrandt and Saskia in the Scene of the Prodigal Son in the Tavern* (c. 1635). See Chapman (1990), p. 97.

approximations to the image of the princely artist, the attributes of painting and symbols of fame—Alpers contributes an economic reading that casts Rembrandt as both the inventor and the commodifier of the modern self. In Alpers' reading the court painter whose status is defined by distance from physical labour becomes the studio painter whose authority depends on commercial success arising from mastery of his craft.

Alpers attends to the sliver back, that fragment of the painting that eluded me. She considers that:

... the sliver of canvas just visible along the right edge of the Kenwood self-portrait (so light that it is often cropped in reproductions) to which he does not turn or lift a brush is Rembrandt's anti-illusionist way of calling attention to the painter's condition ... It is on canvas, and in paint ... that Rembrandt knows himself ... his works are commodities distinguished from others by being identified as his; and in making them, he in turn commodifies himself. He loved only his freedom, art and money, to recall the words of Descaps. (Alpers 1988, pp. 117–118)

In this view nothing is interiorized in Rembrandt's self portraits; all is surface. They represent a truth to exterior appearances that manufactures for his other portraits an image of personal identity he first manufactured as an image of himself. His studio is an artisanal kind of assembly line for the mass production of individualized subjectivity.

But X-rays of the Kenwood portrait suggest the crafting of a deliberate delay in our understanding of the painting that holds the artist back from complete identification with the commodity he is making. Edwin Buijsen, Peter Schatborn and Ben Broos summarize the dominant interpretation of the changes revealed by X-rays that show that Rembrandt had once painted himself turned towards the canvas he is painting:

In his first design, Rembrandt had initially intended to depict himself at work ... the body was angled more to the right and the painter was applying a brush to the canvas with his raised hand. ... With a few swift but effective brushstrokes, Rembrandt then altered this active pose to a more frontal angle, moving all the painter's attributes to the right and depicting his other hand resting on his hip. (Buijsen, Schatborn and Broos, catalogue, White 1997, p. 220)

Ernst van de Wetering insists that this change was '*undoubtedly* prompted by the problem facing anyone painting a self portrait, and one that confronted Rembrandt time and again throughout his career: the fact that the right hand becomes a left hand in the mirror' (my emphasis). Whether 'the hands in self portraits are usually omitted or just cursorily described', the 'right hand is unable to "pose", because as a mirror-image left hand it is moving as the artist paints' (Wetering 1990, p. 12). Despite the spectacular virtuosity of the way Rembrandt changed the hand that holds the brushes, 'what *must* have happened', according to van de Wetering again (1990, p. 13, my emphasis), is that 'he followed the reality in the mirror faithfully and then swiftly reversed the hands.' In other words he severs the tie with the mirror in a fashion akin to a midwife's routine cutting and tying of umbilical cords. I find this exclusive emphasis on Rembrandt's quest for likeness too dogmatic. And while Buijsen, Schatborn and Broos entertain more conflicted motives for the change,

they too assume that Rembrandt was only intent on mimetic virtuosity: ‘On the one hand he was apparently driven by a desire to record things exactly as he saw them reflected, but on the other hand he did not want the viewer to recognize the picture immediately as a mirror image’ (Buijsen, Schatborn and Broos, in White 1990, p. 220). I concur with the inference of temporal unfolding here: the conviction that Rembrandt wanted the spectator to understand the image’s origin in a mirror eventually but not straightaway. *Pace* these scholars, however, I contend that Rembrandt wished to convey a narrative that could never be apprehended as the static image they assume was his objective, and that the painting represents the forethought immanent in the act of painting: the preparatory observation, calculation and invention that motivate the artist’s eye and hand. Thus, at this point, my argument shifts from the external determinants of the portrait to its inner determinants, as far as they can be reconstructed from the theories and practices of Rembrandt’s day.

In turning to the inner determinants of the painting I also return to the idea of the soul as an armature on which the meaning and emotion of the painting depend. To the many interpretations of the two circles on the wall behind the artist—a double-hemispherical map, a theoretical statement of the ‘O’ that Giotto drew to illustrate the perfection of the artist’s skill, a compositional device securing (in modern parlance) the ‘significant form’ of the composition (Wetering 2005, pp. 565–567)—perhaps it would be crass to add the possibility that the ‘incongruent and fragmentary’ circles, whose ‘slight asymmetry ... is repeated in that of the eyes’ (Clarke 2006, n.p.), actually symbolize those artist’s eyes as windows to the soul, where soul is understood as an older and more capacious category than self, as the seat of the passions and as the locus of spiritual inwardness.⁶ As tendentious as the idea would be, to consider the painting as a portrait of the artist’s soul has the advantage of suggesting visual sources that are arguably richer than the ‘types of the artists’ that I have been citing as possible precedents for the Kenwood portrait. In his essay on ‘Representation of “soul” by Rembrandt’, John Nash traces the origin of Rembrandt’s self portraits to representations of individuals caught in meditative attitudes that serve as aids for prayer and meditation in the Christian tradition of devotional images of the Virgin and saints (Nash 2006, p. 195). Passed down from Flemish fifteenth-century paintings to Titian and from Titian to Rembrandt, the contemplative attitude inspired by this tradition stirs empathy for others in us and an appreciation of moments when we take stock of our lives and find value in our aspirations (Nash 2006, p. 198). Dwelling on Rembrandt’s eyes as portals upon the passions of the soul gives us, once again, the spiritual complexion of the whole man beyond the scope of his experience and skills as an artist (Stoichita 1997, p. 226). Our contemplative reception of the image, however, is radically transformed by noticing the detail I mentioned at the outset, which implies a movement of the artist’s body.

Apart from eyes as the windows of the soul, which the asymmetrical circles in the background may reiterate, another way of apprehending the soul was through

⁶ I am grateful to Professor Constant Mews of Monash University for emphasizing the relevance of the soul in Rembrandt’s connection. For the Kenwood portrait, the circles and windows of the soul see also Susan Fegley Osmond (2000), p. 3; and Jean-Marie Clarke (2006), n. p.

motions of the body, since physical movement was identified with being emotionally moved (as for example in the Italian word *affetti* that means both motions and emotions). Nash explains that:

Following ancient theories of rhetoric, Renaissance treatises on art advocate the use of body pose and gesture to express the internal emotional states associated with character. Gesture as discussed in these treatises has two functions. First, it conveys life, indirectly indicating the existence of the soul that animates the body. Second, specific gestures can be signs for particular emotions. Alberti wrote of how the 'feelings are known from movements of the body.' Leonardo essayed in the same vein: 'Let the postures of men and the parts of their bodies be so disposed that these display the intent of their minds'. (Adams 2009, p. 100)

Nash considers that this path to the passions and intentions of the soul is closed to Rembrandt's meditative portraits because they do not do anything (Nash 2006, p. 195). With his hand stranded by his side or in his pocket Rembrandt's figure transfixes us so steadily with his gaze that it takes inordinate time for us to notice the almost imperceptible sliver of canvas back that extends upwards as a misty wedge from half way up the right hand side of the canvas. Once noticed, however, its transformative power is proportional to its former unobtrusiveness. That is because it has the effect of dramatically pushing the figure backwards and sideways to energize the atmosphere that envelops the scene. The role of the sliver back in Beckmann's self portrait was to confer presence on the body it occludes, but here, since it does not touch the artist's body, it brings volumetric presence to the very air of the scene, enveloping it in a semblance of aerial perspective despite the shallow space between the back wall and the picture plane. It is an effect that greatly enhances the majestic monumentality of the figure already achieved by the strong relief of its silhouette against the untypically light background (Wetering 2005, p. 565). Lying parallel to the edge and surface of the painting, Beckmann's sliver back creates the reflexive effect of showing the back of the real painting as if it had been folded back into the illusion on the front. Rembrandt's misty sliver does no such thing. It resists that possibility by the angle at which it is set to the picture plane and tilted against the painting's edge (and by the possibility that there was no mindset in which such a modernist reflexive effect was meaningful). Its presence animates the whole picture space, and it was necessary to do that in order to achieve the ultimate goal of endowing the figure with potential movement.

Alpers observed that Rembrandt does not turn or lift a brush towards the canvas sliver (Alpers 1988, p. 118), but I contend that our delayed recognition of the sliver opens a distance between itself and the body of the artist that will be crossed by the painting hand of the artist as it turns to the canvas, though the distance is too great for it to do so without the artist breaking his pose. Ergo, his hand must move to paint the next brushstroke; just as it has moved back from the last brushstroke he applied. Ergo the image of himself he is about to paint on canvas will be a short-term memory of the pose he will no longer be able to see. Our delay in noticing the sliver creates a premonition of visual action and the visual trace of a recent memory, neither of which equate simply with observable reality.

However, my contention that that the sliver was always too faint and narrow to be recognized quickly, faces a significant practical objection: it seems to fail, if we

accept Ernst van der Wetering's argument that 'the painting was originally wider. Its present width is just 13 cm short of the most standard size of 1.5 ell (app. 107 cm), which could mean that the width of the canvas was reduced by 13 cm. Given the absence of cusping along the left edge, at least 10 cm must have been cut off here. Despite the presence of cusping on the right edge, it is entirely plausible that a few centimetres of the image were also cut off along this edge' (Wetering 2005, p. 564). This practical obstacle to my hypothesis weakens, however, if we acknowledge by these calculations that the sliver would have extended to the right only by an extra three centimetres, which would make the actual painting only a little more than a thirtieth of its present width. In this case, the sliver would still be inconspicuous and would still be too far away for the artist to paint without him moving from his pose. In fact van de Wetering's calculations are far from neutral in intent. They comply with his belief that Rembrandt's was exclusively interested in verisimilitude: 'Should the painting have been slightly larger at the right, then the canvas at the right in the portrait—currently scarcely visible—would gain in recognisability' (Wetering 2005, p. 564). The belief determines the interpretation of the measurements, which do not necessarily support the belief. Thus van de Wetering is unlikely to entertain the possibility that Rembrandt was representing a memory, nor take into account the spectrum between Rembrandt's realism and visionary works such as *Balshazzar's Feast*. I do not wish to eliminate mimesis as a goal of Rembrandt's portraiture but rather propose a broader definition of mimesis that includes elements of memory, imagination, implied future action and painterly abstraction.

Having overcome this possible objection to my hypothesis, I shall pursue my case by arguing that the continuity between the painting as a depiction of a recent memory and the premonition of a future act is secured by the ostensive role of the conspicuous impasto paintwork left as tangible evidence of that action (for in a purely physical sense paintings just are residues of human action). Certainly the artist is no longer gazing at *us*, but neither is he gazing into the depths of his own soul. Consequently his gaze has become instrumental rather than meditative, and his hand (already made "instrumental", as Alpers observed, by substituting instruments of painting for it) will shortly comply with its purpose. He gazes now to commit what he sees to memory and so, in the next instant, to paint what he remembers, though it is possible that when he has left off painting, he will look back to remember more before turning to paint again, so that the painting does not record a moment but evokes a process, albeit one that is coming to a never-ending end.

In more senses than one the sliver is a thin end of the wedge that applies leverage upon our understanding so that we read the intentions of the artist's soul as vividly in the body's immanent action as we do in the eyes. Indeed it is possible that several of the competing scholarly interpretations of the circles behind the figure of the artist converge in this imminent action of eyes and hand. Not only do the slightly asymmetrical circles echo the eyes as windows of the soul, but their possible recollection of Giotto's dexterous drawing of the perfect circle on the wall prefigures the arc that the artist's hand is about to describe through the air in reaching the canvas.⁷

⁷ I am grateful to Philippa Boldiston for this insight.

As vectors of the soul's intentions, the circles ostensibly emphasize both gazing and bodily turning.

Our deferred attention to the sliver is necessary because the conspicuous paintwork is not itself a sufficient trace of the artist's mental processing of long-term to short-term memory. We might have thought that the 'broad, insistent, rough technique'—especially around the fist that holds the painting implements—sufficiently draws our attention to the painting as process (Chapman 1990, p. 101). It does not do so, however, in any way that meaningfully discriminates the order in which the brushstrokes were applied. (Even documentary films of the American abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock at work do not help us to construe very clearly the order of brushstrokes composing the palimpsest of the final product.) The evidence of paint work certainly contributes to the appearance of the painting in its state of a 'never-ending *statu nascendi*' (Wetering 2005, p. 303), but it does not articulate the contours of the events that caused them, still less the artist's fluid metamorphosis of mood from vulnerable self-communion to masterly construction of the image, with all the intervening phases of emotional suspense, trepidation, tremulous optimism and determination. Neither is paintwork alone enough to convey the repeated sallies of the artist's cumulative turnings to and from his canvas.

As we become aware of how noticing the sliver changes the whole meaning of the painting, the painting loses the character of mimetic realism in favour of something ambiguous, though it does not flaunt contradiction as Beckmann's does. We are given to consider, for example, the paradox that the painting represents the mental prelude to an action that will take place after the residue of paint shows it has already happened. This articulates the opposite end of the painting process shown in Rembrandt's early *Artist in the Studio* (1629) in which, it has been argued, the artist contemplates the mental idea of what to paint before he has begun to paint the hidden front of the panel (Wetering 1976). The Kenwood portrait, by contrast, is about to put (and, literally speaking, has already put) the last touch to the painting, but only after we have experienced Rembrandt communing first with us and secondly himself. It envisages the end rather than the beginning of the painting process and of the life of the person who has mastered it, for the very figure shown threatening to disintegrate with age is also at the height of his artistic abilities.

The sliver also helps to convince us we are presented with a memory because neither it nor anything else in the painting quite possesses the tangibility of an object. If paintings of *pictor doctus* dissociate the artist both from the tools of his trade and the physical act of painting, then, *mutatis mutandis*, it is also possible for artists to associate themselves with the objects they paint and the implements they paint them with far more closely than Rembrandt does here. He does not work at the mechanical end of the intellectual spectrum. Earlier we saw how in a series of contrasts with the *pictor doctus* Rembrandt comes down with 'smoking artists' (like Leonaert Bramer's) on the thinking side of the artist's relation to menial work. We discover further limits to Alpers' contention that Rembrandt 'defines or knows himself in or as a material object' (Alpers 1988, p. 117) if the relatively opacity of objects in the Kenwood portrait are compared with the clarity of those in works by Clara Peeters and other Dutch painters earlier in the century. Celeste Brusati explains that those

artists are so committed to the mechanical aspects of art in self-representations such as *Still Life with Flowers and Goblets* (1612) that they are prepared to ‘transform themselves into pictures, and appear as pictorial images displayed among other representations and products of their art’ (Brusati 1990–1991, p. 168). They therefore depict themselves behind their canvases as images reflected from the polished surfaces of the objects they represent on still life tables. These are painted with such perfectionist clarity that Rembrandt’s figure and his painterly attributes look unfinished by comparison. The juxtaposition of the artist and the canvas back in such reflections ties the identity of the artist to the obdurate quality of material objects to express the sentiment of *ars longa, vita brevis*: the idea that the artist will live on only in what she has made. By contrast to the hyperreal clarity of Peeter’s work, the point at which the ochre and brown sliver back is cropped by the edge of the Kenwood portrait is so smoky and diffuse that the image threatens to dematerialize.

Rembrandt paints memory as image, where image is something whose identity hovers between the status of an object (the painting itself), a representation (the scene depicted) and a perception (the idea produced by the painting in the minds of artist and viewer). The assumption that Rembrandt’s primary goal was verisimilitude leads to a premature resolution of the question of whether the Kenwood painting is finished or not. I disagree with those who deem the question ‘not particularly relevant, given the overwhelming impression the painting makes in its present state’ (Buijsen, Schatborn and Broos, in White 1991, p. 222). Certainly van de Wetering cannot be counted amongst these scholars, for he defends the portrait’s truth to reality so eagerly that ‘however far-fetched it might seem at first sight,’ he argues that the rough paint texture ‘is comparable with that of a human skin whose pores are visible, as is the case with older people, particularly men.’ In this view the grainy paint quality induces focus on surface textures whose illusion of reality is greater the rougher it is. Far from a signature of personal style, the degree of coarseness in the application of paint is adjusted to the subject, and van de Wetering believes that his argument is clinched by Rembrandt’s paintings of young women from the same period whose application is as smooth as their young skin (Wetering 2005, p. 308). But it is possible to unsettle this claim without leaving the Kenwood painting, for there is massive variation in the substantiality of the illusion within this single work. The relief of the head against the pale background of the wall would not be so prominent unless the whole figure loomed out from sketchy darkness at the bottom of the painting at the lower periphery of our vision. Against the rich, highlit, polychrome illusion of the face—composed, nevertheless, of broad, abstract brushstrokes—goes the ‘anti-illusionistic’ sliver back and painting instruments (Alpers 1988, p. 118). We may well agree with van der Wetering that ‘[i]nfluencing the viewer’s perception by varying the surface painting was a practice employed by Rembrandt more frequently—and with more sophistication—than by any other painter in the history of art’ (Wetering 2005, p. 307) without foreclosing the possibility that by varying the paint surface he might have intended as a distinctive personal quality of his style the intention of both enhancing and detracting from the illusion within the same painting. ‘In the same way that we can shift from a simple 2D form to the optical

illusion of a third dimension and back (as in M. C. Escher), we see Rembrandt appearing and disappearing in paint' (Clarke 2006, n.p.).

Despite the greater definition of the background and the face, the considerably diminished degree of finish in the cap, the torso and the shirt, descending to the 'indistinct blur' of painting instruments—thought to have been altered in a few seconds (Buijsen, Schatborn and Broos, in White 1991, p. 222, and Wetering, in White 1991, p. 12)—down to the shadowy base of the figure, recalls Jean Luc Nancy's brilliant distinction between paintings as things and images. The image:

... must be detached, placed outside and before one's eyes (it is therefore inseparable from a hidden surface, from which it cannot, as it were, be peeled away: the dark side of the picture, its underside or backside, or even its weave or its subjectile), and it must be different from the thing. The image is a thing that is not the thing: it distinguishes itself from it, essentially. (Nancy 2005, p. 2)

Nancy is seeking to define the character of all images, yet the extent to which paintings announce their characters as images or things is a matter of degree in which Rembrandt is closer to images and Peeters closer to things. Arguably, this is because Rembrandt is painting the reality of a looming memory and Peeters is painting the enduring presence of a thing, including an artist manifested as a thing. This equivalence between Rembrandt's free manner of painting and the depiction of a memory may not be unprecedented. Its possibility is strengthened by an interpretation of a startling discrepancy of styles between two earlier companion portraits. Though the sitters for Frans Hals' portraits of *Nicolaes Pieterszn Hasselaer* (c. 1633–1635) and his wife *Sarah Wolphaerts van Diemen* (c. 1633–1635) were both the same age, the wife is painted far more circumspectly than the husband, who had died in 1635. 'The portraits may have been commissioned by Sara Wolphaerts van Diemen after this, as a posthumous tribute to her deceased husband. It would perhaps explain ... the swift and powerful nature of the man's portrait in particular' (Middelkoop 1997, p. 78). The portrait of *Hasselaer*, in other words, may be a memory.

That the space of memory Rembrandt's sliver opens up is also a narrative space becomes apparent if we contrast it with yet another modernist sliver painting: Henri Matisse's *Self portrait at Nice* (early 1918). In this painting the artist is seated before the canvas whose back appears to us only as a few brochettes on a sliver that widens downwards at bottom right. The way the tip of Matisse's brush applies pressure on a canvas that is mostly outside the frame (like Breughel's *Painter and the Connoisseur* mentioned above) turns the sliver into a hinge on which the reverse of the actual painting might be imagined to swing out to the right, forming a rectangular back view coextensive and isomorphic with the flat formal patterning of the whole frontal surface. We could not entertain this fantasy unless the flat surface we imagine on the back was not prepared for our imagination by the overall surface harmony of the front, and especially by the still life lying parallel with the picture plane behind the artist's head and shoulders. The coherent, integrated distribution of Matisse's patterns is as flat as the back of the actual canvas would be. This modernist conceit is wholly at odds with Rembrandt's sliver whose asymmetry at the outer limit of the canvas produces depth that destroys surface harmony, even as it helps to unify atmospheric volume and propel narrative action. 'This extreme placing

creates a tension between the flatness of the pictorial plane and the illusion of a three-dimensional canvas edge' (Clarke 2006, n.p.). It conforms with the different understanding of pictorial composition Alberti ascribed to bodies arranged to narrate stories through movements reflecting the intentions of the soul, an arrangement that is indifferent to modernist concern with coherent picture surface (Puttfarken 2000, pp. 49–62).

The implied narrative movement of the Kenwood portrait also suggests a complication in the customary hierarchical subordination of still life and portraiture to history painting. Svetlana Alpers remarks that 'attention to studio realities marks the demise of European history painting as it had been', yet the studio-bound action implied in the Kenwood portrait simultaneously evokes nostalgia for the grandeur of the highest genre and aspires, like many works in the subsequent tradition of studio painting, to reconstitute the narrative power of history painting in new ways (Alpers 2005, p. 34). Like Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, it is both a 'historiated self-portrait' (through its reminiscent princeliness) and a 'here-and-now painting' distinct from ordinary history painting (Knox 2009, pp. 121 and 149). There are precedents in Rembrandt's oeuvre for the implied narrative movement of the figure. The second figure from the left in *The Syndics* (1662) is caught rising in portentous preparation to answer the invisible speaker on the viewer's side of the picture surface (Adams 2009, pp. 103–104); likewise, as its title suggests, movement is implied in his *Portrait of a Man Rising from His Chair* (1633). (Figures turning in their chairs to greet the spectator in paintings ranging from Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* to Govert Flinck's *The Governors of the Kloveniersdoelen* (1643) also belong to this tradition.) Such movements invoke sympathetic movements in the viewer; we identify with figures' actions and the dawning intentions that appear to motivate them, creating a "psychic dialogue" in real time (Adams 2009, p. 111). Noticing the sliver and working out the artist's relation to it in the Kenwood portrait activates our sympathy with the body of the artist within pictorial space, endowing it with potential, story-telling motion expressive of the soul, though the story be so trivial—or grand—as the prospect of the artist turning to his canvas and back again—again and again—to paint what he has been observing, memorizing and inventing.

Philip Verene's reflections on the eighteenth-century philosopher Giambattista Vico, often regarded as the first autobiographer, help to explain why the transformation of the figure of the artist in the Kenwood portrait is important: 'Autobiographical knowledge, which is certainly self-knowledge, is dependent upon a move in thought from reflective understanding to speculative thinking in which the self becomes the maker of the truth of its own being' (Verene 1991, p. 87). Noticing the sliver back engenders the same kind of shift in self portraiture and guarantees our perception of a transition between two characteristically seventeenth-century conceptions of the self. One is the permanent self, the enduring subject of consciousness that many philosophers dwelt on. It is secured by our initial sense that Rembrandt is looking at us—and subsequently at himself—for such a protracted period of time and with such lowered defenses that we see whom he 'really' is. Realizing that he is about to break his pose to paint the memory of what he saw introduces us to a different experience of time. The enduring self, the permanent subject

of consciousness, gives way to a changing self: 'what one is at a particular time' (such as 'my former self' or 'my later self) or 'what one is in part' (Rosenthal 2005, pp. 14–15). The commonsense view may have been that a self can be enduring and changing, and that a fragmented, momentary self has always been a minority view in philosophy, but the experience of attending to Rembrandt's figure tends to separate these alternatives out. Since he now returns his own gaze to himself instead of engaging with us, this narrower sense of professional self intervenes and his gaze appears purposeful and instrumental, so that he gazes to remember what he sees and so be able, in the next instant, to paint it.

Usually the permanent and changing selves are in conflict as they would be in Beckmann's self portrait were his permanent self not tantamount to a social mask. But the changing self of the Kenwood portrait *sublates* the permanent self rather than replaces it. It preserves it, that is, as a partial element in the synthesis. When it dawns on us that Rembrandt's permanent self is going to break pose and take his brushes to paint the unseen side of the sliver back, and that he is observing himself primarily for this purpose, that purpose nevertheless includes the capture of his permanent self. But how could a changing self incorporate a permanent self? Would it not be the equivalent of pouring a quart into a thimble? Perhaps another way of putting it is that the changing self processes the long-term memory of the artist's enduring self into the short term or 'working memory' of the image he will carry from the mirror to the canvas. 'My history needs to be adapted to the moment', wrote Montaigne (2003, p. 740). As I remarked earlier, once noticed, the transition from one self to another is irreversible; they do not oscillate and undermine each other as they do in the deliberately unstable, consciously contradictory, Beckmann self portrait.

A mechanism of deferral is required to mentor our participation in this change of consciousness. In *The Navigation of Feeling: a Framework for the History of Emotions*, William M. Reddy has eloquently argued that 'An utterance is endowed with the capacity to reveal structure by a deferral, a delay that gives the utterance unity, from beginning to end, and allows parts and their relationships to emerge from this unity. An utterance can, in this way, seem to convey meaning or to be driven by an intention' (Reddy 2001, p. 321). Just as several interpretations in the voluminous literature on *Las Meninas* depended upon deferred understanding of the painting's structure (Cohen and Snyder 1980), so does Reddy's account of utterance as a unified event apply to the Kenwood portrait. The all-important consequence is that once the possibility is entertained that the artist is on the point of carrying the memory of himself to paint it on the hidden side of the sliver, his facial expression becomes irradiated with intentionality.

It is possible to speculate upon the nature of Rembrandt's intention. In this period artists understood that customers' familiarity with their portraits 'enhanced their popularity at least as much as the engravings made after their compositions' (Zsuzna 2005, p. 135). The variable, *non-finito* quality of Rembrandt's paintwork reflected a shift of interest away from subject matter towards an aesthetic and commercial interest in signed paintings that bears witness to a master's characteristic personal

style. In refraining from giving all-over finish to his image, Rembrandt is pursuing a *non-finito* style that had appealed to a class of connoisseurs more interested in virtuosity than illusionism. In this sense mimesis could then apply to the capture of memory in the artist's memorable style. Houbraken reports that Rembrandt was never dissuaded from his practice of working certain parts of his paintings up in detail while leaving others inchoate, 'saying in justification that a work is finished when the master has achieved his intention in it' (Houbraken, quoted Wetering, in White 1990, p. 34). I attach the utmost importance to this phrase as it applies to the Kenwood portrait. The filtered and diffuse matrix of conspicuous brushstrokes that constitute the image represents the successful attainment of his intention to represent himself—just enough and no more—to satisfy the eyes of imaginary connoisseurs eager to purchase examples of his idiosyncratic skill. That is another reason why the level of finish appears to fluctuate, so that the memory of the artist continues to build and rebuild itself in paint. The transformation I have outlined in the meaning of Rembrandt's figure is contingent on relationships with connoisseurs through the agency of a sliver painting rendered as an image not a thing. It is an inter-subjective compound of what Rembrandt made and the intentionality he invites us to read in it. Once again this draws the painting back from the brink of materialism that Alpers attributes to it, for the soul re-enters the equation through the successful communication of the intention to project a memory of the future act of painting. Both the actual painting and the evanescent fragments represented in it, moreover—brushes, cloth, maul stick, palette and sliver back—embody the idea that objects and people in paintings are not entirely distinct 'and that the transactions that surround things are invested with the properties of social relations' (Appadurai 2006, p. 15).

The principle is illustrated by Rembrandt's relationship with the mirror he paints himself in. So far my argument seems to have neglected that second phase of our viewing in which we realize that the artist's focus on the mirror leaves him in solitude and cuts the spectator out of the equation, but we all know that sociality need not depend upon the immediate company of others. Imagination of social relationship can indeed be enhanced by physical isolation. My supposition has been that Rembrandt did not want the spectator to construe the derivation of his image in a mirror straightaway, but that he did want it construed eventually. It was a mirror that those in the know might have recognized as one of the larger, seventeenth-century kinds that allowed the torso to be reflected down to the hips (Wetering, in White 1990, p. 13). Perhaps, like evidence of the *camera obscura* in Vermeer's painting, there was status in oblique signs of owning such property. Where sociality is concerned it is useful to recall Jacques Lacan's dictum that the 'infant is split between identification with the mirror reflection and alienation from it as it realizes that it is an object for the gaze of others'. Mirrors convey sociality by rehearsing the process through which the 'infant is split between identification with the mirror reflection and alienation from it as it realizes that it is an object for the gaze of others' (Lacan, summarized in Woods-Marsden 1998, p. 34). Vermeer demonstrates this understanding in *Woman with a Pearl Necklace* (circa 1660–1665) when he represents a woman leaning on tiptoe, holding forward a necklace to a mirror to see how it will look on her. She is imagining how she will look in the eyes of others. Likewise,

Rembrandt's solitary image of himself in the Kenwood portrait was a vicarious engagement with his clientele, mentoring them still more in the taste by which he knew they wished to receive him. Solitary gazing in the mirror, therefore, is a surrogate for social interaction, for in painting by himself Rembrandt was also painting for imaginary connoisseurs who wished to see an image of him and his style in the same painting. The mirror image shows him internalized within prior social relations. At a time when his fame had spread quite broadly, 'Rembrandt's activities before the mirror should be seen in large measure in the context of a growing demand for "portraits of Rembrandt done by himself"... as self-portraits were referred to in the seventeenth century' (Wetering 2005, p. xxv). This takes place within a far wider taste for paintings of artists amongst a growing number of art-lovers. When Rembrandt painted Rembrandt, he was never quite alone, though his stance always seems personalized for reception by each and every viewer. Since painting is an act of imaginary communication, no self-portraitist ever is alone.

A proof of this is a self portrait at a far remove from the Kenwood portrait that perhaps comes closest to an ideal expression of solitude and yet ultimately fails to be so. It is Paul Cézanne's sliver painting, *Cézanne à la Palette* (1890) whose fascination for this viewer lies in the degree to which the impersonality of the artist's expression—cross-eyed as it is through the simultaneous focus of each eye on canvas and mirror-image respectively—seems to close the circuit of mirror, artist and milieu against the spectator completely, as if the artist were merely another inanimate object in the room. Nevertheless, there is exciting evidence of will power in the way that the artist holds his body and his shield-like palette so that they reinforce a series of rectangles that sharpen in their forward progression from amorphous patterns on the wall, through the stocky figure in the rounded, rectangular overcoat to the sharply delineated palette held rigidly parallel with the picture plane and finally the reversed canvas occupying the foremost plane on the right. This implies agency in the depicted human subject and not just in the way the painting is composed. Such voluntary conformity to a static pattern of inert objects in which the implied mirror closes the visual circuit nevertheless cannot avoid the impression that a viewer other than the artist overlooks the artist's strictly circumscribed field of vision. The agency is 'for' a viewer who includes the artist but who is ultimately everyone who looks at it. The special nature of the communication given to all is in Cézanne's case, however, the possibility of the artist's solipsistic communion with himself. It is that which is so paradoxically 'shared' with us. It does not, as Rembrandt's portrait does, so readily (if tardily) invite the appreciation of the specialist connoisseur, though certainly our prior knowledge that Cézanne worked in this solitude contributes to this claim.

I have moved from consideration of the soul back to the self and, in the case of working memory, to neuropsychology. As far as I am aware there is a lacuna in scholarship on the historical relationship between the self and the soul. The issue of David Hume's conflation of self and soul is highly contested, but it seems that he used these terms interchangeably in his eighteenth-century philosophical writings, which seem to represent a transitional phase between old and new regimes of subjectivity. If I now attempt to align the structure of pictorial and emotional

transformation I have outlined in the Kenwood portrait with the workings of the soul in the period ‘before the self’, a suggestive analogy arises between them and the implied movement of Rembrandt’s figure. In Western philosophy and theology there are strong analogies between the turning of gazes and the conversion of souls. According to Charles Taylor, Plato maintained that ‘just as the physical eye can only be turned by swiveling the whole body, so the whole soul must be turned to attain wisdom’ (Taylor 1989, p. 123). For Augustine, too: ‘[t]he soul must be swiveled around; it has to change the direction of its attention/desire. For the whole moral condition of the soul depends ultimately on what it attends to and loves’ (Taylor 1989, p. 128). In asking whether the imminent turning of Rembrandt’s gazing body from mirror to canvas carries associations from this tradition, it must be acknowledged that Rembrandt’s turn is counter-spiritual in so far as it turns from contemplating the immutable to acting on the most mutable of things: a painting under construction. Turning from an attitude of reverie to one of active memory, careful scrutiny (in Poussin’s sense of looking), and purposeful action entails a tremendous act of detachment for both the artist and spectator and an equally tremendous renewal of empathy for a new subject: the artist who can communicate all this. While departing from the Platonic tradition of inwardness it closely corresponds to René Descartes’ contention that we realize the immaterial nature of our being by disengaging from bodily perspectives in order to adopt an attitude of detachment towards the world, including our bodies, so that we may purposefully act upon them. The task requires the same sort of switch between first- and third-person perspectives that I commented upon earlier in relation to self portraiture. There, though, it entailed change from the general artist figure making art to Rembrandt painting himself. Now it is a change from Rembrandt in spiritual communion with the viewer (and afterwards himself) to Rembrandt observing and painting himself as if he were a stranger. Charles Taylor charts the corresponding move in Cartesian philosophy: ‘In view of its transposition of first-person experience into an objectified, impersonal mode, it might seem surprising to class the stance of disengaged control as a modified figure of Augustinian inwardness. But the paradox is merely superficial. Radical reflexivity is central to this stance, because we have to focus on first-person experience in order so to transpose it.’ It is only when ‘we try to get clearer on what we feel about some person or event’ (Taylor 1989, p. 163) that we can take an impersonal stance towards it, a stance of detachment that, paradoxically enough, invites empathy with someone as they ‘really are’. This enables exactly the sublation of a permanent into a changing self that seemed problematic in my earlier argument. We realize our spiritual and permanent being by distancing ourselves ‘from all the particular features which are objects of potential change’ (Taylor 1989, p. 171), but the distancing is itself a change enacted by a punctual self, a self acting in the moment. The image reflected in the mirror that Rembrandt is about to carry in his working memory to paint on canvas is not his true being, however, because for both Rembrandt and Descartes true being has more the character of a verb than a noun. It is an imminent shaping power that exists ‘nowhere but in this power to fix things as objects’ (Taylor 1989, p. 172), in what it promises to become rather than what it presently is. As such, it is unpicturable, and not the static correspondence or

resemblance van de Wetering and other advocates of Rembrandt's exclusive realism insist it is.

But why should the act of painting be unpicturable? Why omit the act of putting brush to canvas if it is nothing more than reducing the stigma of manual work, preserving the secrets of the trade (Wetering 2000, p. 6) or concealing the literal left-handedness of the mirror image? Why not delight the connoisseur by preserving the original attitude shown in the X-ray, where the artist was reaching brush in hand towards the canvas, especially since he depicted himself as such on other occasions?⁸ The deeper reason may be that here the occlusion of the hidden side of the sliver back and the artist's hand about to work on it creates the impression that the painter's creative act is structurally unpicturable, not just jealously concealed. As we look at Rembrandt he is not merely observing and remembering himself, but working out how to turn his own image into a structure that could be translated onto canvas by recalibrating thousands of visual relationships whose overall relation to each other could be changed at one stroke. Though not an authority on seventeenth-century art, the novelist Henry James is useful to call on here for his incisive formulation of the dilemma of representing the painter's distinctive achievement. In his reflections on the fictional character of the artist Nick Dormer in the 1908 preface to the New York edition of *The Tragic Muse*, James muses on the hubris of a word-smith attempting to capture what an artist achieves in paint. To make his point he aptly reaches for a literary image that negates itself:

Any presentation of the artist *in triumph* must be flat in proportion as it really sticks to its subject ... For, to put the matter in an image, all we then—in his triumph—see of the charm-compeller is the back he turns to us as he bends over his work. 'His' triumph, decently, is but the triumph of what he produces, and that is another affair. ... The privilege of the hero—that is of the martyr or of the interesting and appealing and comparatively floundering *person*—places him in quite a different category, belongs to him only as to the artist deluded, diverted, frustrated or vanquished; when the 'amateur' in him gains, for our admiration or compassion or whatever, all that the expert has to do without. (James 1908, p. xxi)⁹

Instead of reversing his back to become a *rückenfigur* (a person seen from behind) as James's artist does here, Rembrandt reversed his canvas to leave the missing act of creation immanent in the viewer's expectations. Since the end result is the moment before the action we are left to imagine, a tangle of tenses results: the image of a memory of the artist about to do something that in real time had just been completed a very long time ago by now.

⁸ For example, *Self Portrait at the Window, Drawing on an etching-Plate* (1648) and *Self Portrait at the Easel* (1660), where the hand with brushes was once positioned closer to the reversed panel.

⁹ Of the unpicturable mystery of what artists do in James's novels, Maurice Beebe observes (1964), p. 222: 'Five appearances of the turned-back image do not, of course, prove that James used it always deliberately, but it seems significant that the five turned backs represent almost the same thing in each instance. To repeat, it matters not what the artist does in the world, how he dresses, what company he frequents; for when he creates, he inevitably withdraws to a private realm. The detachment of the artist is rooted in an innate consciousness that transforms and vitalizes normal perception, that actually "makes life." Thus James was able to use the turned back of the artist to symbolize the "artist *in triumph*."'

Returning to the discussion of the historical origin of the embodied pictorial self and its precipitation from doctrines of the soul, it seems far more convincing to connect Rembrandt with the leading thinker of his day than with Henry James's late Romantic aesthetic. But while several clues, including Rembrandt's drawing of Descartes, connect their lives in Antwerp (Wright 2007, pp. 275–276), strict analogies between Rembrandt's self portraits and Descartes' meditations on the mind-body dualism flounder on the intrinsic differences between painting and philosophy as forms of communication, especially since Descartes' position on the dualistic mind is complex, hence open to multiple or misinterpretation.

On the one hand Descartes initiated a division between soul and body in rejecting the scholastic followers of Aristotle, but equally, on the other hand, in adopting Plato's division of body and soul, he was in no textbook sense a 'sharp separator'. In fact there is variation in his position. Whereas the 'Cogito' principle ('I am thinking, therefore I am') establishes the existence of soul as distinct from the body in the first Meditation of the *Principles of Philosophy* (1644), it appears to be denied in the second Meditation (Garber 1998, n.p.). In her essay on Rembrandt and Descartes, J. Leonore Wright provides useful commentary by suggesting that Descartes wished 'to diminish the wedge between mind and body' without eradicating it (2007, p. 284). This was because '[t]hought *must* be coupled with a supervening force, like memory, and a physical substance, like the body, to enjoy unity over time (and not merely mathematical unity but metaphysical and psychological unity as well)' (Wright 2007, p. 283). This may characterize the way Rembrandt contrives the impression of continuity between an abiding soul and a changing self, to mix the terms at this point. At best, however, perhaps only a loose analogy can be claimed between Rembrandt and Descartes. They were both interactionists whose works convey a strong sense of interplay between empathy and detachment in articulating the soul's relation to matter. I cannot therefore go so far as Wright in pronouncing with certainty on their differences by claiming that for Rembrandt 'the knowledge, fear and eventuality of death unifies the dualistic mind and body expressed in early Cartesian thought' (Wright 2007, p. 288). If I am correct in suggesting that Rembrandt's Kenwood self portrait represents an intention in the form of a memory, then perhaps he anticipates David Hume's conviction that, if the self is not to be split, introspection can only take the form of retrospection, and that we are not aware of our 'states as we have them but, rather, of our *immediate memories* of those states' (von Eckhardt 1988, n.p.). This would support Arthur Wheelock's contention that Rembrandt genuinely anticipated the unique, interiorized, unified self of later times because 'the myth of Rembrandt as isolated genius did not first emerge in the Romantic era ... but was fostered and developed by the artist himself' (Wheelock 1997, p. 16). Even this, though, may provide only a reductionist account of Rembrandt as rebel at the expense of the multivalent nature of the interactions he is likely to have entered with patrons and clients (Zell 2011). Rather than joining body and soul that Descartes (sometimes) pulled asunder, I have shown why I incline to the view that the Kenwood figure is not an embodied self, but retains a distance from embodiment (enhanced by our deferred understanding) by which the soul gains purchase on matter, matter that is firstly to be conceived of as paint, but secondarily

as a memory of a particular person expressing purposeful intention through bodily action, an illusion forever recomposing itself from inert skeins of paint. As the representation of a rational and purposeful activity inviting acknowledgement from committed connoisseurs (Adams 2009, p. 105), this imminent act of painting sets up a tension between the experience of being in which we feel ourselves to be embodied creatures and a thinking thing that Descartes, and perhaps also Rembrandt, conceived of as distinct from the body. From the qualities I have argued for in the painting, this view is at least as tenable as Wright's view that body and soul are one in Rembrandt's image of himself. At the meta-level there may be an art historical lesson in the measure of uncertainty that abides in choosing between these alternatives. In relation to philosophy, art history partakes of the tensions between general theory and local knowledge in the sense that images arise from material practices that are not simply ideas, though they are deeply and often contradictorily informed by ideas, including those whose meaning is still open to debate.

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Part II

Emotion

Grief and Desire, Body and Soul in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Saint Macrina*

Michael W. Champion

Introduction

Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Saint Macrina* (*Macr*) is laden with grief.¹ In his memorial to his sister, Gregory recounts a life filled to overflowing with sorrow. Deaths of a suitor, two dear brothers and Macrina's beloved mother structure the work. There is an extended scene around Macrina's own death-bed followed by communal lamentation. The work concludes with a story related by a grief-stricken soldier which demonstrates Macrina's salvific piety. In an insightful analysis of the *De anima et resurrectione* (*An et res*), Rowan Williams noted that grief functions as a 'paradigm of desire' in that dialogue (Williams 1993, p. 243). If that is so, grief and attitudes towards it provide theoretical concepts which shed light on Gregory's ideas about body and soul.²

Focusing on grief (λύπη) is useful because it crystallises well-known problems concerning the passions in the Platonic tradition, about how to relate desires to reason within different parts of the soul, and about how physical stimuli relate to the soul's reasoning powers. On one reading, grief may be motivated by diverse physical stimuli, and the lower, desiring parts of the soul may move the agent towards various physical expressions—tears, wailing, beating of the breast, rending of garments. The higher part of the soul, in this model, may be at war with the lower parts, seeking to moderate, or, perhaps, eliminate the immaterial impulses which lead to such physical expressions. Such a psychology would result in a negative attitude towards grief, which would be seen as irrational, essentially opposed to the reasoning powers that distinguish humans from beasts.

¹ For a useful discussion of modern scholarship, see Meissner (1992), pp. 2–18. References to Gregory's *An et res* are to Migne (1857–1866) vol. 46. References to the *Macr* are to Gregory of Nyssa (1971). I have consulted Gregory of Nyssa (1995) and Gregory of Nyssa (1916).

² For a more negative assessment of grief, see Smith (2000a), pp. 37–60; Smith (2004), pp. 56–84.

M.W. Champion (✉)
The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
e-mail: michael.champion@uwa.edu.au

This view of how the soul works and relates to the body is found in one strand of the Platonic tradition.³ In the *Republic*, Plato presents a divided view of the soul. This allows the possibility that the goods sought by one part of the soul may conflict with those identified by another part. Fulfilment of bodily pleasure may be incompatible with the contemplation of the Good by the reasoning part of the soul. The best part of the soul, the reasoning part, may be overcome by such impulses, but may also eradicate them in the pursuit of the goods it identifies. The implication is that the lower and the higher parts of the soul cannot share coherent goals. The soul appears to be divided against itself.⁴

As Williams notes, this picture is modified in the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*, where the desires of the lower parts of the soul may be directed towards goods also identified as good by the reasoning soul (Williams 1993, p. 230). These desires may in fact be necessary for the attainment, by the reasoning soul, of its desired goods. Diotima argues in the *Symposium* that desire for the beloved can be an expression of desire for the Good and even that it is essential for being able to grasp the mystery of knowledge of the Good (*Symp* 204B–205A). In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates' claims that Love cannot be evil, since it is divine (*Phaedr* 242E). In both works, Plato acknowledges that the passion of love can objectify the other and diminish relationships, but that it can also be open to the reality of the other and be freely given, spurring the lover on to greater awareness of truth and beauty. Socrates speaks of such 'free' or 'generous' love in the *Phaedrus* (ἐλεύθερον: *Phaedr* 243D); love drives the lover to contemplation of the Good in the *Symposium*.

Thus while Plato's psychology can present humans as divided against themselves, with the different parts of their souls unable to pursue a unitary good, there are elements of his thought which suggest that a coherent human good may be pursued by each part of the soul, and that the desires and impulses of the lower parts of the soul may indeed be essential for transporting the rational soul to its higher contemplation of the Good. It is controversial whether grief in Gregory's thought can be such a good or whether it is always at war with reason.⁵ The question is fundamental to Gregory's anthropology—his views about body and soul.

Recent writers on the *An et res*, Gregory's dialogue on the soul with his sister Macrina on her death-bed which recalls the dramatic setting and subject matter of the *Phaedo*, have pursued dialectical readings to resolve this question.⁶ I begin by reviewing these arguments and the divergent views about Gregory's attitude to-

³ See the texts collated in Sorabji (2005), pp. 275–299. See also the excellent discussion in Williams (1993), pp. 229–230 to which I am indebted.

⁴ G. C. Stead identified this problem in his *The Concept of Mind and the Concept of God in the Christian Fathers* (1992), pp. 39–54. Williams (1993) clarified Gregory's position in the resulting tradition.

⁵ For philosophical influences on Gregory more generally, see Armstrong (1948), 113–126; Meredith (1984), pp. 181–195; Rist (1996), pp. 386–413; Pochoshajew (2004). For Pauline influences on the *An et res*, see Roth (1992), pp. 20–30.

⁶ To the scholarship cited in Williams (1993), 227 n. 1, I would add Williams's own article and Daniélou (1994); Daniélou (1964); von Balthasar (1988); Smith (2000b).

wards grief.⁷ Williams's suggestion is that grief is mainly a paradigm for a bad sort of passion in the *An et res*, but he also argues that it may be a virtue (Williams 1993, p. 243). The embodied human soul may impulsively and rationally grieve for a dead friend, for example, with higher and lower parts of the soul virtuously directed to the same end. Smith, however, sees grief as more consistently negative. (E.g. Smith (2000b), pp. 15–18). Where Williams and Smith most strongly disagree is in the sort of good ends to which grief might be put in Gregory's view, and thus in the extent to which grief should be purged from the virtuous individual. For Smith, grief is only acceptable as repentance, strictly limited and directed by reason.⁸ On the first view, impulses and desires associated with grief within the soul may be necessary, making certain good actions possible that would not have come about without the instigation of the desires, whereas in the second they are in need either of eradication by, or of close alignment to, the reasoning soul.

Such tensions recur in the *Life of St Macrina*. While the *Macr* lends support to Smith's identification of possible goods associated with grief, it also expands them. In this text, although Macrina's stated attitude towards grief is often austere, Gregory's sympathetic treatment of grief in the lives of various characters in the text, together with his own deep grief, strengthens the case for him seeing impulses and desires of the soul, grief included, as essential to good embodied lives. Macrina is the subject of the text, yet Gregory retains a prominent position as the author of the work, through whose consciousness Macrina's life is refracted, and as an actor in the text, travelling to her sick-bed, experiencing (though in different ways) the death of brothers and mother, learning and arguing at her bedside, burying her body, playing a large role in funeral preparations, and finally leaving the monastery still grieving for his sister. The prominent role Gregory plays in his sister's *Life* sets up a contrast between how Macrina and Gregory view grief, complicated by the reader's natural (if naïve) identification of the textual 'Gregory' with the Gregory whose authorial voice intrudes persistently. Thus we can contrast Gregory's emotional experiences and actions with Macrina's as we would in a dialogue. Both Gregory and Macrina should be read as heroes in this text, each viewed at multiple and sometimes contrasting stages along the way to perfection, but each models of virtuous lives nonetheless. The contrast between their lives allows for a dialectical reconstruction of Gregory's anthropology and views about grief which, I argue, leaves room for several ways in which grief can be a positive impulse. This is coherent with his wider anthropology, in which the passions are essential to the human soul and its ultimate eternal contemplation of God.

In the course of the *Life*, Macrina is never captured by the text; words always fail Gregory as he attempts to describe his sister's perfection. Gregory's words, like souls, may tame bodily desires or be overcome by them, embody truth and reason or fail to reach reality. The narrative's failure to capture Macrina, including shifting

⁷ The main division of views is ably represented by Williams against Smith (note 2 above). See also Smith (2000b), pp. 15–18.

⁸ Smith (2000a), pp. 58–59; Smith (2004), p. 73, citing *An et res* 56B–C and *De Virginitate* 18.3.17–18 with the Pauline background from 2 Cor. 7:10.

constructions of the saint's gender and analogies between textuality and eternity, figure the centrality of striving towards an unattained goal while simultaneously depicting Macrina's saintly perfection. The text and what it suggests about body and soul are thus influenced by Gregory's wider eschatology. Human embodied souls, like words, are implicated in processes of exchange and desire, yet are ultimately capable of joyful, free participation in God. This eschatological goal destabilises texts and simplistic distinctions between reason and emotion, bodies, minds and souls. The relation between body and soul mirrors that between ineffable concepts and the physical words we nevertheless use to describe them. Gregory is an expert word-smith, and sees words, like bodily passions, as necessary and good. But he thinks they will ultimately be transformed into a new reality analogous to the transformation of material beings into purified spiritual bodies (cf. 1 Cor. 15:53).

Gregory's eschatological view means that desire is necessary to humanity—the passionate impulses of the soul should not ultimately be negated, but they are purified, just as bodies are necessary to individuals but are transformed into an immaterial body in the eschaton. Gregory's positive evaluation of the passions means that when perfect humans are resurrected in heaven, desires such as grief are transformed rather than eliminated. This reading of grief harmonises well with other readings of the passions in Gregory's thought. Ludlow, for example, has argued that even Gregory's concept of 'freedom from passion' (ἀπάθεια):

is thus not absence of desire (ὄρεξις/ἐπιθυμία) but freedom from any *materialistic* impulse or passion (ῥοπή, ὀρμή, πάθος or πάθημα). (Ludlow 2000, p. 58)

Similarly, Williams rightly argues that embodied desire remains necessary to stimulate participation in God (Williams 1993, p. 242). Desire for God is ἐρῶς not passionless ἀγαπή, although, of course, the continued, infinite desire for God by the resurrected person is not bodily in the sense that it is not material.⁹ Coakley confirms the point within a wider discussion of Gregory's eschatologically-informed theology of gender:

...it is not that either "body" or gender are disposed of in this progressive transformation to a neo-angelic status. Rather, as advances are made in the stages of virtue and contemplation, *eros* finds its truer meaning in God. (Coakley 2000, p. 69)

In the following analysis of Gregory's *Life of Saint Macrina* I argue that grief is understood as necessary for divine contemplation, if properly expressed in the liturgy and fitting in the context of hagiography, a holy genre it stimulates. In hagiography and liturgy, grief is good not merely accidentally but rather as a necessary part of human attainment of spiritual perfection in the process of transforming the body and soul into greater likeness to God and more perfect humanity.

⁹ Ludlow (2000), pp. 62–63, citing *In cant.* I: GNO VI.27.13, 192; *In cant.* 13: GNO VI.383.9.

Passion and the soul in the *An et res*

Gregory's dialogue *On the Soul and Resurrection* (*An et res*) opens with Gregory, already grieving after the death of his brother Basil, turning to his sister for comfort, only to find that she too is about to die.¹⁰ The sight of his dying sister 'awakens all [Gregory's] grief (λύπη)'. Like a skilful charioteer (a multi-valent reference to Plato's *Phaedrus*), Macrina gives some rein to Gregory's grief, before beginning a process of educating him to acknowledge the error of his emotional reaction—hardly the sympathetic exchange (κατὰ σπουδὴν κοινωνήσων) he was looking for (*An et res* 11A).¹¹ Gregory explains that he grieves because he has an instinctive abhorrence of death (*An et res* 13A), and because he is uncertain about the hope of the resurrection or the immortality of the soul. This doubt, he states, is held because his passion (πάθος) had taken away his reasoning capacity (λογισμός) (*An et res* 17A). In this account, reason and passion are at war with each other. Macrina's response stresses the existence of the soul as an incorporeal entity which gives life to the body.

Gregory responds that many bodily states arise from human impulses or desires (θυμός, ἐπιθυμία), such as anger, which are incorporeal although they have physical symptoms: the motions of the immaterial soul alter bodily states, in Gregory's view. What is incorporeal, Gregory argues, is intellectual. So either we have a multiplicity of souls, as many as we have desires, or else the reasoning part of us is no more a soul than the irrational desires are (*An et res* 48C–49A). Macrina identifies this as a key question in ancient philosophy: how should we conceptualise desire and anger within us? She sets out the problem thus: are they 'consubstantial with the soul, or are they something different, accruing to us afterwards?' (*An et res* 49B). Macrina makes a distinction between the essential, divinely created qualities of the perfect soul and human characteristics which are not essential to human nature, characteristics caused by sinfulness. The creative tension in the Platonic tradition about whether passions are essential to human nature or not is at work, expressed in Aristotelian terms of substance and accident.

Macrina, having already employed the *Phaedrus*' chariot image in her attempt to teach Gregory about the passions, now disavows the image, and also rejects Aristotle's view of the immortality of the soul (*An et res* 49C–52B). Claiming to follow scripture, Macrina argues that since the soul of humans is made in the image of God, and God is passionless, the human soul is also essentially passionless. 'Impulse (θυμός) and desire (ἐπιθυμία) and all such things' are not consubstantial with the nature of the human soul (*An et res* 52C). Moses is taken as an example of one who has achieved freedom from passion (ἀπάθεια) and hence attained his true nature. (See further Ludlow (2000), pp. 56–64).

We are, of course, expected to treat this claim with suspicion, and Gregory will point to its weaknesses. Moses, after all, acts with divinely-sanctioned wrath in

¹⁰ For the *An et res* and *consolatio* literature, see Meissner (1992), p. 378.

¹¹ For discussion of the *Phaedrus* resonances, see Williams (1993), 231 ff. See also Wessel (2010), p. 374.

smashing idols, offers impassioned prayers to God, longs to see Israel and killed an Egyptian in a fit of rage. Our suspicion strengthens the case for a dialectical reading of the dialogue, suggesting that Gregory's own position on the place of desire in the soul is softer than Macrina's initial case.

Macrina, however, proceeds to argue that common definitions of emotion in no way connect it with various philosophical conceptions of the soul. All definitions of desire—as seeking for something one lacks, or longing for pleasure, or pain at not possessing or being unable to possess some pleasure—do not connect in any way with the definition of the essential, immaterial and impassible rational part of the soul (*An et res* 52D ff). We seem to have a position closer to the Plato of the *Republic* than of the *Phaedrus*.

Gregory responds that Macrina has forgotten that such passions help the virtuous and that they are experienced by them. He recounts examples from the Old Testament to make his case (*An et res* 56C–57A). His point is that passion is essential to a life of virtue, and that it is therefore more appropriate to consider the passions as an essential part of embodied human nature. Macrina is made to acknowledge that human nature cannot be studied without reference to the experience of the passions. While perfected humans in the eschaton—the finally perfected cosmos—are without bodily passion, the reasoning faculty of the soul in real humans cannot exist without sensations and desires. These are not in themselves bad or good, but are accounted good or bad in accordance with the use to which they are put by free agents. Affective states directed by reason will bring about goods: fear ends in obedience, anger in courage, cowardice in caution, desire in the enjoyment of God (*An et res* 57B–64A). Furthermore, such affects 'lift us up to grasp the heavenly delights' (*An et res* 65A). Love enables unification with God, anger is necessary in repelling the devil, and grief is the impulse which propels humans to repentance (*An et res* 65A–B). 'If love is snatched away, how shall we be united with the divine?' (ἢ τῆς ἀγάπης ἀφαιρεθείσης, τίνι τρόπῳ πρὸς Θεῖον συναφθῆσόμεθα;) (*An et res* 65A).

What emerges from this exchange seems to be that in the *An et res*, the mind is understood to include morally neutral impulses and desires, although some forms of passion may hinder attempts to attain the good.¹² Smith's conclusion is useful:

...this modification of Macrina's original position...establishes that an emotion in itself is morally indifferent, and therefore, it should be judged solely in terms of the end toward which it is directed. (Smith 2000a, p. 81)

There are hints that while these are to be controlled by reason, reason is itself incapable of expression without the deployment of impulses and desires and is also incapable of achieving its desired ends without their operation. Can the *Life of Saint Macrina* shed further light on these questions?

¹² Similar conclusions may be found in Williams (1993), pp. 229, and 237–238.

The Grief and Desire of Macrina and Gregory in the *Macr*

In reading the *Life of Saint Macrina* as a text about grief, it is useful to have in mind Smith's insightful analysis and his taxonomy of affective states which must either be eradicated, rightly ordered or eschatologically transformed.¹³ He provides a detailed and helpful analysis of Macrina's grief in the *Macr*, emphasising that Macrina's spiritual gifts lie in 'overcoming both physical suffering and physical disorder' associated with grief; her 'charism' is to replace grief with hope (Smith 2004, p. 76; and *passim*). In his taxonomy of the passions, Smith places grief at the bottom of the hierarchy (Smith 2000a, p. 38). In his reading, grief mostly signifies inappropriate attachment or despair, which must simply be purged (Smith 2000a, p. 58). Grief which arises from an accurate perception of one's sinfulness is a rightly ordered desire (ἐπιθυμία), and the impulse (θυμός) of self-directed anger in the face of one's sins is also appropriate, although grief often manifests in depression which weakens such a righteous impulse (Smith 2000a, p. 59).¹⁴ Grief, however, must, in Smith's reading, be eliminated as the believer instead hopes for eternal life (Smith 2000a, pp. 59–60). My analysis will revise Smith's identification of negatives associated with grief-laden desires and impulses, while offering a fresh reading of other positive functions of grief, since Gregory does not, in my view, identify grief in all contexts with failure of hope. What emerges from this reconceptualisation of grief in Gregory's thought is further evidence to support the view that the passions and the reasoning soul are each necessary for embodied human nature, and that Gregory's view of perfect bodies and souls is strongly coloured by his eschatology.

Macrina is constantly grieving and beyond grief in the text, as she responds to the death of two brothers and her mother before facing her own death. We first see her grief in the narrative of the death of Naucratus. This is introduced as a digression, and apparently takes us away from the narrative account of Macrina's development. But in fact the digression is woven into the narrative through its account of desire and personal attachment.

Naucratus, the second of the four Cappadocian brothers, spurns the glories of rhetorical display and sets up as a hermit, along with a companion, on the banks of the Iris (8.10–17, *SC* 166).¹⁵ There, Gregory tells us, he escaped the distractions of the city, having freed himself from all human clamour, and began to care for the elderly and the poor, simultaneously taming his youthful spirit 'by such works' (8.20–29, *SC* 166, 168).

These activities, together with following his mother's commands to the letter, allow Naucratus securely to travel 'home to God' (8.29–34, *SC* 168). At each point

¹³ Smith (2004). The reader is directed to this excellent analysis. The foregoing discussion cannot aim to engage with all Smith's points, but confirms much of his analysis while offering some fresh conclusions.

¹⁴ Smith (2004), p. 73: 'grief can be understood as a deficiency of both desire and gumption resulting from despair'.

¹⁵ References to the *Macr* are to section and line number, followed by page number in the *SC* edition (see note 1 above).

in this narrative, separation and personal attachment are intertwined. Naucratus goes off alone, taking ‘nothing with him but himself’ (8.10, *SC* 166). But, Gregory immediately informs us, he is attended by his servant Chrysapius who follows him with affection. He removes himself from the social bonds of civic life only to be bound to care for those about him. He keeps the divine commands partly by keeping those of his mother. Attaining the higher life is dependent on inter-personal attachment and care for others. Individual spiritual perfection is a social, inter-personal activity. While freedom from certain sorts of attachments is necessary for spiritual perfection, others are essential to Naucratus’ autonomous spiritual progress.

In the digression on Naucratus, Gregory insists that the higher life of spiritual perfection drives the perfect Christian into certain relationships of dependence and mutuality. Such relationships are essential to Naucratus’ spiritual development. This account of essential social relationships provides a hint about characterising the role of the passions in the soul. Just as individuals remain dependent on community even as they remove themselves from certain types of harmful attachment or dependency, certain objects of desire are to be eliminated, but desire itself remains an essential part of human nature and experience.

Grief strikes with Naucratus’ sudden death in a hunting accident (9.11–14, *SC* 170). His mother’s shock and grief is violent and immediate:

She was perfect in every virtue but nature was mastering her in equal measure. Having slackened her soul, she became lifeless and speechless, since her reasoning power was overcome by passion, and she was thrown to the ground by the assault of the evil tidings, just as a noble athlete struck by an unexpected blow (9.16–21, *SC* 170, 172).

The image of the boxer reeling under the unexpected blows of life is Stoic, and brings to mind the Stoic doctrine of ἀπάθεια.¹⁶ Certainly, the mother’s grief for the death of her son is characterised as irrational, despite the initial claim that she is described as universally perfect in virtue. Macrina’s greater virtue is immediately on display as she sets reason against passion (τῷ πάθει τὸν λογισμὸν ἀνιστήσασα) and raises her mother from the abyss of grief (ἐκ τοῦ βύθου τῆς λύπης) (10.2, 4, *SC* 172). By ‘steadfastness’ (στερρωῶ) and ‘imperturbability’ (ἀνευδότης) she educates her mother’s passions (10.5, *SC* 172). Grief, even a mother’s grief at the sudden death of her son, is characterised as an instance of nature conquering the higher powers of the rational soul. For Macrina, it is formless and chaotic, a threatening deep which is irrational and unproductive. This grief is feminised: Macrina, by contrast, is not characterised as feminine and is praised for supporting her mother so that she does not continue to act in this womanish fashion, lamenting over her disaster. Macrina herself suffers as much as her mother: ‘for then the lofty and aroused soul of the maiden glowed red-hot, because the nature in it suffered equally’ (10.13–16, *SC* 174).¹⁷ Yet even in the face of this natural suffering, she ‘got the up-

¹⁶ Gregory may have borrowed the pugilistic imagery from Philo of Alexandria (*Prob* 26). Seneca takes virtue to be enduring ‘as bravely as possible what cannot be avoided’ (*Ep* 69).

¹⁷ Smith (2004), p. 72 is right to point out that since Macrina herself is disturbed in her soul with grief, she is not depicted as a Stoic sage.

per hand of her passion (τοῦ πάθους)' (10.19, *SC* 174). Macrina's perfections give the mother a chance to rejoice over her blessings rather than grieve for her loss.¹⁸

It seems clear from this account, then, that grief for an individual is both natural and to be overcome. This sort of desire is natural but not essential for humans. Rather, it is directly in conflict with reason, whose job it is to purge such desire from the soul. What is essential to the human person is rationality; grief is a natural emotion but inessential and damaging to the soul.

There seems no place in this narrative for valuing grief for a particular individual as a desire which could be in harmony with reason. In Macrina's account, the soul which lets emotion in is divided against itself. The re-integration of the Naucratus digression into the narrative supports this reading. Immediately following the digression, Gregory writes of the ways in which Macrina and her mother relinquish other particular objects of desire, including property, luxury, household items and all the distinguishing marks of their high social rank (10.21–11.33, *SC* 174–178). Together with the digression, the narrative thus places attachment to particular people on the same level as attachment to particular things. All such desires are to be purged in the life of philosophy. Removal of the 'vanities of life' is likened to the desired release of the soul from the body in the eschaton (11.16–20, *SC* 176). Neither Macrina nor her mother desire anything in this life which they do not need (11.21–33, *SC* 176–178). This brings them as close as is possible on earth to worldly perfection:

What human speech could lead you to see such a way of life, a life on the borderline between human and incorporeal nature? For nature to have been freed from human sufferings is more than can be expected in the case of humanity. But these women fell short of the angelic and incorporeal nature only in that they appeared in the body and were circumscribed by form and lived by sense perception. Perhaps someone might dare to say that the difference was not to their disadvantage, since living in the body and after the likeness of incorporeal powers, they were not weighed down by the attraction of the body, but their life was ascending and buoyed up, raised together with the heavenly powers (11.33–45, *SC* 178, 180).

All living creatures are limited by their necessarily material form. But it is possible for them to approach the angels by removing attachments to worldly things, limiting desire by the application of reason. Gregory's optimistic account of human progress towards the likeness of God is on display: their 'philosophy advanced always towards greater spiritual purity by the addition of newly discovered goods' (11.47–48, *SC* 180). The account of the death of the mother a few paragraphs later appears only to strengthen this view of the need to eliminate desire. In comparison to the death of Naucratus, all affect is absent. Gregory does not even identify a precise moment for his mother's death (13.1, *SC* 184). Her children do not grieve, but treasure her deathbed blessings and follow her exhortations to further progress in the spiritual life. Her death is orderly and a further manifestation of her spiritual perfection. The purgation of passion is a mark of the mother's spiritual perfection.

¹⁸ Smith (2004), p. 58 has emphasised that Macrina has a 'charismatic power to mediate the hope of life beyond death', but whether hope and grief are mutually exclusive throughout Gregory's thought remains an open question.

Similarly, the account of the death of Macrina's brother Basil also seems to point to the Platonic divided psychology. Macrina was naturally distressed in soul by her glorious brother's death, Gregory tells us, but he then uses the metaphor of testing the purity of a metal in several furnaces to argue that Macrina's soul was unadulterated and undefiled like pure gold. The three trials of the loss of Naucratus, her mother and Basil prove Macrina as an 'invincible athlete'. Her spiritual progress, like her mother's, seems only possible by assuming a divided psychology, setting reason against desire and eliminating attachments to particular created beings and things in the process.

Yet this would be too strong a conclusion for two reasons. First, the Naucratus digression alerts us that the account of mother and daughter's lack of desire for worldly things should be understood as proper attachment to material things and people rather than absolute separation from them. As with Naucratus and Chrysapius, Macrina displays wholesome attachment in the care she takes in the education of her brother. Such care helps, rather than hinders, the process of growing purer in the spiritual life. Further, the mother's deathbed scene, while to modern readers curiously lacking in grief, does not suggest that there is a lack of attachment between the family members on that account. Grief is turned to blessing, and those blessings are personalised, as the mother lovingly remembers each of her children and blesses them individually (13.8–23, *SC* 184, 186). So attachment to individuals, according to Gregory, is not ruled out in a perfect life. Desires which signify inappropriate attachment are to be eliminated, whereas those which drive people to fitting attachment, including charity and blessing, are entirely aligned with reason. Whether grief can ever signify appropriate attachment remains to be argued. Secondly, Gregory does not eliminate desire from the perfect life.¹⁹ For Macrina and her mother, desire for God is heightened in the spiritual worship for God as they desire divine things in 'unceasing prayer and never-ending hymns, coextensive with time itself' (11.29–31, *SC* 178).

About half-way through the narrative, the character of Gregory enters, to find Macrina herself on her death-bed in her monastery. A conversation on the soul (supposed to be that recounted in the *An et res*) ensues, Macrina managing to be cheerful despite the circumstances. Macrina's adherence to rational argument on her death-bed is compared to the example of Job, who did not let his physical pains interfere with his reason (18.1–8, *SC* 198, 200). Gregory is saddened and dejected in soul when reminded of Basil's death in the course of the conversation. But Macrina uses the conversation as an opportunity to discourse on the resurrection and the soul, thereby elevating Gregory's soul to a more perfect level (17.21–30, *SC* 198). Smith takes Macrina's elevating discourse as clear evidence that grief is an evil which should be eliminated by the elevation of the mind to philosophy; it is one instance of Macrina's 'angelic' power to heal by raising the mind from its fixation on death to the hope of the resurrection (Smith 2004, p. 75). Gregory, one might think, desires his absent brother, while Macrina displays the higher passion of desire for

¹⁹ Cf. articles on 'Apatheia' (Mateo-Seco 2010a), 'Desire/Epithumia' (Smith 2010) and 'Epektasis' (Mateo-Seco 2010b) in Mateo-Seco and Maspero (2010).

philosophy, except that, again, the picture is not so simple, as Macrina has already expressed her happiness that her desire (ἐπιθυμία) to see Gregory before she dies has been granted. Again, Gregory points us to the positive functions of desire in the soul, encouraging a dramatic, dialectical reading of his text, which allows Macrina's more austere statements to be modified in reconstructing Gregory's views about grief and desire, body and soul.

After the conversation, Macrina sends Gregory off to rest in the pleasant gardens of the monastery. Gregory finds he cannot enjoy the garden, weighed down as he is by his grief for his sister, but when he learns that she may be doing rather better than expected, he becomes happy at the good news and begins to enjoy all the sights of his surroundings, delighting in their variety and beautiful arrangements. These material delights are all the work of Macrina, who, Gregory tells us, 'was eager (σπουδή) for such things' (19.36–40, *SC* 204). Macrina's perfection again includes personal care for those around her, including a form of desire for them, and her delight in things of beauty also suggests a psychology in which passions are necessary for the pursuit of goods. In her interactions with Gregory, it becomes clearer than in the first half of the *Life* that Macrina's spiritual perfection does not consist in the eradication of desire. Rather, her virtue is that her desire is properly directed.

When brother and sister resume their conversation, Macrina's care for her close friends and family is again displayed, as she recounts to Gregory her version of their family history. Her aim is not to glory in worldly status, but rather to give 'gratitude to God'. (On this point, see further Krueger (2000), pp. 483–510). Her family history becomes an exposition of salvation history, taking the life of the family as 'an example of divine blessing'. Gregory's tendency to wallow in his own personal troubles, afflictions and intra-Church battles is rebuked, and he is made to see the divine hand in his sufferings: 'will you not heal the ingratitude of your soul?' (21.5–6, *SC* 210).

Gregory's grief at his sister's impending death includes a variety of strong emotions. Nature weighs him down with sadness (εἰς σκυθρωπότητα) since he will soon no longer be able to listen to his sister's sweet voice (22.14–18, *SC* 212). But he also has less noble emotions. He fears a diminishing of his family's spiritual status with the loss of the 'common glory of our family'. He also treats her as though she might escape the limits of creaturely existence (22.18–21, *SC* 212, 214). In the light of the earlier section of the *Life*, where Macrina and her mother give up worldly things, Gregory's concern for status is seen as spiritually misguided. Similarly, Gregory presents his heavenly picture of Macrina as an idealisation based on an erroneous judgement. Certainly, there is evidence to suggest that Macrina is closer than most to the life of heaven, but it is a mistake, Gregory has us believe, to think that any mortal is capable of absolute perfection.²⁰ His grief is identified as that which clouds his judgement and makes him view Macrina as an idea rather than as a person. Macrina, by contrast, recognises the reality of Gregory's spiritual imperfections, and relates to him accordingly.

²⁰ Ludlow (2000) has convincingly shown that Gregory believes that each human is capable of being perfected, but such perfection cannot be achieved in the mortal body.

At the end of the day, which figures the ending of Macrina's life, Gregory longs for the day to be extended, but as the sun sets, Macrina's own spiritual light is strengthened and, Gregory tells us, she 'hastened towards the desired one (τὸν προθύμενον) with the greater eagerness' (23.3–5, SC 216). She directs all her reason and desire towards God, no longer addressing humans but gazing with undivided attention on God (23.1–11, SC 216).²¹ She prays a long prayer of praise and confession (24.1–46, SC 218–224). Her desire for God brings her both to enjoyment of him and into a state of repentance, as in the *An et res*. Finally, she moves beyond even words: her 'voice died away and only by the parting of her lips and the movement of her hands did we recognise that she was praying' (25.4–5, SC 226). Earlier, Macrina's bodily, physical tears had been 'her language flowing with all ease...like the water from a spring streaming down freely', the emotion of grief transmuted in Macrina's experience into an intellectual offering of reasoning comfort (18.20–22, SC 200). Now she moves beyond physical words into an intellectual communion with God as she dies.

This ineffable desire is not the elimination of desire but the transformation of it. Her desire for God means that she is not distracted by other bodily human desires. This may seem to support Smith's analysis, that there is an element in Gregory's treatment of the passions which supports the elimination of sensual passions so that the mind can be more and more illumined in an eschatological transformation of desire. (For example see Smith (2000a), p. 60). That is, for Gregory, perfected desires are not generated by the experience of absence or lack, and nor are they physical (heaven is immaterial) although in the embodied condition of humans, physical desires are not bad purely because they are physical. As Williams perceptively notes, Gregory's *erōs* is

...only capable of being called "desire" in a rather eccentric sense, because of its distance from the processes of wanting and getting, lack and satisfaction. We are challenged to imagine a radical lack, accepted without anxiety, hunger, fantasy. (Williams 1993, p. 242)

The perpetual and ever increasing enjoyment of God in heaven is one way in which the passions of the body and the passionate movement of the soul come together in Gregory's thought, and preclude the conclusion that he thinks that passions should be eliminated.

Apatheia makes humans like the angels who are characterised by it (*In Cant I*, GNO VI, 30; *In Cant IV*, GNO VI, 135), yet the 'beautiful passion of insatiability' remains even in the eschaton, as the soul is continually filled to overflowing in perpetual movement towards God (Daniélou 1964, pp. 291–292). (See also Ludlow (2000), pp. 58, 61–63). The soul's ability to enjoy and desire God, as Daniélou argued, is 'eternally enlarged each time that it is filled, so that there can be in it at

²¹ Meredith (1984), p. 191 points out that this is not Neoplatonic 'contemplation' (θεωρία) since for Gregory 'even the noblest of created minds can go no further in their search for God than straining towards him, without ever actually catching sight of him'. Smith (2004), p. 76 rightly points to Gregory's adaptation of the Neoplatonic view of the body as a 'mirror of a mirror' (*Op hom* 12.9–10; PG 44, 161D). On this point, see Pépin (1992), pp. 217–229.

the same time satiety and desire, repose and movement' (Daniélou 1964, p. 53).²² As Macrina dies, we glimpse in part the notion that perfection is the eternal movement into God's infinite being, a movement in which there is no desire for physical things but rather the intellectual enjoyment of God.²³ Macrina's death provides a commentary on the *An et res*:

...when the hoped for thing actually comes, then all other faculties are reduced to quiescence, and love (ἀγάπη) alone remains active, finding nothing to succeed itself (*An et res* 96B).

This ultimate wordlessness of Macrina's perfection also draws attention to the construction of Gregory's own hagiographic text. His words attempt to describe the life of the saint truthfully. Yet from the beginning of the text, Gregory self-consciously draws attention to the failure of his narrative. The subject of his text is a woman, he informs us, and in the next breath admits he does not know if Macrina should be identified as female (1.14–17, *SC* 140). As Georgia Frank has argued, Macrina the martyr is also figured in Homeric terms both as Penelope and as Odysseus, again pointing to her fluid gender characterisation (Burrus (2004), pp. 249–264; Frank (2000), pp. 511–530). The saint is both physical and gendered, and so able to be rendered in physical signs, and simultaneously beyond gender in her eschatologically perfected existence, and so beyond words.

Time and again, as words are used to describe anticipations of heavenly perfections, Gregory draws attention to their failures. Words, physical signs themselves bound up in processes of exchange, cannot adequately describe the saint, just as they fail her when she anticipates the eschaton and enters the threshold of immaterial communion with God. Similarly, while Gregory's text sets before us the life of his sister 'Macrina', we learn that her mother had a dream before she was born that she was carrying the first female martyr 'Thecla', and this name was to be used for Macrina in secret. The words which describe the human Macrina only imperfectly capture the inner truth of her saintliness which is inexpressibly hidden.

Like Macrina's eschatologically transfigured desire, Gregory's language is stretched to its limit.²⁴ Gregory's text is a 'connivance of the inexpressible' partly because Gregory figures his subject as capable of anticipating eschatological perfection.²⁵ Macrina's wordless passion anticipates desire transfigured in paradise. It does not erase bodily desire from bodily existence but it does figure the immaterial enjoyment of God in the eschaton. In his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Gregory also refuses to eliminate memory of bodily passions:

²² On ἐπέκτασις more generally, see Daniélou (1964), 291–307. See also the articles on *epektasis* (Mateo-Seco) and desire/*epithumia* (Smith) in Mateo-Seco and Maspero (2010).

²³ Cf. *de vita Moysis* 300D. See also Smith (2000a), p. 60.

²⁴ Coakley (2000), pp. 67–69 speaks of the "eschatologically-oriented" feature of Gregory's complex theory of personal (and gendered) transformation into the divine life', drawing on Harrison's perceptive analysis of Gregory's 'theocentric' understanding of gender: Harrison (1996), pp. 38–68. See also Harrison (1990), pp. 446–452, and 459–471; Laird (2002), p. 515.

²⁵ Kristeva (1987), p. 257 cited in Burrus (2004), 261, who helpfully analyses the implications for gender theory of Gregory's language. Cox-Miller (1994), p. 237 points out that dream narratives in the *Macr* allow Gregory 'to see through a dead body to a body that was lively in another register'.

I hope that my commentary will be a guide for the more fleshly-minded, since the wisdom hidden [in the *Song of Songs*] leads to a spiritual state of the soul (*In Cant I*, GNO VI, 4). (See further Coakley (2000), p. 67)

Macrina's death provides the setting for two further explorations of grief in the *Life*. Her death releases the mourning of all the virgins in the monastery. 'Grief (πένθος) like some inward fire was smouldering in their hearts, and all at once a bitter and irrepressible cry broke out' (26.11–12, *SC* 230). As earlier, the effect is that Gregory's reasoning soul cannot remain calm, swept away like an 'overflowing stormy flood' (26.12–15, *SC* 230). His own grief is deep, and he depicts the nuns' grief sympathetically even as he seeks to have them express it in an appropriate liturgical context. Gregory admits that 'the maidens' inclination towards passion seemed...just and reasonable' (26.16–17, *SC* 230). Yet he recognises that it threatens to move from the understandable feelings of sadness associated with the loss of companionship to a pernicious despair which denies hope in God and the salvation of their souls (26.17–21, *SC* 230). Their grief, like his earlier in the *Life*, also displays inappropriate dependency on Macrina.²⁶ In this account, what is troubling is not desire itself, but that it can unsettle the intellect sufficiently to turn the believer from the life of faith.

Gregory emerges from the abyss to quiet the destructive desire of the nuns for their dead abbess, urging them to transform their grief into psalms of lamentation (27.4–11, *SC* 232). This, he reminds the sisters, is the one fitting time for tears of which Macrina had approved (27.7–9, *SC* 232). The all-night vigil before Macrina's burial is mixed with lamentation (33.1–10, *SC* 248). These lamentations within the vigil are all part of the arrangements Gregory makes as he endeavours to ensure that no 'suitable accompaniment' of Macrina's funeral is omitted (33.10–13, *SC* 248). The singing at the funeral itself is both moving and orderly, with the worshippers divided according to sex and the psalms of lament and praise sung antiphonally. Gregory arranges 'rhythmical and harmonious psalmody, blended in an orderly fashion by the shared concord of all the mourners' (33.16–19, *SC* 248). The funeral psalms include the *Song of the Three Children* (*Benedicite*; cf Ps 150, Dan 3:35–88), which is a hymn of praise, and the psalms of the church moderate the excessive and perhaps selfish grief of some unruly worshippers at the graveside, but lamentation and grief remain in the liturgy (34.12–34, *SC* 252, 254).

Gregory's grief also clearly remains; Macrina's example has not convinced him that grief is of itself a bad thing. The funeral complete, he threw himself 'on the grave and embraced the dust' and then set off homewards, 'grieving and crying, thinking how great was the life that was lost' (36.2–5, *SC* 256). On his return journey, he meets a distinguished soldier, who laments Macrina's death with him, since Macrina had healed his daughter's eye through prayer (36.5–38.36, *SC* 256–264). At first, the soldier's lamentation makes rational conversation impossible (*Macr* 996C). But in the course of the miracle account, the soldier truly testifies to

²⁶ Gregory sees inappropriate attachment, tending towards the passions of dependency or symbiosis, as a potential danger for marriage. See Hart (1990), pp. 453–457.

Macrina's saintliness because he sees in her actions the truth of the miracles associated with Christ in the gospels:

...what is great about sight being restored to the blind by the hand of God, when now his servant, accomplishing those cures by faith in Him, has done a deed not much inferior to those miracles? (38.30–33, *SC* 262, 264).

At this point, his story is complete, and his demonstration of Macrina's goodness also ends like it began: in tears. His story 'was interrupted by sobbing, and tears flowing down choked his tale' (38.34–35, *SC* 264). Grief here acts as a sign of the ineffable, which expresses truth in a way merely physical words cannot. In the context of his story, his grief is entirely appropriate, since it is personal mourning for the loss of one who revealed God to the world by distinctively participating in the perfections of Christ, in this case through miracles of healing.

The other miracles associated with Macrina which Gregory mentions in concluding his narrative also point to ways in which Macrina's character traits are good because they are participations in Christ's saving actions and thus direct the reader of Gregory's text to Christ.²⁷ She has her own version of feeding the five thousand, when she causes the corn supply to suffer 'no perceptible diminution' after repeated distributions in a time of famine. And like Jesus, she heals the sick and casts out demons (39.7–13, *SC* 264). The correspondence between the saint's actions and the biblical stories of Christ's miracles thus demonstrate her distinctive ways of participating in Christ and hence point to God and his saving actions for humanity. In this context, it is reasonable to grieve for her. These sections of the narrative suggest that for Gregory, grief and reason are not implacably and universally opposed. Grief, even outside personal repentance, is not always figured as a negative passion which must lead to a failure of hope.

Grief and Desire, Lamentation and Hagiography in the *Life of Saint Macrina*

In sum, the reading I have presented suggests an anthropology which generally takes desire as essential to embodied humanity and the ultimate human contemplation and enjoyment of God. The *Macr* can provide a helpful way into Gregory's ideas about body and soul precisely because he believes that the life of the body provides a portrait of the soul (*Op hom* 29.9). This resonates with the Neoplatonic idea that the healthy body is a mirror of the healthy soul (which is itself a mirror of the immaterial realm).²⁸ But it more clearly highlights ways in which bodily life can corrupt or improve the soul. Hagiography, which outlines a uniquely distinctive and perfectly embodied Christian life, therefore provides an account of the perfect Christian soul, or, perhaps better, of the perfecting of the Christian soul.

²⁷ Smith (2004), p. 83 denies that Macrina is ever a *repraesentio Christi*.

²⁸ See further note 21 above.

Given Gregory's well-known accounts of progress in the spiritual life, no single moment in Macrina's life is itself sufficient to build a picture of her perfection or the anthropology which supports the text. But taken together, something like the understanding gleaned from the *An et res* of a proper relationship between impulses and reason emerges. Desire is needed to spur reason on towards its proper goal, which is the enjoyment of God, even as some desires must be re-directed towards other ends by the reasoning soul lest they become debilitating. Trivially, bodily desire is lacking from the perfect eschatological desire for God since the end of a virtuous life is the elimination of the material body and the perpetual illumination of the immaterial mind. Macrina's life underscores the movement from bodily desire to intellectual desire, as she employs the higher powers of her mind to control the physical experience of the passions and ends offering wordless, almost purely intellectual prayer to God. But it does not follow that all bodily desires are bad for created humans. The impulses Macrina feels are not in themselves negative; appropriate physically-experienced emotions of enjoyment and repentance remain.

The characteristic desire of the *Macr* is grief. But there is ambivalence about whether the particular desire of grief can be allied with reason. Much of the deep and abiding sadness recounted in the *Macr* is transformed by Macrina into repentance and the praise and worship of God, thus displaying a strong continuity with her *An et res* account. In these cases, grief is a negative bodily passion to be eliminated except in the limit case of grief for one's sins, and it is replaced by rejoicing in the blessings of God as the virtuous believer participates more and more purely in the insatiable, intellectual enjoyment of God. Further, grief for individuals is often described as an impulse which is in opposition to reason, to be mastered by the higher part of the soul. There is much in the *Macr* which points to the dangers of grief. Grief and suffering can unsettle and conquer reason and can obscure hope and trust in God's goodness. It can be read as subversively feminine, an impurity to be purified in the spiritual furnace. It can signify excessive attachment to transient people and objects and be an irrational evaluation of their worth, again pointing to conflict between grief and reason. Macrina's life is largely one which avoids these dangers nobly by successfully purging bodily desire, if not desire itself, from the soul. Smith is right to point to the ways in which Macrina mediates hope in the context of grief.²⁹

Yet the narrative allows us to read grief more positively when it is performed in certain contexts. Others have pointed to grief as good desire when it signifies repentance. But it is difficult to see how such a desire—grief as repentance—gets the individual further than reason alone could carry them. That is, such grief is a consequence of a rational judgement, but is not the impulse that leads reason to deeper apprehension of a shared good. It is consistent with a divided psychology.

I suggest that there are at least two ways in which grief is a psychic desire which allows the reasoning part of the soul to grasp shared goals it otherwise would not reach. Macrina's funeral and the soldier on the road give the strongest hints of such

²⁹ My reading thus confirms these features of Smith's helpful analysis in his 'A Just and Reasonable Grief' (2004).

grief. Grief expressed in the context of the liturgy of lamentation and grief performed in hagiography itself are expressions of desire that propel the believer into deeper relationship with others and with God.

When a personal grief is joined to the liturgy of lament it becomes fitting grief, a positive passion, not merely a stage on the way to a virtuous affective state such as repentance. Without such personal, passionate desire, reason could not grasp either the enormity of sinfulness and the brokenness of creation which should be lamented, the appropriateness of lamentation as one response to how the world really is, or the magnitude of divine faithfulness and love, which always remains despite the world of tears. This expression of desire for God in lamentation modifies Smith's definition of acceptable grief as a motivation for repentance. It is both more and less individualised, in that the lamentation is for cosmic, rather than individual sin, and recognition of such cosmic sin is elicited through the sharp experience of a personal grief for another person. Most importantly, Gregory should be read as arguing that grief is more immediate to the perception of the divine than as an instrument of repentance. While it can be damaging, within the liturgy of lamentation it is a desire that allows those experiencing loss, as mortal creatures must, to apprehend God more deeply than the reasoning soul alone could. Grief is a passion which allows reason to grasp a goal it shares but which it otherwise could not attain. Like other desires, it can be 'fleshly passion' that in itself 'leads to a spiritual state of the soul' (*In Cant I*, GNO VI,4).

The liturgical setting for this expression of personal grief is crucial, because it mitigates against the mourner's grief expressing inappropriate attachment, an attachment which, like that confessed by Augustine, retreats into itself or other ephemeral consolations, and idolatrously treats the dead person as one who would never die (*Confessions* IV.vi.11–vii.12). In the context of general lamentation, there is a fundamental acknowledgement of the sinfulness of creatures as well as a foundational belief that God remains good despite the sufferings brought about by sin. Such lamentation turns outward in faith to the God who shares in the grief, rather than turning in on itself or looking for other transient comforts. Grief which is also a genuine part of the liturgy of lamentation can legitimately be grief for a particular individual because it cannot improperly make the mourned-for creature into a god or remove the mourner from God's presence. That such grief is removed in the perfection of the eschaton does not make it improper or irrational for creatures, who daily face the consequences of sin in specific ways. Williams, again, puts it well:

What Gregory effectively says is that human spirituality or intellectuality is not capable of being itself in a "pure" form: paradoxically, it can do what it is meant to do only in the hybrid *phusis* [nature] which is humanity as we actually know it. (Cf Williams (1993), pp. 235–236)

Grief for an individual may also properly be expressed in hagiography. This suggestion, with its conjunction between *res* and *verba*, ties the main themes we have explored together. The hagiographic text stands between the material world and the immaterial perfections of heaven, as it displays its subject as he or she really is, participating in heavenly joys while embedded in creaturely life. Like Macrina's

tears and even the most perfect of human lives, the words of the text are both signs of eschatological perfection and bound up in processes of exchange as ineffective signifiers. Crucially for the expression of grief for an individual, the description of the life of a saint always points to the divine life and the saving acts of God in the divine economy. Gregory's hagiographic account of his sister's life, and through it of the lives of his mother and brothers, like Macrina's own account of family history which Gregory places within his text, is really an account of salvation history, the history of God's saving activities in the world. In such a history, the experience of grief and the experience and mediation of hope are not mutually exclusive. The Gregory who writes the *Life* has learned from his subject not to wallow in his personal difficulties, but he leaves room for personalised grief performed and purified in hope through the hagiographic text.

In hagiography, the saint does not replace God but neither is the individual saint erased as they point to God. Through the descriptions of the unique and particular perfections of the life of the saint, the reader is directed towards Christ, since Macrina's saintliness is a function of the ways in which she participates in Christ. Gregory's grief, mediated through hagiography, allows him and the simultaneously grieving and rejoicing readers of his text to recognise in her distinctiveness, more clearly than would otherwise be possible, the perfect humanity of the God in whom Macrina participates. Such hopeful and loving grief can be experienced by individuals, like the soldier who recognises divine goodness in Macrina. And, we might speculate, it would be appropriately directed towards all individuals in as much as they had revealed divine glory in their lives. Like lamentation, then, hagiography provides a context in which grief as the desire for a particular individual is simultaneously desire for God. As readers weep with Gregory for the departed saint, like Gregory and the soldier he meets at the end of the narrative, they are spurred on to belief in, and gratitude for, the saving works of God (38.30–33, *SC* 262, 264).

The text of the *Life of Saint Macrina* is an icon of Gregory's personal grief for his sister. That it can be so is partly because of the implicit anthropology which supports the text. Gregory values desire, grief and inter-personal dependence deeply, and he should be read as offering an account of body and soul which justifies such experiences theologically and eschatologically. His anthropology recognises that desires can be damaging. He locates wholesome experience of grief in liturgies of lamentation and hagiography to enable grief to be experienced with hope and as a desire that joins the believer both to the object of grief and to God. But desires in themselves are not to be eliminated, and even desires like grief, which can be physically and mentally painful, drive the believer towards an ever greater, ultimately immaterial, enjoyment of God.

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‘Variable Passions’: Shakespeare’s Mixed Emotions

R. S. White

‘... his heart burst smilingly’

Shakespeare uses several times the words ‘conjunct’, ‘conjunction’ and ‘conjunctive’, for example comprehensively canvassing some of their meanings and associations in a single passage spoken by King Philip of France in *King John*:

This royal hand and mine are newly knit,
And the conjunction of our inward souls
Married in league, coupled and linked together
With all religious strength of sacred vows.
(*King John*, 3.1.152–155)¹

This passage appears to describe a formulaic, utopian kind of ‘conjunction’ in marriage, an ideal oneness of sympathies. The words suggest that there can be conjunctions of hands, of bodies, of souls, spirits and feelings, of vows, and even of stars, and words in a sentence, each representing an act of knitting, marrying, coupling, linking, and mingling. However, the irony in its context is that despite the apparent concord which Philip is describing, he confesses himself in the situation to be ‘perplexed’—‘I am perplexed, and know not what to say’ (3.1.147)—a word derived from the vocabulary of knitting (which perhaps suggests to Shakespeare his metaphor in ‘newly knit’) with conflicting meanings of entangled on the one hand, plaited or interwoven on the other. The discrepancy in the image provides a very precise description of the situation, which is both interwoven and entangled. The occasion is a coerced, arranged marriage along expedient, political lines, ‘joining’, in the formal sense, the son of the King of France and the daughter of King John. This event gives new power and property to the respective fathers, but bewilders the couple and angers Constance, widow of John’s elder brother, whose son Arthur had been

¹ All reference to Shakespeare’s works are taken from Shakespeare (2005).

R. S. White (✉)
English Department, The University of Western Australia, 6009, Perth, Australia
e-mail: bob.white@uwa.edu.au

promised to John's daughter. Philip offers the metaphor of fulsome 'conjunction' in a disingenuous spirit but inadvertently it incorporates a different kind of conjunction, the simultaneous existence of feelings of anger and hostility. The reference to harmony is, then, only one element of what is in fact an emotionally fraught state representing both public harmony and private disaffection. It is a moment of 'mixed emotions' paraded uneasily as concord. The moment is one of 'conjunction' but in almost opposite ways since although the marriage is a 'knitting' of souls and bodies in intended concord, yet it comes dramatically as the cause and result of underlying conflict. Affective 'conjunctions' need not be simple, nor singular.

Another, initial example of the same phenomenon emerges when we consider the word 'confusion', which is etymologically speaking a near neighbour of 'conjunction' though one that signals more clearly a potential for diverse feelings:

Perfect friendship, which is a very free, plain, and universal confusion of two souls ... A confusion, not only a conjunction, & joining together.
(*Charon* 1608, III.vii.434)

'Confuse' comes ultimately from Latin *confundere* which in its more neutral sense means simply 'to mix, mingle, join'. However, as inspection of the modern use of the word reveals, there is also a meaning turning on 'con' (against)—'fusion' which suggests a state which is more negative, 'mixed up, thrown into disorder, perplexed, bewildered', to paraphrase the *Oxford English Dictionary*. It entered English from French after the Norman Conquest in 1066. Originally in English 'confusion' could describe a simple 'mingling' but also a situation of things thrown into disorder, destruction or ruin. By the fourteenth century it had come also to be applied to a person's condition of being 'overthrown' as in an argument (still available as a meaning) and from there to a mental condition in which the mind is thrown into disorder. It could be applied to disorder of ideas or emotions, the latter usually signalled by an excitable commotion, a meaning in turn linked to disordered sounds as in the 'confusion of tongues' at the Tower of Babel. Shakespeare, writing from the 1590s onwards, uses 'confusion' in all these different senses, ranging from situations—'A rout, confusion thick; forthwith they fly [like] Chickens ...' (*Cymbeline* 5.5.42–43), 'Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!' and 'confused events', both in *Macbeth*, through sounds ('And mark the musical confusion Of hounds and echo in conjunction' in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [4.1.107–108]), through ideas to emotions (tears of sorrow are said to be 'Like perspectives, which, rightly gazed upon, Show nothing but confusion' in *Richard II* [2.2.18–19]). When, in *The Merchant of Venice*, Bassanio falls in love with Portia at first sight, his emotions, words, body, and his mental state are all disordered:

Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins,
And there is such confusion in my powers
As after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude,
Where every something, being blent together
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,

Expressed and not expressed.
 (*The Merchant of Venice*, 3.2.175–183)

Is confusion an emotion? Yes, but it does not need to be and it is not a self-contained or unitary 'passion'. Invariably by its nature it is not a single emotion (like grief, sadness, anger, or joy) but an amalgam of different feelings 'mingling and conjoining' and yet also disordering each other—if it is a single emotion then it is unified by the very disunity but immediacy of its component parts—what we would call a state of 'mixed emotions'.

I will argue in this essay that in Shakespeare's plays there can be conjunctions of emotional states that are not benignly unified but disparate, complex, sometimes in conflict, and rooted in context, experienced by an audience as experiential fullness. These kinds of 'mixed emotions', I shall argue, lie at the very heart of the Shakespearean dramatic experience. Such states tend to fall through cracks in studies of emotion whether these are conducted from a scientific, psychological, or historical perspective, mainly because in these areas the emotions regularly studied are singular rather than plural: love, desire, amusement, pity, grief, jealousy, melancholy, guilt, shame, and so on: each is given a little box quarantined from the others. I believe there may be a similar danger of oversimplifying in the recent 'affective turn' which rediscovers and re-applies early modern bodily, humoral and physiological explanations for states of the mind, and a temptation to assume that emotions will be 'pure' and fit neatly into a unitary taxonomical slot derived from Aristotle, Augustine, Galen, or some other early authority. Such discrete emotions can be complex enough when studied in isolation, but how much more complex they become when 'conjoined': love *and* jealousy, pity *and* anger, desire *and* grief, amusement *and* melancholy? It is striking and unexpected that such a field of 'conjunctive' emotions has been neglected when it seems to have a more recognisable application to what our emotional lives are like than the unitary emotions, certainly in responding to drama and literature. Furthermore, proposing the idea of mixed emotions is not an anachronism but was recognised in Shakespeare's world, as we see from the writer in his times most associated with the study of affections, Robert Burton:

I did for my recreation now and then walk abroad, look into the world, and could not choose but make some little observation,—*non tam sagax observator ac simplex recitator*—not as they did, to scoff or laugh at all, but with a mixed passion... This I daily hear, and such like, both private and public news, amidst the gallantry and misery of the world; jollity, pride, perplexities and cares, simplicity and villainy; subtlety, knavery, candour and integrity, mutually mixed ...

(Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1624), 'Democritus Junior to the Reader', and Section I, Memb.II, Subsection VIII, 'Of the Moving Faculty')

And again:

The bad are simple or mixed: simple for some bad object present, as sorrow, which contracts the heart, macerates the soul, subverts the good estate of the body, hindering all the operations of it, causing melancholy, and many times death itself; or future, as fear. Out of these two arise those mixed affections and passions of anger, which is a desire of revenge; hatred, which is inveterate anger; zeal, which is offended with him who hurts that he loves; and [Greek: *epikairekakia*], a compound affection of joy and hate, when we rejoice at

other men's mischief, and are grieved at their prosperity; pride, self-love, emulation, envy, shame, &c., of which elsewhere.
(Burton 1624)

The purpose of this short essay is not to analyse the area in any depth, but to establish through some examples that mixed emotions, understood as intermingled but not always opposite states of feeling arising from context, mind and body, exist in Shakespeare's works, and are central to their effects on audiences and readers.

It is surprising that the occurrences in the plays have escaped critical attention as a subject to be reflected on for its own sake, since the overall concept of mixed emotions is surely not new to Shakespearean criticism in its practice. When we carry out close criticism of the plays we frequently notice in both individual characters and collectively in audiences many liminal, complex, or paradoxical states. Where the phenomenon has been critically studied is often when a rather simple binary applies in the form of an oxymoron, such as body and soul, appearance and reality, and in the insertion of comic relief into a tragedy. Such 'conjunctions' of opposite feelings are no doubt sometimes a legacy of the binary thinking that emerged as part of the classical revival, noticeable for example in Catullus's '*odi et amo*' (*Carmen* 85), a phrase which was so influential over Renaissance poetry that it could be said to have virtually initiated a genre in its own right. However, what interests me here in Shakespeare's works are the occasions when the mixed emotions are not necessarily opposite but diverse and unrelated emotional states which often fuse into new and often strange, affective territories. So far as I can discover there has been little attention paid to the subject in this sense. Consequently, there doesn't seem much available by way of theoretical models to work with.

One point of entrance is through cognitive psychology where the subject of emotions has long been a 'hot topic', alongside its applied and cognate research area, Market Research, which has generated quite a sizable literature on mixed emotions. It is somehow both symptomatic and sad that a sustained and intensive mode of research into our emotions should be motivated by a desire to control, manipulate and even deceive us into buying a product. Whatever its motivations and underlying purposes, this research provides a scaffolding methodology through two interesting and fully documented articles in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. The first, 'Recalling Mixed Emotions' (Aaker et al. 2008), examines how situations which at the time inspire conflicting feelings are remembered later, concluding that memory is more of a construction than a reconstruction, and that it tends to emphasise one or other of the emotions rather than accommodating both (O'Shaugnessy 2003; Chaudhuri 2006). (Being a parent of a young child is a good example—in recollection it is very different from the actual experience.) The second article directly on the subject, 'Can Mixed Emotions Peacefully Coexist?' (Williams and Aaker 2002), begins by providing an invaluable survey of scholarly work done in Psychology which debates 'the degree to which conflicting emotions can be simultaneously experienced', and 'the degree to which positive and negative emotions have a bipolar versus independent relationship', both of which I believe are questions raised also in Shakespeare's drama at certain points though they are by no means the only ones. The provisional conclusions which I believe are also useful to us, seem to be that

such questions can be answered only with regard to context. In particular, for example, what market researchers call 'duality' or 'the ongoing process of accepting and synthesizing contradiction in elements or forms' can be shown through empirical research to be age-specific, in coming more naturally to the old than the young; and to those who have grown up in East Asian cultures which have a religious heritage from Buddhism and Confucianism with their emphasis on holism and integration, rather than in Western cultures dominated by an Aristotelian emphasis on binary logic which tends to think in terms of 'either—or' categories and is more inclined to see conflict rather than harmony. In each of the former cases (the aged and Asian), people are more predisposed to value positively situations which raise 'mixed emotions', whereas those in the latter groups (the young and Western) find such experiences much more confusing and potentially alienating and internally divisive.

Even while conceding the utility and intrinsic interest in these psychological approaches, I have to record some caveats before moving on to Shakespeare. My scepticism arises from the fact that the methodology itself inescapably and unconsciously exemplifies Western binary thought, shepherding potential shoppers into groups on the basis of young/old, Asian/European, and those who feel positive about mixed emotions distinguished from those who feel threatened. (One wonders also about the influence of gender differences, and I suspect this is another way that the research in psychology can group people like animals coming to the ark two-by-two.) Such conclusions are also underpinned by questionable assumptions that in a moment of 'mixed feelings' there are only two emotions present and in conflict, and that 'accepting and synthesizing contradictions' implies simple acceptance of a necessary dualism, a coming to terms with contradiction, rather than a third, unified paradox like Blake's view of a state beyond innocence and experience as the inception of reflective social conscience, an understanding which genuinely incorporates and transcends opposites in a new vision. In itself, this approach seems to skew the field and ignores a different kind of contextualisation which I will suggest underlies Shakespeare's depictions. Finally, such conclusions are based on research which quantifies tendencies within large aggregations of subjects as statistical units and does not account for individuals, let alone the volatility of their emotions, without attending to the fact that emotional responses are individual and situationally unique.

In Shakespeare's plays we find a different kind of contextualization of mixed emotions, one which in fact cannot easily be generalized since it hinges on uniquely individuated characters placed in specific situations that arouse often unexpected combinations of feelings. He discovered early in his career the possibilities in dramatizing mixed emotions, or at least sudden switches in mood, as we see in this quite strange exchange between brothers:

TITUS

When will this fearful slumber have an end?

MARCUS

Now, farewell, flatt'ry, die, Andronicus.

Thou dost not slumber. See thy two sons' heads,

Thy warlike hand, thy mangled daughter here.

Thy other banished son, with this dear sight
 Struck pale and bloodless, and thy brother, I,
 Even like a stony image, cold and numb.
 Ah, now no more will I control thy griefs.
 Rend off thy silver hair, thy other hand
 Gnawing with thy teeth, and be this dismal sight
 The closing up of our most wretched eyes.
 Now is a time to storm. Why art thou still?

TITUS

Ha, ha, ha!

MARCUS

Why dost thou laugh? It fits not with this hour.

TITUS

Why, I have not another tear to shed.

Besides, this sorrow is an enemy,

And would usurp upon my wat'ry eyes

And make them blind with tributary tears.

Then which way shall I find Revenge's cave?

(*Titus Andronicus*, 3.1.250–269)

Marcus is describing in a dramatic set piece the kind of staged behaviour we could expect from Marlowe's more predictable protagonists, or the one Hamlet reflects upon in the Player's lament over Hecuba, but Titus unexpectedly does not oblige. Instead, he laughs. When questioned, he offers two explanations for his unexpected laughter in the face of overwhelming grief, a response which 'fits not with this hour', and both inform the emotional design of the play as a whole. First, he laughs perhaps in the state of emotional numbness or even denial which we would recognize as a first response to grief. In modern parlance we might explain it as a moment of psychological overload that triggers a switch of emotions from one extreme to the other, comparable to the experience of manic depression or bipolar disorder. Then, he has 'not another tear to shed'. Driven to psychic extremity, the sheer lack of rational or emotional control makes almost arbitrary which predominates of the two equally powerful but opposite emotional drives, sorrow and detached, existential hilarity, in a moment anticipating Beckett or even Kafka. This seems to be the strange pitch that *Titus Andronicus* as a play strikes, since modern critics have wrestled with the macabre sense of *grand guignol*, some describing its effect as 'horrid laughter', others as moral revulsion, alongside moments of profound pathos involving Lavinia as 'map of woe'. Secondly, Titus suggests that 'tributary tears' at this stage would distract him from the task he sees as primary, revenging the deaths of his children. Again, this has a larger function in the play since it provides an explanatory image for the process by which suffering hardens into a desire for revenge, a dehumanizing impulse that subverts morality and conscience. It is at this point that Titus begins to lose audience sympathy since he goes on to kill the defiled Lavinia in a misguided gesture of Roman 'honour', and Shakespeare marks the moment by representing him as an emotionally and morally cauterized visitor to the pagan 'Revenge's cave'.

Where does 'reason' fit into this emotional landscape? Titus's description of his feelings in suffering as 'bottomless' spurs his more stoical brother Marcus to advise,

‘But yet let reason govern thy lament’ only to be met with a retort that such a word or concept is completely inadequate to contain feelings so powerful that they have an elemental force of nature:

TITUS

If there were reason for these miseries,
 Then into limits could I bind my woes.
 When heaven doth weep, doth not the earth o’erflow?
 If the winds rage, doth not the sea wax mad,
 Threat’ning the welkin with his big-swoll’n face?
 And wilt thou have a reason for this coil?
 I am the sea. Hark, how her sighs doth blow.
 She is the weeping welkin, I the earth.
 Then must my sea be moved with her sighs,
 Then must my earth with her continual tears
 Become a deluge, overflowed and drowned,
 Forwhy my bowels cannot hide her woes,
 But like a drunkard must I vomit them.
 Then give me leave, for losers will have leave
 To ease their stomachs with their bitter tongues.
 [*Enter a MESSENGER with two heads and a hand*]
 (*Titus Andronicus*, 3.1.218–232)

The phrase ‘... like a drunkard must I vomit them’ is explosive and emotionally intrusive, talking about the soul in bodily terms. But even more pertinent than the expression of rage is Titus’s alignment of his feelings with the elemental powers of wind and sea, followed by the wordless but shocking aftermath. The stage direction in its mute spectacle underlines the dismaying recognition that the sheer power of the flood of emotions ‘overflows’ and ‘drowns’ the very notion that reason can control it.

Meanwhile, in apparently ironic counterpoint, a very different character exhibits an amalgam of equally conflicting emotions of which the guiding one is also aberrant, ‘mischief’:

AARON

...
 I played the cheater for thy father’s hand,
 And, when I had it drew myself apart,
 And almost broke my heart with extreme laughter.
 I pried me through the crevice of a wall
 When for his hand he had his two sons’ heads,
 Beheld his tears, and laughed so heartily
 That both mine eyes were rainy like to his;
 And when I told the Empress of this sport
 She swooned almost at my pleasing tale,
 And for my tidings gave me twenty kisses.
 (*Titus Andronicus*, 5.1.111–120)

The wording of ‘broke my heart with extreme laughter’ repeats and reflects upon Titus’s anguished laughter as an extremity of emotional stretching though here the context is different, involving a consciously amoral character, barely aware of the other’s grief. It seems to have been in this play that Shakespeare stretched to a

limit the theatrical power of conjoining conflicting emotions by repeating the same response with completely opposite effects and significance. He was never to forget the discovery and its startling possibilities, since we find the dramatic strategy repeated with variations in his later tragedies. He has already forged his unique gift for representing mixed emotions.

Shakespeare repeatedly demonstrates a belief in the possibility of feelings that are ‘mingled’ (a word he often repeats), sometimes in ways that confirm the psychological theories I have summarised which turn on juxtaposing opposites. For example, when the newly crowned Henry V in *2 Henry IV* says to the anxious onlookers ‘Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear’ he encapsulates the political paradox, ‘the king is dead, long live the king’. Kingly succession is conventionally associated with such a mixture of grief as an embodied man dies, and joy as another takes on the role of immortal divinity in kingship. Claudius in *Hamlet* turns the idea into a faintly grotesque and platitudinous image which may illuminate his own internally divided feelings on his wrongful accession, when he describes the almost simultaneous funeral and marriage rituals in the royal family:

Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
Th’imperial jointress of this warlike state,
Have we as ’twere with a defeated joy,
With one auspicious and one dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,
Taken to wife ...
(*Hamlet*, 1.2.8–14)

Guiderius notes of the disguised Innogen, ‘That grief and patience, rooted in him both, /Mingle their spurs together’ (*Cymbeline*, 4.258–259), while Henry IV generalises a similarly divided state of feelings:

And wherefore should these good news -make me sick?
Will fortune never come with both hands full,
But write her fair words still in foulest letters?
She either gives a stomach and no food;
Such are the poor in health—or else a feast,
And takes away the stomach—such are the rich,
That have abundance and enjoy it not.
I should rejoice now at this happy news,
And now my sight fails, and my brain is giddy.
O me! Come near me now; I am much ill.
(*2 Henry IV*, 4.3.102–111)

The First Lord Dumaine in *All’s Well That Ends Well* ‘moralizes’ such a double vision, elevating acceptance of mixed feelings to an ethical status in his rueful reflection:

The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together. Our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not, and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues.
(*All’s Well That Ends Well*, 4.3.69–72)

As we shall shortly see, Aristotle was one who pondered long on the paradoxes here. Such examples are binary in their basis, holding together two contrary or conflicting feelings in a sometimes uneasy and oxymoronic balance.

Shakespeare even provides some evidence for the different ways in which age is an important consideration in the analysis offered by the marketing research model to determine how mixed emotions are processed, in their case by consumers. On the one hand, we have in *Romeo and Juliet*, a play particularly rich in ambivalent emotional states, young people in love and susceptible to sudden switches of mood or simultaneous awareness of opposite feelings. The mixed emotions here operate first at the verbal level in phrases embracing the opposites: 'Parting is such sweet sorrow' (2.1.229), while Romeo when he is in love with Rosaline feels caught and helpless in the contradictions:

Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate,
 O anything of nothing first create;
 O heavy lightness, serious vanity,
 Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,
 Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,
 Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
 This love feel I, that feel no love in this.
 (*Romeo and Juliet*, 1.1.69–75)

Romeo suspects Benvolio of laughing—'Dost thou not laugh?' but Benvolio replies 'No, coz, I rather weep', and we find differing emotional responses elsewhere in the play. For example, when we look at the divergent attitudes of the Friar, the Chorus, and the Prince, and also the grief-stricken death of Romeo's mother, we observe attitudes to young love which are more distanced from the emotional *mélange*, and more integrative of experienced 'long time' over the 'short time' of young lovers (one explanation for the dramatic 'double time' scheme in the play as a whole²). A paradoxical rather than simple binary attitude is described in the Chorus's lines, seeing love as a 'third state' which incorporates or 'mingles' warring feelings, rather than swinging from one extreme to the other:

But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,
 Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet.
 (*Romeo and Juliet*, II. Chorus.12–13)

This seems superficially comparable with the ways in which, for example, the undoubtedly mature Cleopatra constructs her own version of Antony, but in essence very different since she is a character so prone to swings of emotion that it does not express a consistent state of tolerating ambiguity:

O well-divided disposition! Note him,
 Note him, good Charmian, 'tis the man; but note him.
 He was not sad, for he would shine on those
 That make their looks by his; he was not merry,

² "Double time" is Shakespeare's dramatic technique in which events of a few days feel are made to feel like they have taken much longer. See Chapman (1949). Modern editions of the play invariably deal with this problem but Chapman provides the basic information.

Which seemed to tell them his remembrance lay
 In Egypt with his joy; but between both.
 O heavenly mingle! Be'st thou sad or merry,
 The violence of either thee becomes,
 So does it no man else. ...
 (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 1.5.52.60)

The 'heavenly mingle' lies not so much in Antony as an independent and sentient being but in Cleopatra's constructed and willed estimation going against the grain of her deeper feelings, reflecting only one side of her oscillating feelings. Immediately after her statement of apparent equilibrium, she swings into an uncontrolled rage, setting the tone for a scene of eruptive emotions and unpredictable behavior veering from quietude to explosive anger. However, at least in this passage she seems to give voice to a view that turns contradictions into paradox, and it perhaps could not have been spoken by a young lover like Juliet whose feelings for Romeo do not vary but are intensified into something which is 'extreme sweet' as an avoidance of the dangers raised by the public family feud. (Reeve 2005) Her hatred is externalized rather than being directed to her lover, unlike Cleopatra's emotive state.

Other examples are still more affectively complex. Cominius in *Coriolanus* imagines a scene,

Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles,
 Where great patricians shall attend and shrug,
 I th' end admire; where ladies shall be frighted,
 And, gladly quaked...
 (*Coriolanus*, 1.10.3-6)

Hamlet asserts that he 'must be cruel to be kind' (3.4) in dealing with his mother, while in *Twelfth Night* love is described as a state of 'sweet pangs' (2.4) and Malvolio signs himself 'The Fortunate-Unhappy' (2.5). These again seem to visualise the mixed feelings involved as generating a third state which includes but transcends internal conflicts. It is the legacy which Venus, as goddess of love thwarted in her amatory pursuit of mortal beauty, leaves to the world after Adonis's death:

Variable passions throng her constant woe,
 As striving who should best become her grief.
 All entertained, each passion labours so,
 That every present sorrow seemeth chief,
 But none is best. Then join they all together,
 Like many clouds consulting for foul weather.
 (*Venus and Adonis*, lines 967-972)

In this myth of love, 'variable passions' are left as the ambiguous hallmark of love in Shakespeare's representation.

Nor need such examples exist only in contemplating serious or amatory subjects. Shakespeare the dramatist can, perhaps self-critically and certainly satirically, notice an audience's genuine evaluation of a risibly performed tragedy. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* presents the interlude 'Pyramus and Thisbe as one whose emotive

effect is built on oxymorons but does not really contain contradictions at all, only a single, positive audience reaction of laughter that happens to be justified but inappropriate to the intended tragic decorum, juxtaposing as it does the tragic insert within a comedic frame:

LEANDER [*reads*]
 'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
 And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth'
 THESEUS
 'Merry' and 'tragical?' 'Tedious' and 'brief'?
 That is, hot ice and wondrous strange black snow.
 How shall we find the concord of this discord?
 (A Midsummer Night's Dream, 5.1.56–60)

The effect is incongruous in the strict sense of the word as Egeus comments:

And 'tragical', my noble lord, it is,
 For Pyramus therein doth kill himself;
 Which when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,
 Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
 The passion of loud laughter never shed.
 (A Midsummer Night's Dream, 5.1.66–69)

Here the affective gap lies between the performers' intentions and the audience's very different response.

Like psychology, philosophy too finds problems in mixed emotions, as they bear on the possibility of moral actions. Can virtue be maintained when one is divided by inner conflict? Or in the words of one article title, 'How good people do bad things' (Curzer 2005), how can virtue sometimes countenance vice? It was the usual suspect, Aristotle, who posed this kind of problem in *The Nichomachean Ethics* and elsewhere. Working up from his view that 'virtues are more or less equivalent to states of emotion, feeling or appetite' (Carr 2009), he realised that emotional ambivalence gives rise to moral dilemmas which may not be resolved either rationally or virtuously. David Carr calls one example of this 'The Ximene Problem', referring to a medieval romance in which a woman is deeply in love with a man until he kills her father, which arouses in her hatred for him even while she continues to love him. Although the philosophers do not refer to Shakespeare, my immediate thought is of Ophelia, who must face exactly this emotional and moral problem. The result of her divided emotional allegiances after Hamlet murders her father Polonius is madness, and her snatches of song reveal the psychic and moral rupture caused by ambivalent feelings. Her case would seem to confirm a part of Aristotle's conclusion that such violently mixed emotions have no rational resolution, and Ophelia's madness is a non-rational, but in some ways merciful escape. However, she is not the only one who faces such a problem of the moral implications surrounding mixed emotions. Hamlet himself, as a philosophy student, may even be aware of Aristotle's view and a large part of his mission in the play is to find some virtuous way to deal with the conflicting feelings aroused by love of his father and also of his mother, who appears to have married his father's slayer. His 'way out' is not so involuntary as

Ophelia's—madness does not work for him since it is at least arguably feigned as a stratagem of emotional self-concealment—and he recognises early that pursuit of personal revenge will violate dictates of virtue. However, late in the play his resigned and fatalistic attitude lies in accepting the need for non-reflective, spontaneous action as the situation requires:

... There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now,
 'tis not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come. The
 readiness is all. Since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?
 (*Hamlet*, 5.2.157–161)

Hamlet's acquiescence which marks his emotional state at this point of the play sidesteps the ethical problems rather than resolving them, since reacting to events will corrupt and incriminate him as guilty of murder, while paradoxically releasing his conscience from its burden of choice. The audience is not privy to what Gertrude knows, but she too may face the Ximenes problem in loving Claudius, who, she is told by her son, has killed her first husband. She may even be implicated in the murder, driven by her own emotions, though we never find out. Although I don't know of any analysis that focuses on these issues directly, and I don't have time to pursue them here, yet *Hamlet* as a play could be seen as in some ways Shakespeare's sustained examination of the philosophical problems created by extreme, mixed emotions.

Furthermore, these kinds of problems confront other characters. Cordelia, who feels simultaneously both love for her father and also a refusal to 'speak' her love, and her 'action' in these mixed feelings—silence—does seem to raise Aristotle's doubts about the impossibility of maintaining virtue in a state of divided allegiances where she is fully aware her silence will hurt her father's feelings; or Juliet who loves a man who is not only hated by her family—'My only love sprung from my only hate! ... That I must love a loathed enemy' (1.5.138)—but also one who comes to kill her cousin Tybalt. Juliet's solution is simply to follow one of her conflicting emotion ('Love give me strength', 4.1.125) and relegate the other to a subsidiary level, even though her genuine grief for Tybalt is manifest. The perhaps inevitable result is the tragic suicides of both her and her lover, as though the dilemmas can end only in self-destruction for they cannot co-exist in their conflict-ridden context.

Measure for Measure raises in particularly acute terms the question of divided emotions following from ethical quandaries. Isabella is placed in a situation that one would assume creates in her an appalling and clear conflict of emotions, the decision whether to offer up her virginity to save her brother's life or remain inviolate and lose her brother. In this case, Shakespeare may adopt a philosophy based on something like 'character is destiny' since first, Isabella does not actually reveal that she has mixed feelings at all. Her mind is sealed from the very possibility of yielding her chastity. Secondly, as a young novice nun, this single-mindedness is perfectly in character and even appropriate. Oddly enough it is Claudio as her brother, and Angelo as would-be violator, who understand and confront the moral and emotional conflicts, and they are beset by the mixed emotions and divided consciences attending on the situation. Claudio hovers between a desire for self-preservation and

a sense of shame, while Angelo the puritan swings between self-loathing restraint and guilty lust. Isabella's responses provide a different but consistent perspective on the problems, almost a corollary to Aristotle's view, showing that pure virtue is a shield against being physically coerced or ethically compromised (more or less as Milton demonstrated in the fate of the Lady in *Comus*, her mind still beyond reach even as her body is paralysed), and therefore an unexpected protection against the severely mixed feelings felt by Claudio and Angelo.

Mentioning *Measure for Measure* in this context reminds us that in Shakespeare mixed emotions can be a matter of genre as well as of momentary dramatic effects. One 'problem' in the so-called 'problem plays' concerns exactly this matter of conflicting emotional tones and expectations, since, with apparently whimsical perversity the dramatist teases and compromises his characters by placing them in morally impossible situations and potentially tragic circumstances yet finally allows them to be saved by a comic ending. Comedy is stretched to its formal limits with the result that the ending cannot either sustain or give full closure to the sheer emotional and ethical complexity of what we have witnessed in Isabella's predicament and the male awareness of vicious impulses. Similarly, though in a different way, the romances at the end of Shakespeare's career are examples of what Sidney had earlier derided as 'mungrell tragi-comedies' and what Jonson later deprecated as 'mouldy tales' which cannot be accommodated within neat generic boundaries of comedy and tragedy. In these plays, as throughout Shakespeare's *oeuvre*, emotional life exists on a borderland incorporating laughter and tears, in a more subtle manifestation of his abiding interest in 'conjunctions' of 'mingled' moods.

A next step in developing this train of thought might be to devise a mode of analysis subtle and flexible enough to allow us to understand how Shakespeare makes such emotional 'conjunctions' function on the stage. One possibility lies in retrieving and adapting an idea from a neglected critic, Bertrand Evans. In *Shakespeare's Comedies*, (Evans 1960), augmented in a sequel, *Shakespeare's Tragic Practice* (Evans 1979) he constructed a tool of analysis of Shakespeare's theatrical craft which he called 'discrepant awareness', positing 'exploitable gaps between awarenesses' applying first between characters on stage and the observant audience, and secondly between characters themselves. The theory worked well for the comedies—almost too well, in fact, since it is presented as something of a repeated formula—not so well for the tragedies, perhaps because the device is intrinsically more relevant to comedy. A limitation is that the analysis focuses only on the differences between what each character (and audience) *knows* in terms of what the other characters know or are doing. The eavesdropping scene in *Love's Labour's Lost* as the hypocrisy of each of the courtiers is revealed in turn, is one of the neatest examples. However, my suggestion is to shift the emphasis from knowledge to feeling, and to look more closely than we have so far done to 'discrepant *emotional* awarenesses' between characters at any one time in the action. Such an approach can help us to recognise and value, not only Shakespeare's craftsmanship in plotting scenes, but the emotional complexity of situations in which a range of feeling states and experiences are aroused in different personages, leading to complexities of 'mixed emotions' in individual characters, the ensemble, and the audience alike.

Such ‘conjunctions’ of moods, precisely controlled by the dramatist, help to create effects in which the whole emotional impact of a scene is both a sum of, and greater than, each individual’s limited but strongly felt affective perspective.

There are many more problems and paradoxes arising from Shakespeare’s depiction of mixed emotions than I have mentioned, but in this short paper I have tried to open up questions rather than answer them. My conclusion lies in a set of contentions which might be resisted by psychologists, philosophers and market researchers alike, that in Shakespeare’s drama mixed emotions are not the product of simple contradictions between opposites, that they may have insoluble moral implications, and that they are generally unique and contextually specific rather than predictable or patterned. In Shakespeare’s plays, as perhaps in life, such problems are always *sui generis*, as a unique individual is pitched into an unexpected situation involving others who carry their own singular emotional responses and points of view. The encounter inevitably creates inner conflict which in turn opens up an apparently infinite range of possible resolutions and non-resolutions, providing the characteristic and sometimes problematical open-endedness of Shakespeare’s plays. The strategy of depicting a whole spectrum of mixed emotions stimulated by different situations provoking unexpected ‘conjunctions’ of diverse moods is, I suggest, one of Shakespeare’s signature traits, and a clue to the abiding affective power of his works.

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Subtle Persuasions: The Memory of Bodily Experience as a Rhetorical Device in Francis Bacon's Parliamentary Speeches

Daniel Derrin

Francis Bacon's philosophical achievements often overshadow his brilliance as a parliamentary orator. Part of that brilliance lies in his astute use of his listeners' memories of bodily situations. In many of his extant speeches, Bacon tries to evoke remembered bodily experience and use it to animate the deliberative political thought relevant to those occasions. In doing that, I shall argue, Bacon draws on the materialist faculty psychology derived in particular from Aristotle that was transmitted to renaissance thinkers through Augustine, Aquinas, and many others. In terms of rhetoric, that meant evoking composite mental images in listeners' minds out of the bits and pieces of memory, which served to alter rational perceptions of things, and, in doing so, alter emotional responses too. Rational and emotional responses in Bacon's rhetorical planning are two dimensions of the same set of mental image dynamics. This integrated conception of how reason and emotion work is also a feature of ancient stoic thinking, as important recent scholarship has shown.¹

Bacon himself does not equate reason and emotion. However, he does link them. His view of rhetoric itself is cast in terms of such mental faculties.² In a much quoted passage from his *Advancement of Learning* he says: "the duty and office of Rhetoric is to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will".³ For Bacon, the will of humans may become captive to the "affections". If so, eloquence will step in and "win the Imagination from the Affection's part, and contract a confederacy between Reason and Imagination against the Affections" (III: 410). Reason, that is, has to enter the imagination so that the will sees a greater affective appeal in a freshly reasoned observation than in whatever it was captivated by before.

¹ On the Chrysippean view of an emotion as a judgment of reason, see for example: Strange (2004), pp. 32–51; Becker (2004), pp. 250–275, as well as Graver (2007).

² For a detailed discussion of Bacon's conception of the different faculties, see Wallace (1967).

³ See James Spedding et al. (1861–1879), *The works of Francis Bacon*, vol. III, p. 409; hereafter abbreviated to *Works* with references to volume and page numbers in parentheses. References to the speeches will also be from the volume and page numbers of this edition, which remains the only edition of Bacon's speeches.

D. Derrin (✉)
Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia
e-mail: daniel.derrin@mq.edu.au

Since Bacon leaves so much open about the means by which reason engages with the imagination's passionate potential, it is important to interrogate his model. It is unclear, for instance, whether by "reason" Bacon means something like "right judgment" or whether he refers to the cognitive function of sorting out the consistency and inconsistency between different ideas and different images. If "reason" means "right judgment"—leaving aside the question of whose judgment is 'right'—then Bacon seems to be saying that the affections (or passions) are something different from reason. A belief, that is, can entail emotions but is it the same thing as an emotion? But if reason were unrelated to affection, how would Bacon's theory that the reason works on the will and affections through the imagination even work? If "reason", on the other hand, means sorting out consistency and inconsistency with the most widely respected beliefs in his parliamentary culture, then the relation between reason and imagination becomes much clearer. Reasoned rhetoric evokes mental images which embody consistencies and inconsistencies with other known beliefs. Rhetoric thus constructs altered perceptions, say of parliamentary identity or the practice of dueling, by inviting a certain range of rational analysis between the contents of a mental image and other remembered material. When an audience can see contradictions especially, it has huge passionate potential. Altered perceptions, and objects of perception, will mean potentially altered passions. The passions or affections in Bacon's theory are better thought of, perhaps, as by-products of the cognitive activity of perceiving consistency and inconsistency with various beliefs and observations. To this extent, Bacon seems to be drawing on the Chryssipean-stoic idea of the emotion-as-judgment. When utilizing such dynamics in his parliamentary speeches, Bacon's mental images bring rationality and emotion together. This offers us a fresh perspective on the relations between reason and emotion. The specific meanings of the "mental image" both in the tradition Bacon drew on and in the context of his actual rhetorical practice will be considered in detail in a moment.

The speeches themselves have not been much studied. Spedding's fascinating nineteenth-century reconstruction of Bacon's speeches and letters, and their contexts, relegated all seven volumes of it to the second half of his edition. Clearly, for Spedding, there was Bacon the philosophical visionary and there was Bacon the wheeler and dealer. Much the same separation, perhaps, lies behind the fact that we can count on the fingers of one hand the number of scholarly engagements with Bacon's speeches. In 1925 an article by Robert Hannah took a broad but insufficiently rigorous look at them (Hannah 1925, pp. 91–132). It did not account for Bacon's actual rhetorical skills and what they were used for on particular occasions. A slightly more recent article by Karl Wallace, however, is more attentive to the rhetorical elements of the speeches (Wallace 1971, pp. 173–188). Wallace begins by stating that the "fundamental categories of Bacon's art of rhetoric are psychological" (Wallace 1971, p. 173). He then proceeds to point out that a rhetorical critic must consider the purpose, the occasion, and the "materials" of the speech (Wallace 1971, p. 188). Unfortunately, Wallace only considers those connections in one of Bacon's speeches—the speech on the subsidy bill of 1597. That speech will be my starting point here. Furthermore, in looking at the rhetorical materials of that speech, Wallace notes the role of pathos and reason in Bacon's rhetoric, as well as the figures of speech,

but explicitly dissociates reason from other aspects of persuasion. Reason, he says, “cannot account for *ethos*, nor for the affective ingredients; for these imagination is chiefly responsible” (Wallace 1971, p. 188). Reason for Wallace seems to mean Bacon’s analysis of the material rather than mental perceptions of consistency and inconsistency. Indeed Wallace seems uninterested in how Bacon’s rhetoric actually envisages the cognitive activities his listeners will entertain. Peter Mack’s recent scholarship on the culture of Elizabethan parliamentary rhetoric adds a great deal to our understanding of the details of rhetorical theory but offers no significant discussion of (Francis) Bacon.⁴ It is for those reasons especially that I seek to present a fuller account of Bacon’s rhetorical skills, skills that include more than the well-recognized brilliance of his campaign to reform the sciences.

It is important to consider the psychology Bacon drew on in planning and executing his parliamentary speeches. Without specifying his conception of the mind, it is hardly possible to contextualize Bacon’s rhetorical choices sufficiently, or to historicize more generally the connections between typical early modern rhetorical skills and its underlying psychological understanding. Considering Bacon’s psychological understanding means asking these questions. What kind of rational and emotional cognition from his audiences did he think would be relevant to persuading them on particular occasions? How did he connect that understanding to the figures of speech and other practical rhetorical skills? What roles do a listener’s memories play in those dynamics? What did Bacon think he was doing to people’s minds when he went about the task of ‘moving’ them—in the sense classical of *movere*? I do not wish to claim that particular things actually happened in the minds of Bacon’s listeners. The goal is rather to illuminate Bacon’s rhetorical decisions—especially his decision to evoke memories of bodily experience—in order to bring out more clearly the dynamics that exist for renaissance communicators between passion and reason (consistency), and between the body and the mind.

Speaking of rhetorical ‘decisions’ means taking intentions seriously. While it is clearly impossible to recover a communicator’s intentions in any complete and determinative sense, it is possible—and indeed necessary—to attribute some agency to a writer or speaker, and to theorize the decision making process concerning which rhetorical skills to deploy with reference the cultural and material networks of his or her context. I shall be considering Bacon’s decisions in terms of what Mark Bevir calls a “situated agency”: an agency that is nonetheless capable of achieving a set of intentions despite the cultural and material constraints it works within. Some of the intentions that lie behind that agency are recoverable by the critic. The idea of the writer’s “situated agency” relates to Bevir’s larger concern with a “postfoundational intentionalism”. This kind of intentionalism explores the middle ground between a thoroughgoing textualism, on the one hand, where the ‘writer’ is little more than a nexus of social forces, and a largely discredited foundationalism, on the other, where the writer’s agency is seen as working independently of those forces.⁵

⁴ Mack (2002), especially pp. 215–252.

⁵ See Bevir (2002), pp. 209–217. That essay was a response to Vivienne Brown’s “On Some Problems with Weak Intentionalism for Intellectual History,” (2002), pp. 198–208, which was a critique of his earlier work.

When I speak of Bacon's having a given rhetorical purpose on a particular occasion and when I assume he has the agency to carry it out, it should be understood in this context.

I shall focus on Bacon's evocation of mental images that rely on his audience's memories of bodily experience—visual, tactile, and auditory—for two reasons. First, because it is a rhetorical move that Bacon employs very often: there are many resources from cultural and personal memory but those of bodily experience give him the broadest rhetorical net since everyone listening has a body to reimagine them with. Second, because understanding rhetoric's power to direct mental reconstructions of bodily experience offers another interesting angle on the multiplicitous historical conjunctions between body and mind. In a certain sense, of course, all memories are rooted in bodily experience. I shall focus, therefore, on moments when Bacon tries to evoke memories of very specific bodily situations. I will try to link such moments to our existing contextual understanding of what he was trying to do on that particular occasion. One thing that will be particularly interesting in this context is the extent to which Bacon moves away from evoking mental images of bodily situations when he needs a cool, rational, deconstructive style, and towards them when he needs an impassioned style that generates powerful feelings. If that is the case, care must be taken, though, not to think of the impassioned focus on bodily experience as any the less 'rational'.

Before getting to the speeches, it will be necessary first to consider some important concepts in the Aristotelian faculty psychology tradition that Bacon relied on and the implications of such concepts for gaining rhetorical power over other minds. Primarily that means focusing on the all-important ability of the imagination to create composite mental images. With that in mind, I will then examine the links between the contexts, purposes, and rhetorical skills deployed in five of Bacon's extant speeches that have survived as relatively complete artifacts. Three other speeches are relatively well preserved in Spedding's edition along with summaries and small pieces of other Baconian speeches from various parliamentary records. These, however, for their brevity, are much less amenable to rhetorical analysis.

Memory and the Centrality of the Mental Image

Bacon evokes memories of bodily situations by requiring his listeners to reconstruct composite mental images of those situations out of more fragmentary memory-images. In the Aristotelian tradition that Bacon relied on, the imagination had at least two functions. One is the production of *phantasmata*, memory images. Here the imagination turns sense perceptions into a form that can be stored in memory and then used as the basis for further mental activities, such as recall and intellectual

reflection.⁶ Another is the ability to use those *phantasmata* to create new composite mental images.⁷ It is that second combinatory capability of the imagination, to put various *phantasmata* together, which rhetoric may most exploit—to the extent that rhetoric can associate some phantasmata and disassociate others. It was a capability that grew more and more frightening for renaissance thinkers thanks to its unpredictable power.⁸ The mental image I am talking about then is a product of the *vis cogitativa*, the mental capability that Carruthers has linked to the act of “trained recollection” or mental composition.⁹ Mental images, then, are the compositions that people make mentally in response to rhetoric, constructed out of items in personal and cultural memory, that is, from the things they ‘know’. They are not simply metaphors though they will usually serve one part of a metaphoric (comparative) structure. For example, when Bacon compares parliamentary procedure to the process of bringing a boat into a harbour, the mental image of a harbour is not itself the metaphor, it serves the metaphorical or allegorical connection to parliament already set up.

How can an orator activate another person’s ability to create and reflect on such composite mental images of bodily situations such as bloodletting or being on a boat in an unruly sea? The ancient Roman rhetorical theorist Quintilian suggested that vividly describing key details of a situation as if it were before our very eyes—a technique called *enargeia*—would evoke a potentially powerful mental image in the judge.¹⁰ To the use of *enargeia* may be added the role of inherent spectatorship in the description and the fact that the scene or situation is located in a well-defined sense of place.¹¹

When coming to emotion, Quintilian discussed *enargeia* again. There he exposes the close connection between interpretative perceptions and passionate feelings. He shows how a vivid description that evokes composite mental images is also a way of shifting people’s passionate responses. The emotions of orators, says Quintilian, affect the emotions of judges, so if an orator wants the judge to feel pity, he must make himself feel pity so that the judge sees it in him (*I.O.*, pp. 26–36). How does the orator make that happen to himself initially? By vividly imagining details of the situation as if they were before his eyes—using *enargeia* on himself. For example, “when pity is needed,” says Quintilian, “let us believe that the ills of

⁶ In *On the Soul*, 431^a16 (1984), Aristotle claimed that the soul was unable to think without the phantasmata memory images.

⁷ The two functions relate closely to Aristotle’s distinction between memory and recollection in *On Memory*, 451^a15 (1984).

⁸ For a discussion of the growing worry over the productive power of “phantasy”, see Covino (1994), pp. 37–40, who links the “composing imagination” explicitly to rhetoric.

⁹ Carruthers (1990), p. 197: this power of *cogitatio* is an act of rhetorical invention that gathers and combines in a new place “divided bits previously filed and cross-filed in other discrete *loci* of memory”.

¹⁰ See *Institutio Oratoria (The Orator’s Education)* (2001), 8.3.61-71, hereafter abbreviated to *I.O.*

¹¹ On the qualities of spectatorship in successful *enargeia*, see Walker (1993), pp. 353–377; and Scholz (1999), p. 8.

which we are to complain have happened to us, and persuade our hearts of this. Let us identify with the persons of whose grievous, undeserved, and lamentable misfortunes we complain” (p. 34). Here it is possible to see how newly shaped perceptions in mental images give us newly shaped emotions because there is a direct link in faculty psychology between the qualities of perception and the qualities of passionate feeling. The same link between passion and perception is implicit in Aristotle’s own discussion of pathos proofs in the *Rhetoric*. For example, considering the causes and rhetorical usefulness of major emotions he defines fear as “a sort of pain and agitation derived from the imagination of a future destructive or painful evil”, especially one that is “about to happen; for what is far off is not feared”.¹² A composite mental image, built in the mind from the precise perceptions that rhetoric constructs, can activate more precise passionate feelings towards the contents of the mental image. In that way, to evoke mental images can mean intervening on passionate feeling. The same dynamic plays out in Aquinas’ influential theory of the passions as articulated in *Summa Theologiae*.¹³ Thomas theorizes there about how his 11 fundamental passions arise in a person’s mind. They are a result of the way he or she perceives an object and are thus amenable to the intellectual soul’s rational ability to perceive consistency and inconsistency with other known things.

Mental images, then, are both rational and emotional. They are rational constructs both for orator and listener because their power over the passions involves seeing consistency or inconsistency with other things that are known or remembered. What seems impossible, for example, is much less frightening. The unfortunate man who turns out to be pretending is, for that reason, much less pitiable. But mental images are also passionate to the extent that the perceptions they involve specify a fresh or newly particularized relationship between the observer and the object observed, and thus a different passionate stance toward it. The mental image thus scripts an appropriate emotional response. That two-sided nature of Bacon’s mental images needs to be kept in mind when looking at the role of bodily experience in his parliamentary rhetoric.

Upon the Motion of Subsidy (1597)

In the parliament of 1597–1598, Bacon made a speech in support of the queen’s request for a new defense subsidy. A few years earlier, in 1593, in a similar request for subsidy, Bacon had created difficulties for himself by suggesting good reasons why

¹² I quote here from Kennedy’s edition (2007), p. 128.

¹³ The discussion may be found at 1a2æ 22–48, vols. 19–21 of *Summa Theologiae: Latin Text and English Translation, Introductions, Notes, Appendices, and Glossaries* (Aquinas 1964–1981). On Aquinas’ influence, see James (1997), p. 47.

parliament should not provide it.¹⁴ Elizabeth was not happy with him.¹⁵ By 1597, Bacon was still feeling the effects of the estrangement in the slow pace of his career (Jardine and Stewart 1998, pp. 194–195). But here again he got the chance to talk about the defense subsidy. This time, of course, he supported it.

Erring on the side of caution, Bacon starts by stating that Elizabeth's bounty toward the nation has been like a "sweet odour of honour and reputation" (IX: 86). He then predicates the whole speech on the commonplace principle that "safety and preservation is to be preferred before benefit or increase" (IX: 86). Providing for 'safety' is why the subsidy should be granted. However, the main argument, to which Bacon gets very quickly afterward, is that a renewed Spanish attack on England is all the more likely at the present time (1597) because the normal impediments to that state's otherwise natural willingness to attack others have disappeared since the last parliament. Since these impediments have gone, Spain will very likely renew 'her' attack on us. In view of this, Bacon argues that granting the subsidy would be another prudent example of the principle of "safety and preservation". Furthermore, he argues, it affords the English the opportunity to have another hotly desired "invasive war" like the expeditions to the Azores and to Cadiz (IX: 88), which will, no doubt, redound to England's glory.

Making the first point as economically as possible that "at the foot of the account remains the purchase of safety", Bacon advertises the "prints" of this commonplace that are "everywhere to be found" (IX: 86).

The patient will ever part with some of his blood to save and clear the rest. The seafaring man will in a storm cast over some of his goods to save and assure the rest. The husbandman will afford some foot of ground for his hedge and ditch to fortify and defend the rest. (IX: 86)

Bacon's anaphora (repeated first words) and antistrophe (repeated last words) here, created through his repetitions of "save" and "rest", create the effect of parison (isocolon), that is, of well-balanced clauses that build up an accumulatio of 'evidence' for the commonplace. However, what Bacon specifies as evidence is a series of situations that can only be imagined by referring to memories of highly specific bodily situations. The first two in particular involve recognizable bodily situations: bloodletting and boating in an ocean storm. The third—the husbandman's hedge and ditch—is only slightly more abstracted from bodily experience. People in the audience need to reconstruct each situation in the imagination from their bits of memory, *phantasmata*. They may have experienced those situations, seen people experiencing them, or experienced related things. Any such memories can be used to make a new mental image. Each situation involves making a complex mental image, even if held in consciousness for just a few moments. The mental image will

¹⁴ Spedding records what is left of the 1593 speech (VIII: 223), called "Speech on a Motion for a Grant of Three Subsidies, Payable in Four Years". Bacon's feeling was that the country could ill afford it, and that the payment would only breed discontent.

¹⁵ The problematic state of affairs is reflected in Bacon's letter to Lord Burghley around the same time, justifying his objection, and trying to smooth things over with Elizabeth (*Works*, IX: 233–234).

have to be built around a simple narrative of experience in an identifiable place that involves spectatorship. Each mental image enacts the loss of something. Reconstructing these mental images involves remembering the pain of loss. Those feelings link closely to the rational comparison Bacon is making in support of the “preservation of safety” commonplace. Each of the mental images focuses attention on bodily loss and on the ‘cost’ of safety, which all intelligent people, Bacon implies, would be naturally willing to pay. Each involves loss felt at the level of the physical body: loss of blood, loss of personal possessions, and loss of ground for the making of a ditch. Taken together, each situation views state cost through bodily cost.

Each “mental image”—to the extent that it is actually reconstructed in the minds of Bacon’s audience—engages both the reasoning faculty and the emotions. Each bodily situation supports the commonplace—that “safety and preservation is to be preferred before benefit or increase”—by purporting to have a recognizable similarity to it: the “marks”. Bacon’s listeners must sort through personal memory with their reasoning faculties and decide whether such bodily situations really are similar enough to count as marks of the commonplace, and thus as legitimate evidence. The fact that Bacon advances evidence at all for an apparent commonplace that he merely plans to brush over suggests either that the commonplace has little force of authority or that Bacon wants to cast his own ethos at this early stage as one who always gives sufficient evidence. Be that as it may, logos and pathos intersect around the uses of mental images. The mental images are emotional proofs of the commonplace precisely because they evoke rational analysis of their content’s consistency with the commonplace at the same time as engaging memories of bodily ‘pain’ (of loss). Bacon is asking people to remember the rational process of exchanging one kind of loss (the pain of infection, drowning, and crop loss) for better kind of loss (provision), and then importing that perception, with all of its attendant feelings, onto the apparently rational idea that a subsidy (smaller loss) is the right thing to do against imminent Spanish attack (larger loss). Passionate feeling and rational perception do not just interrelate. They are part of the same set of dynamics.

Bacon’s now says why he really thinks a Spanish attack is imminent: Spain’s natural impediments to foreign invasion have recently diminished making an invasion of England more likely. In presenting that argument, he uses the age-old body politic metaphor and its potential for talking about a state’s ‘illness’ in his own creative ways.¹⁶ The four recently displaced general impediments to invasion, Bacon notes, are as follows: to have one’s [the state’s] “hands full of other matter”; to need ports or places of “near approach”; to conceive of how difficult invasion would be; and to have an aged monarch not much concerned with foreign invasions unless provoked (IX: 87). Even in Bacon’s way of saying the first of those impediments—the state’s having its “hands full of other matter”—he draws on the body politic metaphor.

¹⁶ Ancient sources for the idea of the state as a ‘body’ include Plato’s discussion of injustice as disorder in the polis as well as the individual in the *Republic*, 427d–444e, and St Paul’s comments about the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12.12–31. On this topic, see also: Hale (1971); Sontag (1978).

But the way he explains the recent removal of these impediments “since the last parliament” (IX: 87) involves an even more creative use of the rational and emotional potential of the body politic metaphor. Following Henry IV of France’s return to Catholicism, Spain, Bacon assures his listeners, “shall be more free to intend his malice against this realm” (IX: 87). Spain is a human being here with emotional intensity who feels ‘malice’. Spain’s recent acquisition of Calais, Bacon says, is like “a knocking at our doors” (IX: 88). Spain has arms to knock with. Regarding the third impediment—difficulty—Spain now has a greater ease since “that ulcer of Ireland”, like a sore in the side of England’s body, now makes an attack look easier. Just as “rheums and fluxes of humours” tend to attack that part of the body “which is weak and distempered” (IX: 88), so the disease of Spain will find an easy way in through our own ulcerating English side. Bacon asks his audience to imagine not only Spain but also England itself through memories of bodily vulnerability. Regarding the last impediment, age and lack of provocation, Spain, despite is old ‘head’ (Phillip II), is now a fellow with naturally uncheckable “flames of revenge” (IX: 88) for recent damage done to him by us. In short, then, Bacon argues, recent occurrences have combined to bring Spain “on his way” and “to tempt and allure him” (IX: 88). Again, Spain is a body subject to emotional flux and temptation. Bacon further constructs the perviousness of the Spanish body when characterizing his reaction to a recent English expedition against ‘him’: “the life-blood of Spain went inward to the heart, the outward limbs and members trembled and could not resist” (IX: 89). Bacon implies that precisely because he (Spain) has a passive vulnerability, his active reactions are just as likely, since that is what all bodies do. They react to provocation. The point I want to make here is not that the argument is fully cogent but that it is a means for Bacon to develop persuasive potency over the greatest amount of listeners he can. The English judges and counselors are able to feel (and are asked to feel) concern for Spain’s unpredictable potential to the extent that they themselves have bodies with active and passive parts and unpredictable possibilities. They themselves are subject to the same desires, temptations, diseases, medicines, checks, and encouragements. They may imagine what Spain will do because they have bodies and memories to refer their imaginations to. Bodily memory animates the deliberative political thought Bacon wants to promote.

For a speech that purports to “speak not by way of apprehending fear” (IX: 87), Bacon’s body politic metaphors have a considerably unsettling, if not disturbing, potential for those listening because they locate his Spanish probabilities in a logic that people know all too well: bodily action and reaction. The speech’s power is that it carefully avoids looking like an act of fear-mongering yet is still able to bring fearful passions to bear on the situation by relating that situation to other problematic bodily conditions, such as loss and illness. Bacon derives rhetorical force from this move but also protects his own ethos: Mr Bacon MP is not an imprudent fear-monger.

A Petition Touching Purveyors (1604)

In the parliament of 1604, the king's major concern was the issue of the Union (Smith 1999, p. 104). Yet there were other issues too, including those of purveyance and monopolies. Each of these, as Jardine and Stewart point out, involved an implicit and awkward attack on royal prerogative (Jardine and Stewart 1998, pp. 282–283). In the case of purveyance, Bacon was chosen by the Commons to present to the king the grievances of the people toward the purveyors, who were responsible for buying provisions for the royal households, and who abused that responsibility by forcing sales at untenably low prices, and extorting to excess (Jardine and Stewart 1998, p. 282). Complaints abounded. But royal prerogative was royal prerogative. The king had a right to use purveyors to secure goods for his household. Bacon had to tread very thin ice. His job was to present what was, at one level, an attack on royal prerogative but without angering James (Jardine and Stewart 1998, p. 282). Spedding suggests that the king's frustration at continual obstacles to the Union bill made this particular job easier for Bacon since the king had bigger things to worry about (Spedding 1861–1879, X: 187). Bacon cleverly associates James's court with a mental image of a nettle plant and people being stung by it. James is the generative root but his outer leaves are stinging people. The outer might easily be fixed.

Bacon starts by setting up the ethos of the king as "*pater patriae*...father of your people" (X: 181–82)—with which the king who is listening to him can be happy and against which Bacon can contrast the abuses of purveyance. Just like the emperors of Rome who took victory names like *Germanicus*, *Britannicus*, and *Pater Patriae*, James may do the same:

Your Majesty mought with good reason assume unto yourself many of those other names... as appertaining to you, not by bloodshed (as they bare them) but by blood; your Majesty's royal person being a noble confluence of streams and veins, wherein the royal blood of many kingdoms of Europe are met and united. (X: 182)

Bacon has here asked James to focus his own self-perception on his embodiment. It will be a useful basis for presenting the problem of purveyance when Bacon comes to the nettle plant. But purveyance also threatens to dishonor the *Pater Patriae* aspect of James's rightful kingship and body. Bacon is careful to show that what he and the commons are asking for—the right to proceed against the purveyors—is in no way “to derogate from your Majesty's prerogative” (X: 183). The focus on *Pater Patriae* gives Bacon a way of presenting the grievances without looking like he is taking away from royal prerogative. That is because it allows Bacon to present the grievances as a compromise of what James rightfully wants (and ought) to be—*Pater Patriae*—and not as a denial of his customary rights. Bacon presents the issue as a contradiction within James's own kingship, within his body, both politic and natural, but as a contradiction at the level of function (purveyors) and not at the level of structure (prerogative). It is no argument against royalty to attack what contradicts royal honour, Bacon suggests.

Bacon makes the sense of contradiction come through quickly. Referring to his majesty's personal household and the prerogative to fill it with the country's goods, he says:

we hold it ancient, we hold it reverend. Other courts respect your politic person, but that [prerogative] respects your natural person. But yet notwithstanding (most excellent king) to use that freedom which to subjects that pour out their griefs before so gracious a king is allowable, we may very well allege unto your Majesty a comparison or similitude used by one of the fathers in another matter, and not unfitly representing our case in this point; and it is of the leaves and roots of nettles; The leaves are venomous and stinging where they touch; The root is not so, but is without venom or malignity; and yet it is that root that bears and supports all the leaves. This needs no further application. (X: 183)

Presumably it needed no further application because Bacon could rely on the king to feel at the level of bodily experience the irrationality of the situation as Bacon has constructed it. The "similitude" Bacon makes also generates a powerful mental image of a nettle plant and its sting. Bacon does not simply say "your *Pater Patriae* has become like a nettle plant". He specifies simple details that have to be put together from memory. The nettles have roots. They are in the ground. So there is a sense of location. The roots in the ground do not do any hurting as we know from experience. It is the leaves above the ground that sting when people of the realm walk by and touch them. The mental image of the nettle plant, however detailed it gets in individual minds, involves a simple narrative that has to be seen and thought about. The current state of affairs makes the king's court seem like a nettle plant. Bacon asks the king to compare the nettle plant both with purveyancy as currently practiced, and also, of course, with the ideal image of *Pater Patriae*. Rational analysis of sameness and difference is required. Does the king want to be like this nettle plant and put up with the contradiction between excellent root (James the *Pater Patriae*) and nasty nettled exterior (abusive purveyors) or does he want to extend a consistency with *Pater Patriae* all the way through his political body and thus not be like the nettle plant? James is pushed toward the later to the extent that the contradiction itself is associated with bodily pain. The nettles, and the memory of pain at touching them (whether personal or commonplace) is an extra resource for Bacon here. It adds to the pathos of contradiction, to the feeling that this particular contradiction ought not to exist. Out of it Bacon achieves a sense of injustice but avoids any sense of disrespect because James is the generating root, not the whole plant. He is the stinging-leaf-supporting root but, as the root, he is himself non-malignant.

Concerning the Article of Naturalization (1607)

The debate over whether and how to naturalize, with full English rights, those Scottish born after James's accession to the throne in 1603, and those born before, was vehement and nasty. At the meeting of parliament in November 1606 the issue of the Union with Scotland came up again bringing with it a wave of fears about the naturalization that would ensue from it. The Christmas break of that year seems to

have been “a breeding ground for new fears” (Jardine and Stewart 1998, p. 294). Englishmen worried about what would happen if Scots had similar rights to them, and in their own country. When Bacon gave his pro-Unionist speech after the break it was a response to Nicholas Fuller’s anti-naturalization invective given on the 17 February 1607 (Spedding, X: 307). Fuller’s oratory presented reasons why naturalization should not take place, reasons that reflected English fears and insecurities. Bacon addresses them, adopting the coolest tone he can in view of the passions of fear and hatred raging among the houses. In supporting the Unionist cause, Bacon needed to undo Fuller’s fear-generating rhetoric. An impassioned rhetoric of his own would not have been suitable. Interestingly, when moving back into a cooler rational style for deconstructing Fuller’s impassioned statements, his evocations of mental images tend to steer clear of drawing directly on memories of bodily experience. That is to say, drawing on bodily experience is a rhetorical mode that fits most neatly with attempts to engage the passions. When he needs a style that either enlivens or diminishes the passions Bacon also tends to engage bodily experience. In the same way that Fuller has here, Bacon also is able to stir fear and loathing in the speech “Touching Duels”, which I will get to in a moment.

The naturalization speech was a complicated and brilliant performance. Bacon’s eloquence was admired at the time and transcripts were collectable (Jardine and Stewart 1998, p. 295). However, I will need to focus on just a few aspects of it. One of the first things he does is to break down Fuller’s argument. Acknowledging the first alleged inconveniences of naturalization, he says:

To come therefore to the inconveniences alleged on the other part [Fuller’s]. The first of them is, that there may ensue of this Naturalization a surcharge of people upon this realm of England, which is supposed already to have the full charge and content: and therefore there cannot be an admission of the adoptive without a diminution of the fortunes and conditions of those that are native subjects of this realm. (X: 309–310)

For Bacon, this objection to naturalization would have significant weight if only it were reasonable. He assures his audience, however, that the similitudes Fuller has advanced in support of this “surcharge” just do not work.

For (Mr Speaker) you shall find those plausible similitudes, of a tree that will thrive the better if it be removed into the more fruitful soil; and of sheep or cattle, that if they find a gap or passage open, will leave the more barren pasture, and get into the more rich and plentiful, to be but arguments merely superficial, and to have no sound resemblance with the transplanting or transferring of families. (X: 310)

Fuller must have tried to develop mental images of sheep and cattle rushing disruptively toward fresh pastures as a way of strengthening his similitude and enhancing, through confronting mental imagery, the fear and indignation he wanted people to feel for the very idea of naturalization. Breaking this down and trying to support naturalization, Bacon asserts that sheep and plants need little more than good ground and pasture in moving from one place to a foreign one. Humans, however, need significantly more. How can they [the Scottish] thrive in England, to the detriment of the English, if “they have not stock, means, acquaintance and custom, habitation, trades, countenance, and the like” (X: 310). The grass may always be

greener, even for humans, but there is just not enough similarity between sheep, plants, and Scots to support the anti-Unionists' fear-mongering arguments.

In deconstructing Fuller's rhetoric, Bacon exposes the psychological dynamics between rational perception of similarity and difference and the emotional responses (in this case of fear) that can ensue from them. Revealing the irrationality of an opponent's argument is to rob it of its power over the passions, if, that is, passions are affected by perceptions. Bacon's rhetoric in these speeches, taken as a whole, does seem to imply his belief that it is possible to affect the passions by trying to alter perceptions.

While he explicitly refers his audience to their own knowledge and experience in this speech, the mental images he evokes here tend toward historical examples rather than the sorts of bodily situations that have been analyzed so far. "Experience", he says, in reference to the alleged influx of Scots, "is the best guide; for the time past is a pattern of the time to come...I report me to all your private knowledges of the places you inhabit" (X: 311). Objecting now to the potential argument that since the Scottish live and thrive in Polonia they are even more likely to do so here in England, Bacon states that it is nonsense: "for you see plainly before your eyes, that in Germany, which is much nearer, and in France, where they are invited with privileges, and with this very privilege of Naturalization, yet no such number can be found" (X: 311). Obviously, his listeners do not actually see that "plainly" before their eyes. It is an allusion to the rhetorical procedure of *enargeia*, in which the orator tries to present a scene, event, or a location so vividly that it is as if it were before the eyes, *sub oculos subiectio*, at the same time as an application of it. Given that the classically trained lawyers listening to him will be aware of the allusion, Bacon's reference to *enargeia* invites them to imagine. The imagining they are to do, though, is not a passionate and empathetic response to a highly constructed bodily situation. Instead they are to imagine an image of a current political situation. The complexity of that situation takes us far from the vivid mental focus on a particular bodily situation. Bacon relies further on historical examples of political situations when responding to Fuller's objections. He can rely on his audience imagining those situations, even vividly, but not with the same pathos that personal memories of bodily suffering and pleasure afford. His decision to move away from bodily memory here suits the persuasive context—the need to deconstruct the similitude—because it offers relative objectivity and distance from the emotional intensity of Fuller's mental images.

Bacon's ensuing string of political examples—and potential mental images—across this cautious speech slides, only once, back into a body politic metaphor that requires people to feel a situation at the level of their own bodies' vulnerabilities. Even then Bacon is cautious. He does it when mentioning Ireland for the second time. The first time he mentions Ireland is while objecting to the influx of Scots. Ireland is "that desolate and wasted kingdom", with "all the dowries of nature", which "continually call unto us for our colonies and plantations" (X: 313). This is not a concession to Fuller's own argument. The point is that influx is not proportionate to opportunity: there have been many things complicating the plantation and as many reasons not to go (war and foreignness) as reasons to go ("all the dowries of nature,

as rivers, havens...good soil, and temperate climate”, X: 313). Bacon mentions Ireland for the second time later when describing the benefits of naturalization in his view. Here he slides back into the bodily politic metaphor. The union, he suggests, would be helpful in cutting off enemy access to England via Scotland, and, likewise, the path through Ireland will be “cut off by the convenient situation of part of Scotland towards the north of Ireland, where the sore was: which we see, being suddenly closed, hath continued closed by means of this salve” (X: 323). Bacon most likely refers here to Elizabeth’s *Nine Years’ War* with the Irish. The war was finished by 1603 and the Plantation of Ulster had begun by the time of Bacon’s speech. Ireland as a “sore” on the English body has been closed and the union, Bacon says, would consolidate that closure. The union would be a healing salve protecting the body further than it has been from infectious foreign invasion.

Why does the body politic metaphor of state illness return at this point in the speech? It is because Bacon has now moved out of deconstruction and back into the attempt to support his own propositions about the benefits of union. He is not now negating his opponent’s views. He is not now attenuating fears of a Scottish influx. When he was doing that, any reference to the closeness of bodily pathos would be relatively indecorous and ineffective because that kind of pathos—developed in his opponent’s favour—is precisely what he is trying to attenuate. Later when that job is done, he can afford some moderate references of his own to bodily memories of pain, and the fear of it, as well as of relief, and the pleasure of it, through the ulcer-salve metaphor. The use of memories of bodily experience constitutes an impassioned style that can be employed or not employed at different times depending on the argumentative stance of the orator toward the listener. Is he trying to generate passions or discourage them? The stance will be defined in part by the emotional tenor read into the oratorical context.

Charge of Sir Francis Bacon, Knight ... Touching Duels (1613–1614)

The issue of private dueling was hardly a new legal problem in early 1614 when Bacon addressed his charge against it to the Star Chamber (Bacon 1614). The charge was, at one level, conducted against a particular dueling case involving William Priest and Richard Wright. But Bacon used it as an excuse to develop significant legal precedent against dueling and thus to warn bigger fish than Priest and Wright. He made sure the speech, with the court’s decree annexed to it, was published.¹⁷ Solutions to the problem—of young men dying in duels over trifles—had been sought before, acknowledges Bacon (XI: 399). However, the very fact that people saw it as a problem was due to early modernity’s gradual transformation of the chi-

¹⁷ Spedding, XI: 398. Bacon’s publication was entitled: *The charge of Sir Francis Bacon Knight, his Maiesties Attourney generall, touching duells vpon an information in the Star-chamber against Priest and Wright. With the decree of the Star-chamber in the same cause* (1614).

valric honour code into a variety of newer notions of honour shaped by humanist protestantism's fusion of classical and Christian virtue (James 1986, pp. 308–415). Alongside that renaissance transformation, James argues, was a growing concern to bring the civic body under the wider authority of law and sovereign (James 1986, pp. 308–415). Both contexts inform Bacon's legislative interests here: the authority of law and sovereign and the different meanings of honour both come out loud and clear in his speech.

Bacon needs to get his judicial audience angry and disgruntled enough to proceed against both the particular case before them and the issue of dueling in general. For that reason Bacon consistently presents dueling throughout the speech in terms of both the 'demonic' and the 'unlawful', which he relates together. They are related, of course, because of the extent to which ideas of divine law, and of natural moral law which was based on it (thus demonically invertible) lay behind constructions of human law. The space outside the law could then be seen as a demonic inversion.¹⁸ For example, Bacon calls them "*bewitching Duels...no better than a sorcery, that enchanteth the spirits of young men*" (XI: 401). Bacon would wish his "Lordships see what a desperate evil this is" (XI: 401).

The speech begins though with Bacon's attempt to bring out a strong contrast between those law-breaking duelers and his own community of lawmakers—himself and his fellow lordly judges. Their demonic duels are an attempt, says Bacon, to take the law into their own hands. When "private men begin once to presume to give law to themselves, and to right their own wrongs" (XI: 400), this is what happens:

No man can foresee the dangers and inconveniencies that may arise and multiply thereupon. It may cause sudden storms in Court, to the disturbance of his Majesty, and unsafety of his person. It may grow from quarrels to banding, and from banding to trooping, and so to tumult and commotion, from particular persons to dissension of families and alliances, yea to national quarrels, according to the infinite variety of accidents, which fall not under foresight: so that the state by this means shall be like to a distempered and unperfect body, continually subject to inflammations and convulsions. (XI: 400)

Again, the body politic metaphor pops up. Again, those listening are asked to imagine a horrifically disordered situation of which the intensity of bodily experience is a significant part. Again, the mental image serves a number of Bacon's purposes. There is a textbook example of *gradatio* here, where an orator moves through the various extents of something moving upwards as if on a ladder adding to what was just mentioned.¹⁹ In Bacon's case the extent of danger in dueling moves from quarrels to banding, to trooping, to civil war, and beyond. But the termination of the *gradatio* resembles Quintilian's first form of amplification, *incrementum*, which moves by steps like a *gradatio* until the listener is at the point where nothing greater could be specified.²⁰ The endpoint of Bacon's *gradatio*—his "infinite variety of ac-

¹⁸ See White (1996), pp. 21–43 in particular, and Lisska (1996), pp. 82–115. A particularly important ancient source for the idea that the human and natural laws depend on a divine one is Cicero's *De Republica*, especially XXII, 33 (1928).

¹⁹ See Quintilian, *I.O.*, 9.3.54–57, and Sonnino (1968), pp. 101–102.

²⁰ Quintilian, *I.O.*, 8.4.3.

cidents, which fall not under foresight”—is such a large category that it has become totally vague. The details are left to the listener’s private imagination. His *gradatio-incrementum* is an invitation to the judges to imagine the worst forms of painful discord in the state’s political body, with its members in ‘demonic’ disorder, with reference to any known feelings of the natural human body’s disorder. The pain of disorder in the human body becomes associated with disorder in the political body. Dueling is such a disorder. Dueling is an unnatural illness. The duty, then, of the central control system of law (and sovereign), which is supposed to enact the natural law, is to prevent it.

Amplifying further the difference between (natural) law maker and natural law breaker, Bacon claims that demonic dueling is a very affront to law itself, which, in bodily terms makes it a disease. Human law will be the medicine. Can we have two laws, Bacon asks, rhetorically? It would be as if “Paul’s and Westminster, the pulpit and the courts of justice, must give place to the law...of *Ordinary* tables, and such reverend assemblies; the year-books and statute-books must give place to some French and Italian pamphlets, which handle the doctrine of *Duels*” (XI: 400).

An ethos framework of upright community has now been established, within which to view demonic dueling in this court. Bacon can go on to encourage a more pointed hatred for the activity by presenting two further things that dueling contradicts, each of which involve situations that must be imagined with reference to specific bodily experiences. The injustice of dueling, then, Bacon affirms, comes not only from its contradicting the law but also from its contradicting what is valuable in youthfulness and what is valuable in self-sacrifice for one’s country.

Again (my Lords) it is a miserable effect, when young men full of towardness and hope, such as the poets call *aurorae filii*, sons of the morning, in whom the expectation and comfort of their friends consisteth, shall be cast away and destroyed in such a vain manner. (XI: 400)

The pathos of ‘loss’ at the level of bodily freshness, energy, and hope is again channeled into Bacon’s sense of a contradiction. This is not just any contradiction. Dueling contradicts the very value placed in the goodness of youthfulness by a wasteful and preventable death. Such a contradiction informs the larger distinction Bacon is trying to encourage between the ‘honour’ in dueling and the ‘honour’ of upholding the natural values that legal code is supposed to protect. The ‘honour’ in dueling is a false honour, he intimates, a contradiction in terms. Bacon is associating the contradiction between true honour and false honour with the contradiction of the value of youthful vitality by fighting in the streets. He wants his lawmakers to feel the same negative pathos he has associated with the image of *aurorae filii*—fear, moral indignation, and empathetic sorrow—toward the (dis)honour of dueling. The speech would hardly work in an age that still widely valued the honour code. Older concepts of the honour code that made dueling so important were fracturing in Bacon’s time into a range of new conceptions developed in the context of Christianity (James 1986, pp. 308–415). Space opened up in the concept of honour for other things than the (spurious) ‘honour’ in dueling. Bacon exploits that space for a rewriting of ‘honour’. It is therefore not a conflict over human law per se: that is,

about what should be legal and illegal. It is a conflict over readings of the natural moral law. Is one to read honour into the act of protecting a good name to the death, or does honour really exist more in protecting youth and vitality until it has a greater purpose?

But there is more to this “miserable effect”. Bacon continues:

Much more is it to be deplored when so much noble and gentle blood shall be spilt upon such follies, as, if it were adventured in the field in service of the King and realm, were able to make the fortune of a day, and to change the fortune of a kingdom. So as your Lordships see what a desperate evil this is; it troubleth peace, it disfurnisheth war, it bringeth calamity upon private men, peril upon the State, and contempt upon the law. (XI: 400–401)

Dueling does not merely compromise youth and freshness. It also wastes the opportunity of youths to use their freshness and strength to serve their countries. From the larger perspective of the body politic it wastes the strength of the state-body’s members for waging necessary wars. That is a contradiction of something deeper. It contradicts the very desire to get returns out of investments. People want their deaths to mean something. And there is no comparison between the significance of king and country and the supposed significance of a private dispute. Fighting for the later, argues Bacon, is a comparatively pointless expense of potential. No person, state, or body wants to spend everything and get nothing in return. The state invests resources in young men and they are contradicted by dueling. These multiple levels of bodily expense (of youth and strength) animate the contradictions in dueling and encourage the auditors to feel badly toward it in the same way they would feel badly toward unprofitable investments and in any waste of bodily strength.

Bacon defamiliarizes the ‘value’ of trying to derive honour from dueling by exposing the way it contradicts other values in the lawmakers’ value-sphere. By encouraging the lawmakers’ rational analysis of such similarities and differences between the values of youthful freshness and investment returns and the sources of honour, Bacon is attempting to generate the passions of fear and indignation. Any rational response to something is potentially an emotional one in Bacon’s and early modernity’s rhetorico-psychological economy. Interestingly, he is now doing the same thing Fuller had done in the context of naturalization and which Bacon himself had deconstructed—generating fear and anger by constraining perception through particular narratives and rational analyses.

A Speech...When the House Was ... Much Troubled About the Undertakers (1614)

In this speech, Bacon evokes memories of the tense interplay between being in and out of control. He locates such feelings specifically within the situation of being on the water in a boat sailing toward the harbour. The speech was made in his capacity as a member of the committee that had been set up to investigate who might have been undertaking for the king, how they were doing it, and what could be done

about it if so. Undertaking meant the action of privately reporting to the king on parliamentary events and seeking to move its decisions towards the king's will. Suspicions ran high and, though the committee Bacon was on found no one to prosecute, anxiety in the house about a threat to parliament's autonomy, equal in seriousness almost to the gunpowder plot, seems only to have increased after the committee had given its report.²¹ It was that anxiety Bacon was trying to calm in this speech. He hoped his argument would help to avoid a fresh committee inquiry. Given the magnitude of the supposed crime, he must have thought a new inquiry would be uncomfortably invasive, breeding fresh grudges with the potential to disrupt that parliament's main agendas by fragmenting its community. He failed, however, and the inquiry was launched.²²

In trying to attenuate people's fear that undertaking was happening, and thus reduce the chance that new committee powers would come out of it, Bacon tries to reframe the lower House's sense of parliamentary community. He edits out the possibility that it is vulnerable to undertaking. Bacon develops the reframed identity around the parliament's history as a firmly established ancient institution impervious to such threats. Everyone knows, says Bacon, that the House is so open to reason and its power to change our thoughts that none of the members can possibly predict what they think on an issue until "they hear things argued and debated" (XII: 43). Much less "can any man make a policy of assurance, what ship shall come safe into the harbour in these seas" (XII: 43). The harbour metaphor becomes the basis of powerful allegory—in Quintilian's sense of that trope as extended metaphor—with different levels of connection: "ships" are policies and ends; "these seas" are the procedural environment of the parliament; the "harbour" is decision, resolution, or the good effects the parliament tries to accomplish.²³ Getting an issue debated, reasoned, agreed upon, and enacted in law for the benefit of the country is like steering a ship safely towards the harbour on rough stormy seas with only a few sure guides. How could any one person presume to control that complicated process from the outside?

Bacon now enhances the mental image his hearers are developing with a series of rhetorical questions. "Must there be a new passage found for the King's business by a point of the compass that was never sailed by before?" he asks (XII: 43). His listeners are invited to infer that no such 'passage' could exist in this parliament. "Or must there be some forts built in this House that may command and contain the rest?" asks Bacon and answers immediately that he knows only two "forts" in this House (sea) of the king: affection and reason (XII: 43).

²¹ See Spedding's commentary, XII: 41–42, 48–49.

²² Spedding quotes the journal record for the enlargement of the committee following the debate. See XII: 48.

²³ For Quintilian on allegory, see *I.O.*, 8.6. 44–53. The main form of allegory, he says, in Russell's translation, "generally consists of a succession of metaphors" (44). Bacon's harbour allegory here resembles Quintilian's own first example, from Horace's *Carmina* 1.14, in which a ship and the ocean represent the state and civil war, respectively. Lanham also describes allegory as the act of "extending a metaphor": see Lanham (1991), p. 4.

The allegory thus encourages the MPs to shape their mental images of the parliament into a more solid place than had been before. From that fresher angle, parliament is now a place in which undulating and shifting issues can only find steered controlling toward the right decisions because of the firm fort of reason. The idea that a single person could move a ship into the harbour in a predefined way has no ‘visible’ space in the mental image. Bacon has edited it out. How on earth could anyone sail a boat into a harbour without reference to the contingencies of wind, currents, compasses, guideposts, or the harbour’s particular features? It is non-sensical, from the point of view of the mental image, that a predefined pattern unrelated to these issues could work. Bacon asks his audience to put together a mental image in which any other boat passage than reasoning through contingencies is unthinkable. It is only through the process of debate—the compass and fort of reason—that the right passage for ship-policies moving toward resolution-harbours could be found. The very idea of undertaking—which Bacon describes as, the “dust”, “these vapours”, this “cloud”, these “light rumours” (XII: 43)—is set up, through that word-pattern, as the opposite of the solid forts of parliament: affection and reason. The mental image is able to bring emotional distance because it invites the inference that what is feared is impossible. Another way to describe that is to say that Bacon has deconstructed the fear that comes from perceiving impediments to escape. He has provided the means of escape from the fear: it is the perception that undertaking is impossible in such an institution.

Bodily memory is integral to this reimagining of the parliament. The mental image might be experienced as a place the imaginer inhabits as much as a scene played out in front of him. It is certainly possible that Bacon expected some listeners to imagine the scene as if they were immersed in it as the people on the boats. The conceit of life as a boat on the unruly ocean is a commonplace that Bacon can draw on, and expect his audience also to draw on, confidently.²⁴ That immersion evokes the tension between being out of control yet amenable to the solid forts of reason. Perhaps some of his listeners had actual experience of the terrifying situation of being on a boat that is only just under control. In saying that, of course, I do not deny the relatively obvious sexual significance of this mental image, the bodily aspects of which add something to Bacon’s evocative power and purpose here. But be that as it may, I wish primarily to point out the potential of the image to evoke memories of seeming to be out of control and really not being so, that is the feeling of recognizing one’s actual safety after all. It is a feeling tied closely to the body within Bacon’s mental image. Whatever tension there was is resolved by the forts, which control the progress of the boat to the harbour within the mental image. Evoking such feelings of tension and resolution in relation to bodily experience with his allegory gives Bacon the opportunity to encourage a reconception of the parliament as similarly in control. The allegory is not there for decoration. With it Bacon can relate his deconstruction of fear, in the parliamentary context, to a consolatory feeling that potentially gets much closer to the persons in front of him. With it Bacon offers the parliament a version of itself that its members will *want* to be true. The

²⁴ It is reflected for example in emblem 3.11 of Francis Quarles’ *Emblems* (1635), p. 165.

mental image is presented as the more rational view of parliament precisely because it develops consistency with a widely felt bodily experience.

In all the speeches discussed above I have tried to show how Bacon's rhetorical skills work to evoke memories that can be shaped into powerful mental images with a view to altering perceptions of situations and, thereby, passionate responses to them. While mental images ask listeners to draw on a great variety of remembered material—far more than just bodily experiences—those that register highly sensitive bodily situations are particularly useful to Bacon. They are useful partly because most people have the familiar material in their memories required to construct them. Even if they have not personally had doctors bloodletting them, been stung by nettles, or been in a boat out of control, even if they had never even seen or heard about these experiences from others, they could readily reconstruct those situations with sufficient sympathy in reference to related experiences in order for them to work in Bacon's favour. Bacon registers, at the level of the body, memories defined by loss, pain, illness, reaction and safety, and associates them rationally with other concepts on his agenda. Bacon's careful use of mental images involving bodily experience thus is the widest rhetorical net he could cast.

His mental images, in so far as he successfully evokes them in the minds of those listening, are the sort of cognitive activity that provides a basis for further rational and emotional engagement. That cognitive primacy in mental images is itself a feature of the largely Aristotelian psychology Bacon inherited. His mental images involve rationality because they promote thought about similarity and difference, or, consistency and inconsistency. They involve passionate emotion because of their power to alter perceptions—perceptions of consistency and inconsistency—and thus form a different passionate response appropriate to those altered perceptions. Bacon's mental images of bodily experience, then, show us one more instance of the extent to which the machineries of rational and emotional cognition in renaissance psychology, and thereby those of body and mind, are implicated in one another.

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Lessons in Music, Lessons in Love

Katherine Wallace

In Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (c.1590s; first folio 1623), two eager suitors seek to gain access to the fair Bianca, who has been "closely mew'd... up" by her over-protective father, and "[kept] from all access of suitors... until the elder sister [the shrewish Katherine] first be wed" (1.1.178; 1.2.257–1.2.259). In spite of strictly controlling his daughters' social contact, Baptista, who is, in his own words "very kind, and liberal/To mine own children in good bringing-up," actively seeks "Schoolmasters [to]... keep within [his] house/Fit to instruct [their] youth" in "music, instruments, and poetry." Upon hearing this, both of Bianca's would-be lovers disguise themselves as tutors, for they clearly see a chance for an intimate and amorous encounter. Hortensio describes his intentions, saying,

Now shall my friend Petruchio do me grace,
And offer me disguis'd in sober robes
To old Baptista as a schoolmaster
Well seen in music, to instruct Bianca;
That so I may by this device at least
Have leave and leisure to make love to her,
And unsuspected court her by herself.
(*The Taming of the Shrew*, 1.2.128–1.2.134)

Hortensio's idea is not a new one, nor will Shakespeare be the last to use this device, for indeed the ruse of obtaining access to and courting an unmarried girl through her lessons, especially lessons in music, appears frequently upon the stage, both dramatic and operatic. Cleante poses as Angelique's music tutor in Molière's *Le Malade imaginaire* (1673)—first performed with musical interludes by Marc-Antoine Charpentier; librettist Apostolo Zeno's *Gl'inganni felice* features a Prince disguised as a musician in order to engage in political and amorous intrigues (1695); and Count Almaviva pretends to be a replacement music master, Don Alonso, on his third visit to the well-guarded Rosine, in Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville* (1775)—a play set to music by no less than six composers. To this list of masquerading musicians,

K. Wallace (✉)
Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, National University of Singapore, Singapore City,
Singapore
e-mail: muswkam@nus.edu.sg

one might even add Nanki-Poo (*The Mikado*, Gilbert and Sullivan 1885) or the Phantom (*The Phantom of the Opera*, Lloyd Webber, based on Gaston Leroux 1986) whose disguises as travelling minstrel and mysterious voice teacher allow them access to their beloved. However reworked, these dramatized music lessons are extensions of a conventional Renaissance device, for one of the stock scenes of Commedia dell'Arte involves Flaminia tricking her parents or ward into letting her lover, disguised as a music or dance instructor, into the house. Yet this dramatic device in itself may in fact be a case of art mirroring life. By Shakespeare's time, the music lesson as a potential for amorous intrigue had become a commonplace not only in literature, art and drama, but also in Renaissance social commentary and educational treatises, fuelled as much by a philosophical equation of music and love as by very real instances of a pupil being seduced by her (or his) tutor. This article will discuss scenes of musical seduction in literature, legend and art, drawing on parallels found in diaries, court records and other real life scenarios, examining the amorous potential of an actual lute lesson, and presenting early modern arguments for and against girls' music education. Our exploration will reveal how the music lesson came to be a pivotal artistic device, impelling early modern art and literature into the realm of social commentary. Each artistic reworking reveals an intricate, if sometimes ambiguous or contentious, critique of music and love, both physical and philosophical—a marriage which was indissoluble in the social complex of the early modern era.

The music lesson as a scene of illicit love surfaces in literature and legend in the early Middle Ages, where it suffuses the narratives of history's most famous, forbidden lovers. Perhaps it might surprise some to learn that Tristan and Isolde were not the innocent victims of a misplaced love potion, as Wagner tells us. Rather, Gottfried von Strassburg suggests in his middle-high-German romance (1210), the potion served merely to awaken latent feelings, kindled much earlier in their relationship during music lessons. From the time that Tristan, disguised as the minstrel Tantris, was engaged as a harp-teacher at the Irish court, Gottfried writes, "the young Princess was constantly under his tuition, and he devoted much time and energy to her. One by one he laid before her for her consideration the best things that he knew, both in book-learning and the playing of instruments." (von Strassburg, *Tristan*, 1210). As a result of Tristan's tuition, all who heard Isolde play and sing were moved by "her wondrous beauty that stole with its rapturous music hidden and unseen through the windows of the eyes into many noble hearts and smoothed on the magic which took thoughts prisoner suddenly, and, taking them, fettered them with desire." (*Tristan*, p. 148). As the music works its enchantment on the young couple themselves, Tristan praises Isolde's beauty superfluously, and Isolde, who, Gottfried tells us, "scanned his body and his whole appearance with uncommon interest", finds that "whatever a maid may survey in a man... all pleased her very well." (*Tristan*, p. 173). Gottfried's narrative attends to the physical aspects of Tristan and Isolde's infatuation as a natural outcome of their spending much time together and gazing on each other's physical beauty, but the emotional and mental entanglement is described as supernatural. The music lessons emphasize Isolde's hands or voice—"whenever they played, her fingers

touched the lyre most deftly and struck notes from the harp with power.... Moreover, this girl so blessed with gifts sang well and sweetly.... and her tutor, the minstrel, much improved her” (*Tristan*, p. 147); Tristan is also engaged in Isolde’s intellectual education through instruction in “Bienséance” which “often refreshed [the princess’s] mind.” (*Tristan*, p. 147). For Gottfried, natural love involves both mind and body, but the natural outcome of these lessons becomes supernatural as Isolde’s accomplishments increase. Gottfried ends up comparing Isolde “to the Sirens, who with their lodestone draw the ships towards them.... Thus, I imagine, did Isolde attract many thoughts and hearts that deemed themselves safe from love’s disquietude.” (*Tristan*, p. 148). Tristan and Isolde both fall under this magical enchantment, and a potentially pure love engendered by beauty, both physical and aural, during music lessons and performance, becomes dangerously intensified when they drink the potion.

If the role of music education in Tristan and Isolde’s affair was too subtle for its Medieval audience, the fate of Heloise and Abelard, two real-life lovers who were both musicians, stood as a strong warning to fathers or guardians who sought to educate their daughters. The twelfth-century affair is recorded in Abelard’s biography, *Historica Calamitatum*, as well as in the couple’s surviving letters which were translated into French in the fourteenth century by Jean de Meun. Like Baptista, Canon Fullbert wished his niece Heloise (1101–1164) “to have the best education he could possibly procure for her,” and so the philosopher, theologian, and musician Peter Abelard joined their household as Heloise’s tutor. (Abelard c. 1135, *Historia Calamitatum, The Story of My Misfortunes*). Although their letters attest to a genuine and abiding love, Abelard’s self-professed seduction of his student led to pregnancy, elopement, castration, and separate lives lived out in convent and monastery. In retellings of their story, music is often implicated as a catalyst for Heloise and Abelard’s mental and emotional entanglement; as an inducement to love, the music lesson here has immoral implications dangerous for the mind, but blatantly physical consequences.

While these famous couples quickly became the subject of musical, literary, and, more recently, cinematic legend, other real-life cases of teacher-student seduction served as warning and welcome gossip throughout early modern Europe. Though undoubtedly most cases were dealt with privately, those brought to public trial offer interesting insights into Renaissance perceptions of sexual crime and punishment. In 1642, Dionora Luppi accused the musician Giovanni Carlo del Cavalieri before Venice’s Council of Ten of not only seducing her 13-year-old daughter Silvia during their music lessons, but also of attempted abduction and murder. (Glixon 1996). The biggest obstacle to justice here seems to be the fact that Giovanni already had a wife and so could not be made to marry his victim. As Cohen and Cohen point out, “law and custom ordain[ed] that a man who carrie[d] off and deflower[ed] a virgin must marry her himself or at least provide funds so she c[ould] either espouse another or take the veil.” (Cohen and Cohen 2000, p. 127). In Florence a few years earlier, the musician Pompeo Caccini (son of the famous Giulio) was fined 100 lire plus a dowry of 75 scudi for getting his student, Ginevra Mazziere, pregnant, and in this case, the two eventually married.

(McGee 1990; See also Ruggiero and Brown 1985). In the case of Bernardino Pedroso, a Spanish music master who ran away with his pupil Ottavia Rosignoli, the sentence and punishment is missing from the Papal court transcripts of his trial. We are told that under torture Bernardino confessed to a relationship with his younger female student; however he insisted that Ottavia was not a virgin when he met her, and that he treated her like a sister, helping her to run away from an abusive family. Ottavia, on the other hand, maintains throughout the trial that Bernardino was her first and only lover; she is supported by her family and key witnesses, likely in an attempt to have the court order their marriage (See Cohen and Cohen 2000).

At the center of perhaps the most famous early modern case of a teacher seducing (or in this case sexually assaulting) his student, is another educated, musical woman, the artist Artemisia Gentileschi.¹ The seven-month-long trial for rape held in 1612 ensured that scandal would remain attached to Gentileschi's name for life, but this did not entirely ruin her artistic reputation. From 1638–1641, for instance, Gentileschi secured an important commission from the English court of King Charles I, to paint ceiling frescoes for the Queen's house at Greenwich. With the salacious history of the Tudors still within living memory, the seduction of a young girl by her tutor was an unremarkable scandal in England. To mention just one of the many famous cases attached to the English court, Henry VIII's third wife, Catherine Howard, admitted to having succumbed to the amorous attentions of her music teacher, Henry Manno, when she was fifteen, although she later swore the relationship was not consummated. In each of these scenarios the trial records are concerned solely with the physical nature of the relationship. The music lesson here is seen as an inducement to physical love only, its spiritual or mental influence is negligible to the legal issues at hand.

What then, was so enticing about a music lesson that it could harbor seduction and rape, or, in the case of Shakespeare's hopeful suitors, augured love and marriage? Of course the opportunity of being in close contact with one's beloved, possibly without a vigilant chaperone, was the biggest draw for Hortensio and Lucentio. But more than this, the amorous connotations of music, "the food of love," combined with the physical intimacy inherent especially in a lute lesson, proved a dangerous combination. The very first lesson in Medieval or Renaissance music was, as Hortensio reminds us, the gamut—the basic scale of pitches that encompasses the combined average range of the (male) human voice (men and boys). Before singing or playing, a music student would learn by rote to name these pitches and place them in their proper hexachords, using the Guidonian hand—an image reproduced in countless music tutors and treatises—as a mnemonic device. One of the most widely circulated music instruction books, Thomas Morley's *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597), starts with this very lesson. The protagonist Philomathes, has been shamed into studying music for the first time after attending a dinner party where he was the only guest who could not sing from a part book, and so he seeks out a music master:

¹ Artemisia's musical skill is attested by her *Self-Portrait as a Lute-Player* (1615–1617).

Master. [I will teach you] With a good will: But haue you learned nothing at all in Musicke before?

Philomathes. Nothing. Therefore I pray begin at the very beginning, and teach me and as though I were a childe.

Master: I will do so: And therefore behold, here is the Scale of Musicke, which wee tearme the Gam.

(Morley 1597, A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke).

We will remember that Bianca, who considers herself an experienced musician, reacts angrily to being taught as though she were a child; at Hortensio's suggestion that he "must begin with rudiments of art,/To teach you gamut in a briefer sort," she hotly declares, "Why, I am past my gamut long ago"(3.1.69). The next lesson, after learning the gamut by rote, would involve playing the notes of the scale upon the lute—a step which could require the teacher to touch the hands of his student in order to place the fingers upon the correct frets. It is this physical contact that Katherina objects to so strenuously in her music lesson. Hortensio relates the encounter in Act two:

I did but tell her she mistook her frets,
 And bow'd her hand to teach her fingering
 When, with a most impatient devilish spirit,
 'Frets, call you these?' quoth she 'I'll fume with them.'
 And with that word she struck me on the head,
 And through the instrument my pate made way:
 And there I stood amazed for a while,
 As on a pillory, looking through the lute,
 While she did call me rascal fiddler
 And twangling Jack, with twenty such vile terms,
 As she had studied to misuse me so.
 (*The Taming of the Shrew*, 2.1.148–2.1.158)

The physical intimacy and sexual impropriety which is only hinted at here, is quite overt in the earlier *Taming of a Shrew*, which portrays Katherine's lute lesson on stage complete with verbal repartee that goes beyond bawdy punning to blatant crudity (causing critics to dismiss this scene as decidedly un-Shakespearean).

After learning scales, notes and fret positions, a student would progress to simple tunes, first monophonic and then with harmony, and here a further dangerous inducement to love is introduced. The myriad of lute instruction books and handwritten collections for ladies, such as the Margaret Board lutebook, the ML lutebook, Jane Pickering's lutebook, and the Mary Burwell Lute Tutor (c.1670), all include tunes with titles and sometimes lyrics relating to love. "Light of love," "Go from my window," "John come kiss me now," and other such tunes are standard pieces for the beginner, even though the titles and lyrics might seem to encourage amorous adventures. Instruction is also included concerning female deportment when playing outside of the lesson, in company, and this does not always advocate modesty: the Burwell Tutor offers advice on how to display oneself, so that "the beauty of the arm, of the hands and of the neck are advantageously displayed in playing of the lute." (Quoted in Zecher 2000, p. 769). If his lessons had advanced further, Hortensio may have gotten as far as playing lute duets with his student—an even more dangerous pastime especially when, as in an example from Dowland's *First Book of Songs or Ayres*, the duet is (as directed in the table of contents) "for two to play

upon one lute.” This feat is only possible if one participant, presumably the female student, sits upon the lap of the other; her partner must then stretch his arms around to reach the lute in front, embracing both her and the instrument—a posture which would surely have been perceived as completely inappropriate for any virtuous, unmarried Renaissance girl, and might easily provide opportunity for another kind of embrace. The lute lesson in this guise could hardly avoid amorous overtones.

Thus the music lesson becomes, in Renaissance understanding, a conflagration of both physical and mental entanglement. The physical intimacy proffered by playing the lute together with the intellectual stimulation of learning a new art, especially one philosophically linked with love, opens both mind and body to the possibility of an amorous or sexual encounter. The fact that music itself was seen as possessing the ability to magically alter one’s mental state and capture the heart, even as the beauty of the performer conquered through the eyes of the beholder, intensified the danger of learning (or hearing) music, beyond that of the other arts.

In the early seventeenth century, the music lesson as a scene of seduction, already common in literature and social commentary, begins to infuse Dutch genre painting. The theme is long lived, as it is taken over in the eighteenth century by French artists, and resurfaces again in English painting in the nineteenth century. While many artists explore this theme, perhaps most well-known are the paintings by Vermeer, which may serve to complicate our exploration of music tuition and seduction. In Vermeer’s *The Music Lesson* (c.1662–1664; oil on canvas, 74 × 64.5 cm; London, The Royal Collection) a young woman stands at a virginals, her back to us, but her face visible in the mirror behind the instrument. A male tutor stands at the side watching her; his right arm rests on the instrument case, and his left on a staff; his bass viol and bow lies on the floor in front of them. A Motto on the virginals reads: “MVSICA LETITIAE CO[ME]S MEDICINA DOLOR[VM]” (Music is the companion of joy, balm for sorrow), giving a wholesome and somewhat spiritual flavor to the scene. Vermeer’s painting thus redeems the music lesson from its supposed immoral connection. Yet, the distance with which we observe the couple, the intimacy of their position, and their complete ignorance of our gaze imbues their relationship with something clandestine if not illicit (Fig. 1).

We have a stronger indication of music’s connection with love in *Girl interrupted at her music* (Vermeer c.1660–1661) and *A young woman standing at a virginal* (Vermeer, c.1670–1672), both of which show a picture of Cupid hanging on the back wall. In *The Concert* (Vermeer, c.1665–1666; oil on canvas, 72.5 × 64.7 cm; Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum) and *A young woman seated at a virginal* (Vermeer, c.1670–1672); a known painting by Dirck van Baburen entitled *The Procuress*, is depicted in the background, in which the lute figures prominently in the hands of a courtesan. In these works, we move from music as a symbol of relational harmony, to music as an instigator of love, and, finally, music as a sign of female promiscuity. The level of moral implication is of course open to interpretation: David R. Smith maintains that “the painting of Cupid behind the couple in... [*Girl Interrupted*] is an emblem of true and faithful love,” (Smith 1987, p. 428) and Arthur Wheelock suggests that use of Baburen’s *Procuress* in Vermeer’s two later paintings does not necessarily imply immorality within in these music scenes, but may in fact seek only to contrast a low life use of music with its refined and proper use in high



Fig. 1 Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675), *The Music Lesson (A lady at the Virginals with a Gentleman)*, c.1662–1664 (oil on canvas, 74 × 64.5 cm)/London, The Royal Collection © 2011 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

society. (Wheelock 1981, pp. 120–122). The juxtaposition of the two instruments, lute and virginals, may also point to this social apposition within Vermeer’s paintings. However, the association of the music lesson with sexual impropriety was so prevalent by the mid-seventeenth century, that Vermeer could not have escaped this prevailing implication. While his manner is by no means as direct as is found in numerous sixteenth-century *Concerts*, paintings of musical courtesans (with or without a prodigal son to spiritualize the image), or even the perhaps misnamed *Music Lesson* by Sebastiano Florigerio, yet Vermeer is quite consciously commenting on the societal correlation of music and sexual encounter.² By directing a voyeuristic

² Gianni Dagli Orti, *The Prodigal Son with courtesans*, Ambrosius Benson’s *Concert after the meal*, or Michiel Parrhasio’s *Courtesan Playing Lute* offer good examples of these genre paintings. In Florigerio’s *Music Lesson*, which seems to depict a Venetian academy or salon, a richly attired young woman (possibly a courtesan) sits centrally, surrounded in the foreground by three



Fig. 2 Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675), *A Young Woman Standing at a Virginal*, c.1670–1672 (oil on canvas, 51.7 × 45.2 cm)/© The National Gallery, London

gaze toward the music-making woman and including the background paintings of *Cupid* and *The Procuress*, Vermeer is, albeit subtly, drawing his audience's attention once again to the age-old union of music and forbidden love (Figs. 2, 3, and 4).

It is one of those interesting dichotomies surrounding the philosophical perception of music, that music lessons should be so tainted with illicit love while, at the same time, girls' musical education was highly esteemed in the upper classes of Renaissance society. As Danijela Kambaskovic discusses in her article, a similar philosophical dualism is observable in early modern ideas about love. (Kambaskovic 2014). On one hand, it is the source of spiritual inspiration and a personal search for transcendence; on the other, it is a danger to man's rationality, morality and

well-dressed men, all reading from a single altus partbook and keeping time with a finger; in the background, three more men and a veiled older woman (a duenna or procuress?) look on. See Shephard (2010); Davies (2006); or Slim (2002).



Fig. 3 Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675), *The Concert*, c. 1658–1660 (oil on canvas, 72.5 × 64.7 cm)/ © Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA, USA/The Bridgeman Art Library

his rightful place in the hierarchy of God’s creation. On the positive side of the argument, educators such as Richard Mulcaster, Bathshua Makin, and John Essex commend music as an accomplishment that, Essex says, “refines the Taste, polishes the Mind; and is an Entertainment... that preserves [young women] from the Rust of Idleness, that most pernicious Enemy to Virtue.” (Essex 1722). Music was especially recommended for “princely maidens above all” whose education, Mulcaster believes, should consist “in perfecting of those forenamed four, reading well, writing fair, singing sweet, [and] playing fine.” (Mulcaster 1581, *Positions*). Thus, in schools like those run by Bathshua Makin, who was governess to Charles I’s daughter, girls spent “half the time” in “work of all sorts, as: Dancing, Music, Singing, Writing, Keeping accounts. The other half to be employed in gaining the Latin and French tongues.” (Makin 1673, *An essay to revive the ancient education of gentlewomen*, p. 191). Music here is considered a proper and productive subject for a noblewoman’s education, and an aid to virtue.



Fig. 4 Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675), *A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal*, c.1670–1672 (oil on canvas, 51.5 × 45.5 cm)/© The National Gallery, London

In a trend perhaps started by Gottfried’s depiction of the Irish princess Isolde, many notable literary and dramatic heroines are described as musically well-educated. Anne Frankford, another lute-smashing woman from Thomas Heywood’s *A Woman killed with Kindness* is an accomplished musician; her skill as a lutenist and singer are prized “ornaments,” on a level with her noble birth, princely education, her fluency in various languages, and her physical beauty. Anne’s counterpart, the now impoverished Susan Mountford, is similarly accomplished, for she was once “Mistress Sue, trick’d up in jewels” who “sung well, [and] play’d sweetly on the lute” (3.3.23–3.3.24). Here, lute playing is a sign of social class and is allied with wealth and virtue, both of which, these heroines exemplify, can be lost.

Sir Charles.

Master Frankford,

You are a happy man, Sir, and much joy

Succeed your marriage mirth: you have a wife

So qualified, and with such ornaments

Both of the mind and body. First, her birth
 Is noble, and her education such
 As might become the daughter of a prince;
 Her own tongue speaks all tongues, and her own hand
 Can teach all strings to speak in their best grace,
 From the shrill'st treble to the hoarsest base.
 To end her many praises in one word,
 She's Beauty and Perfection's eldest daughter,
 Only found by yours, though many a heart hath sought her.
 (*A Woman killed with Kindness*, 1.1.12–1.1.24)

Shakespearean princesses are equally well-educated in music. Marina, the daughter of Prince Pericles, can read music and, following another Renaissance convention, she shames the nightingale into silence when she sings to her lute:

Now to Marina bend your mind,
 Whom our fast growing scene must finde
 At Tharsus, and by Cleon trained
 In Musicks letters, who hath gaind
 Of education all the grace,
 Wich makes hie both the art and place
 Of generall wonder...
 ... when too'th Lute
 She sung, and made the night b[ir]d mute
 That still records with mone.
 (*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, Quarto, 4.0)

Lavinia, daughter of the noble Titus Andronicus, is musically gifted and she also sang and played the lute, that is, before her hands and tongue were chopped off:

Oh had the monster seene those Lillie hands,
 Tremble, like aspen leaves, upon a Lute,
 And make the silken strings delight to kisse them,
 He would not then have tucht them for his life.
 Or, had he heard the heavenly Harmonie,
 Which that sweete tongue hath made,
 He would have dropt his knife and fell a sleepe,
 As Cerberus at the Thracian Poets feete.
 (*Titus Andronicus*, Quarto 1, 2.4.1117–2.4.1124)

In an apocryphal-Shakespearean example, Sabren, daughter of the Trojan King Locrine and his royal mistress, is again a trained lutenist; in describing her inability to plunge the suicidal knife into her breast, the dramatist mingles images of chastity and courteous love with music (her “virgins hands... [which] tune the amorous Lute”):

Ay me, my virgins hands are too too weak,
 To penetrate the bullwarke of my brest,
 My fingers us'd to tune the amorous Lute,
 Are not of force to hold this steely glain,
 So I am left to waile my parents death,
 Not able for to work my proper death.
 (*The Tragedy of Locrine* 5.6.2113–5.6.2118)

Lute-playing in these instances is a sign of nobility, chastity, and marriageability. Indeed, the supreme example of a virginal, lute-playing princess was Queen

Elizabeth herself, the most eligible maiden in England.³ Hence it is no surprise to find Shakespeare and Heywood's lute-playing heroines described as inherently marriageable, their lute-playing a symbol of their fitness for wifely duty and devotion. The noble Marina is "a wench full grown,/Even ripe for marriage-rite" (4.0); and Anne Frankford, as her brother, Sir Francis, notes, "A perfect wife already, meek and patient!" (1.1.3944). In Henry IV Part 1, Owen Glendower's daughter performs a wifely act by singing to her husband, Lord Mortimer, before he heads into battle (3.1). This music-marriage connection is even parodied in depictions of bourgeois society: the goldsmith's wife Maudlin, in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, makes sure her daughter Moll has "played over all [her] old lessons o' the virginals" in time to meet her proposed husband Walter (1.1.1). In contrast, the Welsh charlatan falsely engaged to Maudlin's son sings unaccompanied bawdy songs, and in *The Roaring Girl* Moll "Cutpurse" Frith avoids the lute or virginals, and instead picks up a manly viol to accompany her singing.⁴

For Ophelia, Desdemona and Queen Katherine, lutes and lute-songs serve to underscore a fidelity wronged or a virtue lost. Ophelia's entrance in Act 4, scene 5 so moved early spectators that her appearance, "playing on a Lute, and her haire downe, singing," was recorded as a stage direction in the first 'bad' quarto of 1603 (*Hamlet* act 4, scene 5). Her musical ramblings indicate that her madness is caused not solely by her father's death, but by Hamlet's indiscretion and abandonment: her loss of virtue is revealed in lines from popular lute songs, such as "Let in the maid, that out a maid ne'er departed more," and "Quoth she, before you tumbled me, you promised me to wed."⁵ Desdemona's impending doom is lent a particular pathos by her distracted singing of the popular lute song, "O Willow, Willow," which survives with lute tablature in the Lodge Book (c.1570), the Dallis Lutebook (c.1583) and an anonymous British Museum manuscript simply known as Additional 15117 (See Joiner 1969). Queen Katherine's deep melancholy, caused by her husband's unjust accusations, is only briefly assuaged when she requests her maid to "Take thy lute, wench: my soul grows sad with troubles;/sing and disperse 'em, if thou canst" (*King Henry VIII*, 3.1). The lute, an instrument that should be a symbol of domestic harmony, becomes, in the hands of Shakespeare's most important heroines, a visible and audible symbol of broken domesticity, accentuating madness and foreshadowing death.

Despite the common practice and professed virtue of giving girls a musical education, there was an equally strong argument on the other side of the debate. Early feminists like Mary Astell believed that music lessons were not in the best interest of a young girl as they took too much time away from more serious and productive

³ Queen Elizabeth I was well known to be an accomplished player of the virginal. Her musicianship is also attested by Nicholas Hilliard's miniature, *Queen Elizabeth playing the lute* (c.1576).

⁴ This is a notable revision of the real Moll cutpurse who is recorded to have "sat there upon the stage in the publique viewe of all the people there p[rese]nte in Mans apparel and playd upon her lute & sange a songe"; in Kastan and Stallybrass (1991), p. 220.

⁵ Carroll Camden is one of the first to assert that it is "the pangs of despiz'd love" rather than Polonius' death which causes Ophelia's madness; see Camden (1964).

study. Others had a moral objection, believing that music in the hands of a woman was a dangerous inflamer of passions, suitable only, as Shakespeare's Richard III comments, for lascivious pleasures within a lady's chamber:

Grim-visag'd war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front,
 And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds
 To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
 He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
 To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
 (*King Richard the Third*, 1.1.9–1.1.12)

Pietro Bembo combined the two arguments, when he wrote to his daughter in 1541, cautioning her against the study of music:

Playing music is for a woman a vain and frivolous thing. And I would wish you to be the most serious and chaste woman alive. Beyond this, if you do not play well your playing will give you little pleasure and not a little embarrassment. And you will not be able to play well unless you spend ten or twelve years in this pursuit without thinking of anything else. What this would mean to you you can imagine yourself without my saying more. Therefore set aside thoughts of this frivolity and work to be humble and good and wise and obedient. Don't let yourself be carried away by these desires, indeed resist them with a strong will.⁶

These arguments draw on the idea that music itself is intrinsically seductive, rather than condemning the seductive environment of the music lesson. Thus playing music is, in Bembo's eyes, the antithesis of female chastity. Such a belief was bolstered by the inseparable connection of music, especially lute-playing, with the famed courtesans of Rome, Florence and Venice, who were renowned for their learning, cultural accomplishments, and musical skill, as well as for their beauty and sexual expertise. Their numerous depictions in art, music, literature, and Renaissance commentary have been amply explored in scholarship by Margaret Rosenthal, Martha Feldman, Bonnie Gordon, Richard Leppert, Julia Craig-McFeely, and others who have concluded that music, particularly singing and playing the lute, figured prominently in the self-fashioning of the *cortegiane oneste*, and led to the lute becoming a symbol of prostitutes and procuresses, especially within seventeenth-century art and literature.

Such continental fashions naturally impressed the English who were enamoured of all things Italian. The English traveller Thomas Coryat (1577–1617) comments upon the musical skill of the Venetian courtesan, saying,

she will endeavour to enchaunt thee partly with her melodious notes that she warbles out upon her lute, which she fingers with as laudable a stroake as many men that are excellent professors in the noble science of Musicke; and partly with that heart-tempting harmony of her voice.⁷

Lute-playing courtesans proliferate in English drama. In John Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan*, Franceschina entertains and enchants a shocked Malheureux, singing and playing "The darke is my delight," an anonymous setting of which is found in Giles Earle's Songbook. (1615, *British Library Additional Ms.* 24665). In *The*

⁶ Bembo quoted in Tomlinson (1998), p. 70 and 333.

⁷ Corvat, quoted in Santore (1988), p. 58.

Honest Whore, Thomas Dekker uses the lute in two contrasting scenes where the instrument serves to underscore the courtesan Bellafront's conversion from vice to virtue. Musical courtesans also feature in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Captain* (1609–1612), Rowland's *Doctor Merrie-Man* (1609), and the anonymous *Blurt, Master-Constable; or, The Spaniards Night-Walke* (1601–1602), while George Ruggle's *Ignoramus* (1630) and Thomas Middleton's *Your Five Gallants* (1607) feature brothels disguised as music schools for girls. This may be another instance of drama echoing life, for the English Satirist Stephen Gosson describes how impoverished musicians became clever brothel owners, as if it were an everyday event:

If any part of musicke have suffered shipwrecke and arrived by fortune at their finger endes, with shewe of gentility they take up faire houses, receive lusty lasses at a price for boordes, and pipe from morning till evening for wood and coale. If their houses bee searched, some instrument of musicke is laide in sighte to dazell the eyes of every officer; all that are lodged in the house (are said to) come thither as pupilles to be well schooled.
(Gosson 1579, *The Schoole of Abuse*)

On the continent, even convent schools came under the censure of moralists, so much so that the Council of Trent ordered in 1563 all “Ospedali and women’s convents to stop all performances of polyphonic music.” (Quoted in Wiesner 1993, p. 158). By the late seventeenth-century, immorality was so widely associated with girls’ music education that Pope Innocent XI issued an edict (in 1686 renewed in 1703) which forbade “all women—single, married, or widowed, as well as nuns—to learn music for any reason from any man including their fathers or husbands, or to play any musical instrument.”⁸

With such strong moral censure, and avid arguments on both sides of the debate, female music-making was a fertile ground indeed for Renaissance dramatists. To return to our opening example, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Shakespeare uses the music lesson not merely as a conventional pairing of love and art; rather, through the two music-lesson scenes (Bianca’s on-stage, and Katherine’s off-stage), he comments on and overturns gendered perceptions of virtue and vice, love and marriage. At first, music appears to be functioning as a sign of female virtue, clearly contrasted by the two sisters: the exceedingly eligible Bianca seems the more virtuous to her male audience, for she “taketh most delight/In music, instruments, and poetry” (1.1.91–1.1.92), while the shrewish, lute-smashing Katherine appears to scorn both music and feminine virtues. However, the music lessons that take place reveal a different nature altogether. While Bianca stops short of smashing the lute against her tutor’s head, her reposts during this scene are petulant and (dare-we-say) shrewish, revealing a willful temperament—“I’ll not be tied to hours nor ’pointed times,” she pouts, “But learn my lessons as I please myself” (3.1.19–3.1.20); “call you this gamut?” she mocks poor Hortensio, “Tut, I like it not!” (3.1.77).⁹ Though Bianca may appear virtuous, this “patroness of heavenly harmony” rejects the amorous overtures of her music tutor not out of a sense of virtue, but rather because she has

⁸ Quoted in Weisner (1993), p. 158. See also Bowers and Tick (1987), p. 139.

⁹ Patricia Parker has also focused on the music lesson as the scene which most reveals Bianca’s hidden shrewishness. See Parker (2007).

already succumbed to his rival, the poet Lucentio.¹⁰ Katherina, on the other hand, whose outward display seems to confirm her disdain of music as well as her violent misanthropy, in fact reacts virtuously to the inappropriate physical intimacy of her lute lesson. Shakespeare thus hints at the sisters' true natures which will be revealed more fully in the play's final scene. The supposedly virtuous and marriageable Bianca happily enters into an illicit affair and elopement, while Katherina, breaking the lute over her would-be tutor's head, holds tight to her virtue, refusing a lover, and only reluctantly accepting a husband. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Shakespeare plays with music's symbolic virtue-vice dichotomy even as he overturns expectations—for Kate will be proved the dutiful wife at the end of the play, while the lute-playing Bianca is unbiddable. Ultimately, whether leading to virtue or vice, for Shakespeare, as for early modern society in general, the marriage of music and love remains unbreakable.

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¹⁰ True to his calling, Shakespeare has poetry, specifically a passage from Ovid's *Heroides I*, win out over music; Patricia B. Phillippy comments insightfully on Shakespeare's choice of text and its gender implications in "'Loytering in love': Ovid's 'Heroides,' hospitality, and humanist education in 'The Taming of the Shrew'." Phillippy (1998).

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Part III
Sex

Secretive Bodies and Passionate Souls: Transgressive Sexuality Among the Carolingians

William Schipper

Introduction

The Carolingians differ only in cultural detail from other medieval societies. Their attitude to issues such as gender differentiation and sexual transgression can be gleaned from their writings. These rarely take the form of direct treatises on the subject of sexuality, or writings that present a transgressive point of view, though these do exist.¹ Their attitude to such matters seems to differ from that found in Anglo-Saxon England, for example, where riddle literature abounds with fecund and highly charged sexual imagery. Among the Carolingians these sorts of things are more muted. But they were not immune to the delights of sexual activity, nor to the legal and personal transgressions that were possible in the realm of sexuality for human beings.

This paper was first inspired during a visit to Cambridge, after a discussion with Danijela Kambaskovic, our editor, about the mysterious things that might lie hidden behind the cloth covering the loins of Christ in the opening *carmen figuratum* of Hrabanus Maurus's *In honorem sanctae cruce*s, and implied by the verses inscribed on the loin-cloth. It was Danijela's searching questions that started me thinking about the implications of the answers discussed below. The paper examines some of the Carolingian texts where human sexuality is discussed openly, either in order to provide and enforce behavioral norms, or to prevent certain kinds of transgressive sexual behaviour. The norm was the kind of sexual morality imposed by Christianity, a society ruled by men, where a woman's role officially was that of a help-meet for men; where women could be powerful, but could not rule on their own; where the mere hint of marital infidelity could lead to civil war (as happened several times under the reign of Louis the Pious when his sons accused their step-mother of infidelity); where boys were placed in monastic settings at a young age as oblates, and must at times have been subject to sexual attentions from more senior monks; where penitential handbooks forbade sexual congress with animals, with people of one's

¹ Baldwin (1994) discusses some post-Carolingian treatises. See also Classen (2008) and Lutterbach (1999).

W. Schipper (✉)
Memorial University, St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada
e-mail: schipper@mun.ca

own sex, in unnatural positions, or with nuns, among others, regulations that must have been established precisely because there were such transgressions that needed to be combatted; where male teachers could express their longing for their pupils in words that have a basis in passionate love poetry (as Alcuin of York did in several letters addressed to Arn, Bishop of Salzburg, a former student); where theologians (such as Alcuin and Hrabanus Maurus) wrote commentaries on the Song of Songs that rewrote the love poetry epithalamically as an allegory of Christ's passionate love for his church; and where clever poets could embed hidden meaning in poems that hint at sexuality.

No-one did this more spectacularly than Hrabanus in his first and most spectacular and intriguing work, the cycle of poems known as *In honorem sanctae crucis* [In honour of the holy cross]. Two poems with embedded images are of particular importance in this discussion, in part because they directly confront the body/soul problem. In the first poem and image of the series, a figure of Christ Triumphant, he invites us to trace the outline of the body of Christ. Particularly intriguing and important is the question of what mysteries lie behind the loin cloth that Christ wears: the verses inscribed on the loin cloth together reveal a great deal about the significance of veiled and hidden bodies and body parts. The second is the figure of Hrabanus Maurus kneeling at the foot of the cross, the final poem and image in the cycle. The body of Hrabanus, poet and monk, encloses verses that directly address the reading audience to pray for *Hrabanus semetipsum* ('Hrabanus himself'), that is, for his eternal soul. The Carolingians were certainly not silent on the subject of sex and sexuality. They could describe the various parts of the male and female human anatomy in graphic terms (as Isidore and Hrabanus Maurus did in their encyclopedic writings), and give a clear indication what these parts were used for. And unlike the Shakers (an eighteenth-century Utopian religious group that, among other things, insisted on life-long permanent celibacy as a condition of membership), the Carolingians did not refrain from sexual activity, and their population grew as a result.²

Transgressive Sexuality and Penitential Handbooks

Penitential handbooks developed under Irish influence in England, and were brought to the continent by missionaries like Boniface, where they quickly became a guide for priests to use when hearing confession. They range widely in subject matter, from restrictions on the use of magic, to regulations on ordination; and from rules on consanguinity to punishment for sexual transgressions. It is the latter that are of particular interest here.³ Although penitential handbooks have their origin in

² On the Shakers see Garrett (1987); and especially pp. 152–153 (on celibacy); and for a history of the Shakers see Stein (1992).

³ Many texts in Wassersleben (1851); Schmitz (1883); Schmitz (1898). New editions of individual penitential handbooks are in preparation in a subseries of Corpus Christianorum ("Paenitentia Franciae, Italiae, et Hispaniae, saeculi VIII–XI"); three volumes have been published so

canonical law and in patristic writings on penance, they took the form they did in England, initially probably as a means of providing guidance to missionary priests faced with a large variety of transgressions of one kind or another. They circulated widely in England and on the continent with the spread of Christianity among the pagan Franks and proved immensely popular, judging from the large number of manuscripts that have survived of penitential handbooks from the eighth to the tenth centuries. Textually they are surprisingly complex, borrowing from each other freely, adding new penances, and refining and classifying their canons.

These collections of penitential canons have not always been viewed in a positive light. Charles Plummer, for example, writing about Bede's alleged authorship of a penitential, expressed himself in rather extreme and judgmental terms that we should be "thankful to believe that Bede had nothing to do with such a matter. The penitential literature is in truth a deplorable feature of the medieval Church. Evil deeds, the imagination of which may perhaps have dimly floated through our minds in our darkest moments, are here tabulated and reduced to a system. It is hard to see how anyone could busy himself with such literature and not be the worse for it" (Plummer 1898, 1, clvii–clviii). On the matter of sexual behaviour, the penitential handbooks are a most valuable source. As Pierre Payer has demonstrated, they provide us not just with an extensive vocabulary associated with sexual behaviour, but also a profound insight into the severe negative position the church in the early middle ages took of various kinds of sexual transgressions and misbehaviour.⁴

The range of subjects that the canons on sexuality address is remarkable. We find, for example, not just penance for adultery, but also for sodomy, rape, rape and murder, wet dreams,⁵ seduction of virgins (both male and female), lascivious dreams, abortion, homosexuality (both between men and women), masturbation (with or without an instrument), and bestiality. The proportion of the penitential canons that deal with sexual matters is substantial in some of these handbooks, (Vogel 1978, p. 30) and one could be forgiven for momentarily concluding that that was sometimes all these priests and monks had on their mind. There remains, moreover, considerable controversy over the purpose of these handbooks. The sheer proliferation of penances suggests that they were an attempt to regulate and codify sexual behaviour, rather than simply being handbooks that priests should use to guide them in questioning their parishioners when they were confessing their sins. Indeed, by the early ninth century there had been a backlash against them, and church leaders such as Theodulph, Bishop of Orléans, thought priests should not read out loud from the handbooks, lest "when the penitent goes away he be persuaded by the devil to fall into one of the crimes of which he had previously been ignorant" (Payers 1984, p. 56).⁶

far (Kottje 1994; Bezler 1998; and van Rhijn 2009). Translations of selected texts in McNeill and Gamer (1938). Payers (1984) has a lengthy and systematic discussion of the topic.

⁴ For a discussion of the vocabulary see Payer (1984), pp. 140–144; and for a list of words, and where they occur pp. 144–153.

⁵ Payer refers to these collectively as "seminal emissions" (see pp. 49–52).

⁶ Second Diocesan Statute 2.65: *Ibidem non debet eum sacerdos de omnibus interrogare, ne forte cum ab illo recesserit, suadente diabolo in aliquod crimen de his quae ante nesciebat cadat* (De Clercq (1938), 1, p. 345).

One of the most comprehensive and most widely cited of the penitential handbooks is ascribed to Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury.⁷ Copies of his penitential circulated in Francia as well. Theodore's Penitential deals with sexual matters in a number of places: 1, 2 covers *De fornicatione* [On fornication]; 1, 8 deals with *De diverso lapsu servorum Dei* [On the varied fall of the servants of God]; 1, 14 addresses issues particular to married men and women (*De poenitentia nubentium specialiter* [On penance of married people in particular]); and 2, 12 provides penances for a variety of sins associated with questions of marriage (*De questionibus conjugiorum* [On questions of marriage]).

Moreover, it was not just the laity who were the target of these canons. Many of them provide one set of penances for the *laici*, and another more severe one for *religiosi*. None, moreover, was above the law, and penances are provided for everyone from the youthful acolyte or novice to bishops. The *Ordines Romani*, for example, provides extensive clauses on the procedures that must be followed for the ordination of bishops. One of these includes directions for ensuring that a candidate has not engaged in unlawful sexual activity:

Tunc dominus apostolicus praecipit sacellario vel nomenclatori, ut eum ad archidiaconum dirigat et eum inquirat de quattuor capitulis secundum canones, id est: arsenoquita, quod est masculo; pro ancilla Dei sacrata, que a Francis nonnata dicitur; pro IIII pedes et pro muliere viro alio coniuncta; aut si coniugem habuit ex alio vir, quod a Grecis dicitur deuterogamia

Then the apostolic representative shall instruct the priest or the nominator to direct him to the archdeacon, to question him about the four capital sins according to the canons, that is, arsenoquita, that is adultery with a man; about relations with the sacred servant of God, who in French is called a nun; with a four-footed animal and with a woman married to another man; and whether he is married to another man's wife, which in Greek is called deuterogamia (bigamy).⁸

The *quattuor capitulis secundum canonum* ('four capital sins according to the canons') are the four kinds of sins, therefore, that according to well-attested canon law required public penance: sodomy, violation of a nun, bestiality or adultery, and bigamy.⁹ It may seem surprising that bestiality and adultery are treated with equal severity in this document, but it is important to keep in mind that this *Ordo* applies to ordained priests, who should be above such sinful temptations. This is not to suggest that these were necessarily common transgressions, though they must have been common enough to cause concern in the church hierarchy, and particularly if members of the priesthood, whose task it was to oversee the spiritual lives in their parishes, were found guilty of them.

⁷ Finsterwalder (1929). In some ways his edition supersedes the one in Schmitz (1883), pp. 525–550, but reviewers were very critical, and particularly of his insistence on the continental origin of Theodore's penitentials.

⁸ *Ordo Romanus* XXXIV, 16. Latin text in Andrieu (1974), 3, p. 607. Cf. Bullough (2004), p. 117. *Arsenoquita* is a transliteration from the Greek ἀρσενοκοῖται, first recorded in I Cor. 6, 9 in a list of people barred from the kingdom of heaven. The Vulgate Latin Bible simply translates the term as *adulteri*. Cf. Weber and Gryson (2007), p. 1774.

⁹ See Andrieu (1974), 3, pp. 549–553 for discussion and additional references.

These sins make their appearance frequently in the penitentials. Bestiality, for example, occurs twice in Theodore: “Someone who often fornicates with a man or with an animal, is ordered to do penance for 10 years” [*Qui saepe cum masculo aut cum pecode fornicat, X annos ut poeniteret iudicavit*] (1, 2, 2).¹⁰ And the next clause adds a further penance: “Someone who has intercourse with cattle [*pecoribus*], must do penance for 15 years” (*Qui cum pecoribus coiret, XV annos poeniteat*;) (1, 2, 3) (Finsterwalder 1929, p. 290; Schmitz 1883, p. 526). Burchard of Worms (died 1025) is even more explicit in his *Decretum*: one of a series of questions specifies: “Have you fornicated against nature, that is, have you had intercourse with males or with animals, that is, with a mare or a cow or a donkey or with some other animal?” [*Fecisti fornicationem contra naturam, id est ut cum masculis vel cum animalibus coires, id est cum equa, cum vacca, vel cum asina, vel cum alio aliquo animali*] (Burchard 1853, col. 968).

Shortly after 813, Theodulf of Orléans (770–821) composed his second *Capitula ad presbyteros parochiae suae*.¹¹ Although in form it is not a penitential, portions of it certainly read as if they were, and Theodulf is clearly working in the penitential tradition. Like the compilers of the penitential handbooks, he provides descriptions of a variety of sexual transgressions, ranging from adultery and abortion, to bestiality and sodomy. Part 7 is particularly instructive because it deals with “irrational behavior,” citing as his authority and main source the canons of the Council of Ancyra, held in what today is Ankara, in Turkey, in 314. Theodulf opens with a description of the triple sense (‘sensus triplex’) of living “irrationally” (‘irrationabiliter’), taken almost word for word from canon 16 of the Council of Ancyra: “Those who mingle sexually (‘commixti sunt’) with cattle, and those who like animals commit incest with their closest relatives, and those who have sexual relations with men.” [*De his qui cum pecoribus commixti sunt, et de his, qui more pecorum incesta commiserunt cum consanguineis, et de his, qui cum masculis concubuerunt.*]¹² He then quotes further from this canon of Ancyra, providing a series of penances for young men under 20 (15 years penance) who commit bestiality; those who are 20 and those who are married (25 years penance); and those who are married and are older than 50 (penance till the end of their lives). Next come those who have sexual relations with animals, and thereby contract mange (*scabies*), which they then pass on to others, either through additionally committing incest, or to animals, or to other men: they must be possessed by an unclean spirit, so must be required to stand and pray among those who are insane. As do earlier writers of penitential handbooks, Theodulf further points out (7, 6) that it is a greater abomination to have intercourse with cattle than with men (*plus abhominabile miscere cum iumento quam cum masculo*), and that it is also a more irrational sin to sin with a man than a woman, whereas to sin

¹⁰ Finsterwalder (1929), p. 290; Schmitz (1883), p. 526. This clause uses *iudicaverat* because the entire penitential of Theodore is structured as a series of notes on his judgments that were taken down by a *discipulus*.

¹¹ Critical edition: Brommer (1984), 1, pp. 142–184. See also Brommer (1974), and Brommer (1975).

¹² *Capit. episc.* 7, 1 (Brommer 1984, p. 165). The direct source is the so-called ‘Versio Isidori vulgata’ version of the canons of Ancyra; Turner (1899–1939), 2, 1, pp. 92–96.

with a close relative and with a consecrated person appears to be equal in the degree of sinfulness.¹³ Finally he also condemns women who sin with women: their sin is equal to a man sinning with a man.¹⁴ Theodulf carefully ranks these transgressions according to severity, and culpability of the sinner (a young man is less guilty than an older man, for example). Moreover, someone who commits one of these sins through ignorance, and who confesses the sin as soon as he knows how severe it is, is to be treated with greater compassion. On the other hand, someone who sins in this way over a long period of time, and despite knowing the gravity of the sin, persists in it, is subject to a series of increasingly severe penances: “First, for 15 years he is to remain apart from the community of the faithful; during those 15 years he may not make an offering, nor take communion, nor stand in prayer with other Christians in the church. After being examined, he may be received back into the communion of prayer. When 20 years have passed, if he has properly (*bene*) and with tears and full devotion done his penance, he may be received back into full communion and reconciliation.”¹⁵ This paragraph is particularly interesting because as far as I can determine, it is entirely in Theodulf’s own words, and expresses eloquently and elegantly not just how he views the gravity of the sin of repeated bestiality, but also how eager he is to welcome the sinner back to the fold if reformed. Although the punishment seems rather severe, perseverance on the part of the sinner will be rewarded not just with full restoration to full communion, but also to reconciliation. Expressed in both the structure of the paragraph, and implicit between the lines is the emotion of a father for his child, echoing the parable of the Good Shepherd, who punishes it for a serious transgression, and welcomes the sinner back to the fold.

Hrabanus Maurus

Hrabanus Maurus, abbot of Fulda, and (from 847) archbishop of Mainz, wrote a number of brief texts addressing some penitential issues to do with sexuality.¹⁶ He also composed two penitentials, the first one about 841 or early 842 at the request of Otgar, Archbishop of Mainz,¹⁷ whom he succeeded as archbishop in 847, the other

¹³ *Capit. episc.* 7, 6 (Brommer 1984, p. 166): *Sicut est autem plus abhominabile miscere cum iumento quam cum masculino, ita plus est irrationabile crimen cum masculino cum muliere. Cum consanguinea et cum sanctimonialia peccare aequale crimen est.*

¹⁴ *Capit. episc.* 7, 7 (Brommer 1984, p. 166): *Aequale est autem crimen feminam cum femina peccare sicut masculum cum masculino, et aequalis debet esse poenitentia.*

¹⁵ *Capit. episc.* 7, 10 (Brommer 1984, p. 167–168): *Primum quindecim annis ab omni communione fidelium segregatus, per illos quindecim annos non offerat, non communicet, ad orationem cum ceteris christianis in ecclesia non stet. Quibus exactis tantum ad communionem orationis suscipiatur. Deinde postea viginti annis expletis, si bene et cum lacrimis et cum omni devotione poenitentiam egit, ad plenam communionem et reconciliationem suscipiatur.*

¹⁶ In 842 he wrote a letter to Regimbald (Hrabanus 1852a, col. 1187–1196), and about 847 he wrote another letter dealing with similar issues (Hrabanus 1852b, col. 1507–1510).

¹⁷ Hrabanus 1852b, col. 1397–1424. This is the same Otgar to whom he sent one of the copies of *In honorem sanctae crucis*; see the presentation image on fo. 1v, and the dedication poem (beginning

at the request of Heribald, Bishop of Auxerre.¹⁸ The prefatory letter to Heribald begins with a brief introductory statement on the nature of penance. Hrabanus then inserts a lengthy passage taken mostly from Lev. 20, cataloguing a large number of sexual transgressions. He begins with adultery (“If someone has committed adultery ...” (*Si moechatus fuerit...*)), then moves on to sodomy (“Who sleeps with a man in feminine-style intercourse” [*Qui dormierit masculo coitu femineo*]). Then follow several forms of incest: with a daughter-in-law (*cum nuru*), his wife’s daughter (*super uxorem filiam*), bestiality (*qui cum jumento et pecore coierit*), intercourse with a menstruating woman (*cum muliere menstruata*), with one’s aunt (*cum uxore patru*), and with the wife of one’s brother (*uxorem fratris sui*). The list of sins concludes with various kinds of divination. These sins are roundly condemned with phrases such as “their blood be upon them”, or “these are nefarious things”, or an “ignominy”. This lengthy passage from Leviticus is then followed by another from Galatians, to demonstrate, Hrabanus says, that such sins are condemned in both the Old and the New Testaments.

Hrabanus’s Penitential itself is radically different in some respects from the ones that circulated in Europe before the Council of Paris (829). As early as 813, near the end of the reign of Charlemagne, two councils, one held at Châllonnais, the other in Tours, had already attempted to regulate or stop the use of penitential handbooks. The Council of Châllonnais, for example, insisted that the clergy “repudiate and take pains to eliminate the small books called penitentials because they contain errors and lack authority.”¹⁹ These church councils sought to have bishops educate priests in the kinds of ancient penitential books that were the best ones to follow, in order to bring some form of common practise to the Frankish church.²⁰ But these efforts appear to have failed, and in March 829 another council was convened at Paris by order of the Emperor Louis the Pious and his co-emperor and son, Lothair I. This council used much stronger language to eliminate the penitential books, ordering bishops to seize and burn “the small books known as penitential handbooks” (*codicelli quos penitentiales vocant*), in order to prevent their misuse by “unskilled priests” (*sacerdos imperiti*):²¹

Because many of the clergy, in part from carelessness, in part out of ignorance of the means of penance, contrary to what is right when hearing confession, rather than determining canon law, impose penances using certain small books called penitentials written in opposition to canonical authority, and in doing so they do not cure the wounds of sin, but rather end up stroking them more hotly.²²

Accipe sancti pater Otgario summe sacerdos/ librum quem dudum mente dedi et calama) on the page facing fo. 1r, in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 652.

¹⁸ Hrabanus (1852c), col. 467–494.

¹⁹ Châllonnais, can. 38: ... *imponi debet, repudiatis ac penitus eliminatis libellis, quos paenitentiales vocant, quorum sunt certi errores, incerti auctorities...*; Werminghoff (1906–1908), 1, p. 281.

²⁰ Tours, can. 22: *Ideo necessarium videbatur nobis, cum omnes episcopi ad sacrum palatium congregati fuerint, ab eis edoceri, cuius antiquorum liber paenientialis potissimum sit sequendum;*” Werminghoff (1906–1908), 1, p. 289.

²¹ Paris 829, can. 32; Werminghoff (1906–1908), 2, p. 633.

²² Paris 829, can. 32: *Quoniam multi sacerdotum partim incuria, partim ignorantia modum paenitentia reatum suum confitentibus secus, quam iura auctoritatem decernant, imponunt, utentes*

Clearly the bishops gathered at this council were deeply concerned about the misuse that the penitential handbooks were being put to. The booklets had little or no canonical authority, their use had never been authorized by the church, and they represented what must have seemed like penitential anarchy over which the church seemed to have little or no control. The bishops therefore decreed that:

...every bishop in his diocese [*paroechia*] diligently make inquiries about these erroneous booklets [*codicellos*], and when found, throw them in the fire, so that other ignorant priests not be deceived by them.²³

In addition, ignorant priests (*praesbyteri...imperiti*) must receive instructions from the bishops about the proper methods of inquiring about sins, and learn to impose penances in accordance with canonical law. Political trouble in the empire in the form of a rebellion by the sons of Louis the Pious (in large part inspired by the emperor's remarriage to Judith and her ambition to make her son Charles a co-heir) no doubt helped to derail the plan to eradicate the penitential handbooks, and standardize the hearing of confession and the imposition of penance. However, the format that Hrabanus's penitential took, and the sources of authority he cited, demonstrate that the desire of the Council of Paris to eliminate the insular form of penitential handbooks was largely successful.

Hrabanus covers similar ground as the insular penitential handbooks in his second penitential, for Heribald: homicide, adultery, capital crimes, abortion (a number of times, with various kinds of people), fornication, eating with Jews, and augury and divination are all targets. But almost all the authorities he cites are the canonical ecumenical church councils. He quotes, for example, from the first Council of Ancyra, held in 314 to deal with, among other things, the *lapsi* (those who had lapsed from the Christian faith under persecution) against homicide and involuntary manslaughter. In other places he cites the Council of Agde (556), of Nicea (323), one of the councils of Toledo, a council of Rheims, and another held at Mainz. He also cites a variety of treatises by writers such as St. Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe, in North Africa (*Ad Petrum diaconum de fide* [To Peter the Deacon, on Faith]), wrongly ascribing it to St. Augustine of Hippo,²⁴ a letter to Pope Boniface I (Aug., Ep. 185),²⁵ several treatises by Isidore,²⁶ and papal decrees of Innocent I, Pope Leo the Great

scilicet quibusdam codicellis contra canonicam auctoritatem scriptis, quos paenitentiales vocant, et ob id non vulnera peccatorum curant, sed potius foventes palpant...; Werminghoff (1906–1908), 2, p. 633.

²³ Paris 829, can. 32: ... *ut unusquisque episcoporum in sua paroechia eosdem erroneos codicellos diligenter perquirat et inventos igni tradat, ne per eos ulterius sacerdotes imperiti homines decipiant*; Werminghoff (1906–1908), 2, p. 633.

²⁴ Fulgentius and Fraipont (1958), pp. 39–41, lines 772–822, pp. 737–739. The particular passage occurs in Chapter 10 of Hrabanus's penitential: *De his qui post sacrum ordinem capitalia crimina committunt, et eorum poenitentia seu excommunicatione* [Concerning those who after their sacred ordination commit capital crimes, and their penance, or excommunication]; Hrabanus (1852c), col. 477. Until 1929, the text was ascribed to "Ps-Augustine"; for the correction see Lapeyre (1929), p. 216.

²⁵ Augustine, ep. 185, 10 (45) (ed. Goldbacher 1911), p. 39=cap. 10 (PL 110: 480A-B).

²⁶ *De officiis ecclesiasticis* ['On ecclesiastical offices'], 2, 17, 3 (Isidore 1989b, p. 80=cap. 15 (PL 110: 484A)).

and others.²⁷ Earlier penitential handbooks such as Cummean's or Theodore's often recycled parts of earlier penitential books. Hrabanus, on the other hand, does not generally do so; his methodology, compiling sometimes lengthy statements from patristic authorities, gives his two penitential books a very different tone. Indeed, there is just one exception, in Chapter 30, addressing the problem of those "who mix menstrual blood in drink or food for others, and who observe the magical art of divination and augury" (*De his quae menstruum sanguinem aliis in cibo vel potu dant; et de his qui magicam artem divinatione et augurio observant*). In this chapter, confronting magical potions and practices involving menstrual blood (a form of love potion), he quotes from the regulations (*constitutiones*) [i.e. the *Canones* or 'canons'] of "Theodore, archbishop of the English people" (*Theodori archiepiscopi gentis Anglorum*).²⁸ And yet, although Hrabanus in general appears to be far more concerned with various problems concerning the priesthood, or serious social issues, when it comes to sexual transgressions, he is as explicit as other writers of penitential handbooks; however, he prefers to cite decrees of church councils rather than penitentials.

Chapters 8 and 9 of Hrabanus's *Penitential ad Herebaldum* (PL 110, col. 474) address the issue of what must have been a fairly common occurrence: aborting or killing the offspring of illicit sexual relationships and transgressions (*ex fornicatione*). Chapter 8, with the rubric "Concerning those who kill the offspring born from fornication" (*De his quae partus suos ex fornicatione perimunt*), provides penances for women who abort or kill their own children; Chapter 9, "Concerning those who cause an abortion" (*De his quae abortum faciunt*), provides penalties for women who cause abortions, either by counselling murder, or by providing drugs to cause an abortion. In both instances the penalty comes from a church council, and involves excommunication or being driven out of the community for a specified period of time. The first of the two chapters is directed at women (use of the feminine form of the pronoun *quae* makes that clear); the second is aimed in the first instance at women, judging from the rubric, but Hrabanus extends it to either sex if it involves the adulterers themselves (*in utroque sexu adulteris*). Just how a man could commit murder in this way is detailed in a letter Hrabanus wrote to a certain priest called Regimbod in early 847. The letter must have been written before February 847, the month he was elected archbishop of Mainz; the month can be deduced from the opening paragraph, in which he speaks of "Herolvesfeld," now Bad Hersfeld, the village Regimbod served as priest, as being "in our vicinity" [*vicino nobis*], about 20 miles north of Fulda. The first question Hrabanus answers concerns the punishment a man should receive who beat his pregnant wife so severely that two of the triplet sons that are born as a result of the beating die during the birth, while the third dies shortly after being baptized.²⁹ Recognizing that this is

²⁷ Decretals of Innocent I, in Dionysius (1848), pp. 237–262; of Leo the Great, in Dionysius (1848), pp. 277–302.

²⁸ Hrabanus (1852c), col. 491.

²⁹ Ep. 41, Dümmler (1899), p. 479: *Primum ergo ibi quesitum est, quale iudicium ille sustinere debeat, qui flagellando uxorem suam, duos filios suos in partu occidit, ita ut ad baptismi gratiam*

a form of manslaughter resulting from excessive application of force (*propter immoderatum correptionem*), Hrabanus reminds Regimbod of the penance (5 years) provided for involuntary murder (*de homicidiis non sponte commissis*) pronounced at the Council of Ancyra (314).³⁰

In Chapter 20 Hrabanus addresses the problem of incestuous marriage at some length. He details the various kinds of incestuous relationships; the length of this chapter, not much shorter than the one dealing with problems of the clergy who commit capital offences, gives a good indication of how serious he views this problem to be. Among the prohibited kinds of relationships are brother with sister, cousins (*fratris germanam*), uncles, and aunts. Also forbidden are marriages with close relatives, being married to two sisters (bigamy), or to two brothers; or committing adultery with two sisters. Men who commit such practises are to be excommunicated for life (*a communione abjiciantur usque ad mortem*).

Chapters 21–24 deal in some detail with those who commit adultery (Hrabanus 1852c, col. 487–489). Judging from some of the penances imposed, this was clearly considered just as heinous a crime as combining adultery with murder (as in Chapters. 8 and 9), or being involved in an incestuous relationship (*Epist. 1*, ed. Hilberg 1996, pp. 1–9). Indeed, it is a serious transgression of both religious (i.e. Biblical) law and canon law. As in his preface, Hrabanus begins with the law of Moses: “Not only does the law (*lex*) condemn adultery, but also the authority of the gospel (*evangelica auctoritas*) forbids the practice.”³¹ He then follows this with citations from the Council of Ancyra (canon 9), a council of Carthage (canon 69), the decrees of Pope Innocent I (Chapters. 24 and 27), and the Synod of Elvira (canon 9). The next chapter, on those who commit adultery (Chapter 22, *De his qui moechantur*) cites three canons from the Synod of Elvira (ca. 306) against adultery committed by men: one prevents subdeacons who committed adultery while adolescents from being ordained,³² and removes from office those who commit adultery after ordination;³³ another imposes penance on adolescents who commit adultery

pervenire non potuerint. Tertium vero filium ita debilitavit, ut post partum mox baptizatus vitam finierit (The first thing that has been asked is what sort of punishment someone should receive, who, after beating his wife, kills two of his sons in childbirth, so that they can not undergo baptism. The third son, on the other hand, is so severely injured, that after being born he dies immediately upon being baptised).

³⁰ Ancyra, canon 42 [22], Turner (1899–1939), p. 111: *De homicidiis non sponte commissis, prior quidem definitio post septennem paenitentiam perfectionem consequi praecipit, secunda uero quinquennii tempus explere* (Concerning homicides not freely committed, a former decree ordered that they could attain perfection after a seven year penance, but this second one [orders] that fulfill a term [of penance] of five years).

³¹ *Adulterium autem non solum lex damnat, sed etiam evangelica auctoritas omnino fieri vetat* (Hrabanus 1852c, col. 487D).

³² Elvira 30: *Subdiacones eos ordinari non debere, qui in adolescentia sua fuerint moechati* (Subdeacons may not be ordained, who committed adultery in adolescence); Mansi (1759–1798), 2, p. 9; Martínez Díez and Rodríguez (1984), p. 251.

³³ Elvira 30: *uel qui sunt in tempore praeteritum ordinati, amoueantur* (Also, those who have been ordained in the past, must be removed); Mansi (1759–1798), 2, p. 10; Martínez Díez and Rodríguez (1984), p. 252.

after being baptized;³⁴ and a third one imposes severe penances on men who frequently commit adultery.³⁵ Chapter 23, “On virgins dedicated to God, or virgins in general, who commit adultery” (*De virginibus Deo sacratis, sive saecularibus, si moechaverint*) cites two canons from Elvira, and one from Ancyra. The first one imposes a severe penalty for dedicated virgins who commit adultery: they are not to be given communion even at the moment of death, unless they transgress only once, in which case they may be given communion at the moment of death, provided they do penance for the remainder of their lives.³⁶ The second one is much more lenient: a virgin who engages in sexual intercourse, and marries the man afterwards, can be admitted to communion, and if she afterwards commits adultery, she must do penance for five years. Chapter 24 (“Concerning those who consort with consecrated virgins; and on unveiled virgins who commit adultery;” *De his qui se sacris virginibus sociant; et de virginibus non velatis, si moechaverint*) confronts the problem of men who violate virgins dedicated to God, judging this to be an association similar to incest, mixed with sacrilege: the punishment is being barred from communion, and unless they do public penance (*nisi per publicam probatamque poenitentiam*) they cannot be readmitted to communion. The authorities cited are the papal decrees of Pope Gelasius and Innocent I.³⁷

Two of the next five chapters address specific issues, and in particular lesbian practises and impotence in marriage. Chapter 25 prescribes a 3-year penance for “a woman who has fornicated with a woman.”³⁸ The chapter deals with more than just lesbian practises, however. The next sentence repeats, in different words, the first penance, placing intercourse with another woman on the same level as the sin of

³⁴ Elvira 31: *Adulcentes qui post fidem lauacri salutaris fuerint moechati, cum duxerint uxores, acta legitima poenitentia placuit ad communionem eos admitti* (Adolescents who after the faith of the bath of salvation [i.e. baptism] have committed adultery, when they marry, may be admitted to communion, provided the required penance has been done); Mansi (1758–1798), 2, pp. 10–11; Martínez Diez and Rodríguez (1984), p. 252.

³⁵ Elvira 47: *Si quis fidelis habens uxorem, non semel, sed saepe fuerit moechatis, in finem mortis est conueniendus. Quod si promiserit cessaturum, detur ei communio. Si resuscitatus rursus moechatur, placuit ulterius non ludere eum de communione pacis* (If someone of the faithful, while married, commits adultery not once, but often, he is to be approached at the hour of death. If he promises to cease, he may be given communion. If he revives and commits adultery again, he may never again make a mockery [ludere eum = amuse himself] of the communion of peace); Mansi (1759–1798), 2, p. 13; Martínez Diez and Rodríguez (1984), p. 257.

³⁶ Elvira 14: *Virgines quae virginitatem suam non custodierint, si eosdem qui eas violaverint, duxerint et tenuerint maritos, post annum sine poenitentia, reconciliari debebunt. Vel si alios cognoverint viros eo quod moechatae sint, placuit, per quinquennii tempora acta legitima poenitentia, admitti eas ad communionem* (Virgins who do not preserve their virginity may be reconciled if they marry and keep as husbands those who violated them. But if they know other men because they commit adultery with them, we order that they may be admitted to communion after doing legitimate acts of penance for fifteen years; Mansi (1759–1798), 2, p. 8; Martínez Diez and Rodríguez (1984), pp. 246–247.

³⁷ Gelasius, can. 20, in Dionysius Exiguus (1848), p. 308; Innocent I, can. 20, in Dionysius Exiguus (1848), p. 245.

³⁸ *Si mulier cum muliere fornicata fuerit, annos III poeniteat* (If a woman has fornicated with a woman, let her do penance for three years); Hrabanus (1852c), Cap. 25 (PL 110: 490).

a man who has intercourse with a woman who is not his wife (*sicut fornicator*).³⁹ In the next sentence, Hrabanus addresses the practise in which a woman mixes her husband's semen with his food in order to increase his ardor for her (a practise also referred to in a slightly different way in Chapter 30); the punishment is simply "she should do penance" (*poeniteat*). Finally, he addresses the practise of masturbation by women who are alone, a practise also punishable by a 3-year penance.⁴⁰ All of these transgressions are found in one form or another in earlier penitential handbooks, often repeated unchanged from one to another, but the actual source from which Hrabanus takes them appears to be the *Paenitentiale Martenianum*, an early ninth-century compilation, which is the only compilation to use the phrase *Anquirinensium* in place of Hrabanus's normal designation of *in concilio Ancyrano* for decrees from the Council of Ancyra, and to list these specific sexual sins in that particular order (Kottje 1980, p. 206).

Chapter 29 addresses the issue of impotence in a marriage, and whether a wife can take another husband, or the husband another wife. Because a successful marriage at the time depended more on producing children, than on having a healthy and satisfying sex life (as we might think of it), it could become a serious issue. Hrabanus could find no guidance from the decrees of the church (*non cum auctoritate*), and could instead quote only from "a certain statute" (*de quorundam statutis respondemus*). The issue does not get mentioned very often in the many penitential handbooks, however, though we should not conclude from this that it was a rare condition.

Chapter 30 confronts a different issue: attempts by women to make an aphrodisiac or possibly a fertility potion by mixing their menstrual blood in food or drink, and giving it to their husbands; or who drink semen from their husbands mixed in a drink. According to Hrabanus, these are nothing more than magical practises: "It seems to us, that they share those views with magicians and sorcerers, who are known to have practised magic arts" [*Ut nobis, tali sententia ferendi sunt, sicut magi et arioli, qui magicam artem exercuisse noscuntur*] (Hrabanus 1852c, col. 491B.). He therefore quotes a passage from the "Canons of Theodore" at this point, a passage that forms a kind of *locus classicus* in the penitentials on this subject, including specific penances depending on the frequency and severity of the transgression.

³⁹ Migne in the PL reprinted an edition by Henricus Canisius and Jacques Basnage, published in Paris in 1725 (in *Thesaurus monumentorum ecclesiasticorum*, 2 vols. [Amsterdam: Rudolphum et Gerhardum Wetstenios, 1725], 2, pp. 283–312); this in turn reprints the edition by Petrus Stevartius (in *Tomus Singularis Insignium Auctorum* [Ingolstadt: Ex typographica Ederiana, apud Elisabetham Angermariam Viduam, 1616], pp. 633–670). This edition inserts the word *Item* (Also) to introduce this variation, but Kottje has demonstrated that the best manuscripts read *id est* (that is; Kottje 1980, p. 205, and note 170), making this a variation of the previous one, instead of a new transgression. Stevart's 1616 edition was based on an eleventh century Weingarten manuscript, now Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, MS HB VI 107. See Kottje (1980), pp. 150–153 for the printing history of this text.

⁴⁰ *Mulier sola, si cum se ipsa coitum habeat, tres annos poeniteat*; Hrab. cap. 25, PL 110: 490B. *Paen. Mart.* 77, 5, al. 2 (Hörmann zu Horbach 1914, p. 465).

Finally, after another chapter on fortune telling and augury, Chapter 32 confronts the issue of “irrational fornication” (*De his qui fornicantur irrationabiliter*). However, rather than quoting from earlier penitentials, Hrabanus is content to cite the Council of Ancyra (cap. 15 and 16). He begins by making clear in his own words what he means: “... in the council of Ancyra, Chapter 15, it is written about those who fornicate irrationally, that is with animals and men” [*Item in Ancyrano concilio, cap. 15, scriptum est de his qui irrationabiliter, id est cum pecoribus et masculis, fornicantur*].⁴¹ Hrabanus is clearly condemning bestiality and sodomy here: *Pecus* (dative or ablative plural: *pecoribus*) can mean either cattle, or sheep, or simply animals in general, and *masculus* refers to ‘a masculine person’. The Council of Ancyra did not mince words. It divides the men guilty of such crimes into three groups, those under twenty (*ante vigesimum aetatis*), those over twenty who are also married (*post xx annos aetatis, uxores habentes*), and those over fifty who are married. The first group is required to do acts of penance for 16 years; after 15 years their life will be examined to determine how they have spent the time of penance assigned, and whether they can again be admitted to communion. But if they persist in their sin, they will be required to do penance for a longer period of time. Men over 20 years old who have fallen into this sin, are required to do penance for 25 years. If they are married, and over 50, and persist in this sin, they will only be permitted to receive the grace of communion (*gratiam communionis*) at the end of their lives (*ad exitum vitae*) (Hrabanus 1852c, col. 492B).

The two sins of bestiality and sodomy are clearly to be treated with seriousness: being barred from communion is akin to being excommunicated, and although it is not clear precisely what form of penance is envisioned, either in the council of Ancyra, or in Hrabanus’s penitential, other sources, and particularly penitential handbooks such as Theodore’s, make clear that this could take a variety of forms, but most often bread and water accompanied by frequent prayer. In the early church, penance was always a public process, but by the fifth century we find Pope Leo I, in a frequently cited letter dated March 6, 459, condemning the practise of forcing penitents to read out loud a list of the sins they have confessed, in part because it could place them in difficulty with secular law, and in part because it serves no purpose, or perhaps it could give ideas to others (though Leo does not say so).⁴² Hrabanus makes his views on this subject very clear in his *De institutione clericorum*: “Those who have sinned in public, must do public penance. ... But if the sins are private and confessed freely to a priest or a bishop ... they must do their penance privately as well, lest the weak in the church be scandalized, seeing the penances of those of whose cases they are ignorant.”⁴³ Hrabanus, in other words,

⁴¹ Hrabanus (1852c), col. 492A. Cf. the similarity of this section with the Capitula of Theodulf, discussed above.

⁴² Ep. 168, PL 54, col. 1209–1211. The date is that recorded in the notes to Migne’s reprint of the Ballerini edition of 1759; cf. PL 54, col. 1210, note h. The two English translators of Leo’s letters (Feltoe 1895, p. 297; Hunt 1957, p. 112) merely summarize the letter.

⁴³ Hrabanus Maurus, *De instit. cleric.* 2, 30: *Quorum autem peccata in publico sunt, in publico debet esse poenitentia.... Quorum ergo peccata occulta sunt et spontanea confessione soli tantummodo presbitero sive episcopoab eis fuerunt revelata, horum occulta debet esse poenitentia ...*

with his penitential, and other writings on penance sought to restore the rules of the early church, rather than the sometimes idiosyncratic penances that he would have found in the penitential handbooks that were so roundly condemned by the Council of Paris in 829.

Epistolary Passion

The penitential handbooks were required for a long time as books that a priest should possess and be familiar with. Together they give a comprehensive picture of the sexual problems present in early medieval Europe, as well as a picture of the tools used to shape Christian sexual morality. But there were other ways in which the Carolingians expressed sexuality and sensuality. Some of these documents are controversial, in the sense that how one interprets them depends in part on how one views human sexuality, or at times even on one's own sexual orientation.

Late in 790 Alcuin of York, while in England, wrote a letter to Arn, Bishop of Salzburg, in which he sends his loving greetings, and expresses his desire to see his former student. The letter seems quite explicit in what Alcuin desires. He begins with a standard salutation, then continues:

I treasure the memory of your loving friendship, holy father, longing that some day the desired time will come when I may put my longing arms around your neck. If only I could fly like Habbakuk,⁴⁴ how quickly I would rush to embrace you and how eagerly I would kiss not only your eyes, ears and mouth but also each finger and toe not once but many times.⁴⁵

This and similar letters have created considerable controversy. Readers such as John Boswell read them as expressions of same-sex love. Allen Frantzen, discussing these same letters by Alcuin as Boswell does, concludes that a reading of Alcuin's letters as a whole makes very clear that he was both a "moralist" and an ascetic, and that Bosworth's conclusion, that Alcuin's own inclinations helped him to modify the regulations of the Carolingian church against same-sex acts is "gratuitous (Boswell 1980, p. 190; Frantzen 1998, p. 199)." Others have taken quite a different viewpoint. C.S. Lewis, for example, though not commenting on this specific letter, finds it curious that expressions of passion, tears, or a desire to embrace, by men should always require a homoerotic reading, since then Hrothgar, Roman centurion, even

ne infirmi in ecclesia scandalizentur videntes eorum poenas, quorum penitus ignorant causas. (Zimpel 1996, p. 376).

⁴⁴ For the story of how an angel transported Habacuc physically to Babylon to feed Daniel in the lion's den, see the apocryphal 'Bel and the dragon' in Dan. 14, 32–41.

⁴⁵ Ep. 10: *Satis suavi commemoratione vestram recolo, sanctissime pater, dilectionem et familiaritatem, optans, ut quandoque eveniat mihi tempus amabile, quo collum caritatis vestrae desideriorum meorum digitulis amplecter. O, si mihi translatio Abacuc esset subito concessa, quam citatis manibus ruerem in amplexus paternitatis vestrae, et quam compressis labris non solum oculos aures et os, sed etiam manuum vel pedum singulos digitorum articulos, non semel, sed multoties oscularer* (Dümmler 1898, p. 38; translation by Allott 1974, p. 140 (letter 135)).

Johnson and his biographer would be “pansies”.⁴⁶ Alcuin expresses his love and longing in other letters to Arn as well. In letter 184, for example, he says: “[T]he third reason for my journey ... was to see your dear loving face; but I have so far been prevented from doing what I so much wanted.”⁴⁷ In another letter, written in 800, Alcuin expresses his passion in very similar terms:

O if could be spirited to you like Habbakuk! How I would fling my arms round your neck and hug you, sweet son! A whole summer day would not be too long for me to press breast to breast and lips to lips till I kissed each limb of your body in tender greeting. But as my sins prevent this, I shall do swiftly what the sluggish body will allow, dipping my loving pen in a sea of tears to write the tenderest words of greeting on my page, that a speedy traveler may bring it to the son of my love, who is my father in merits, my brother in love, and my son in age, that he may read my sorrow, since he cannot see my joy.⁴⁸

Certainly the letter has an erotic undercurrent to it, but the conceit, even the words themselves, have a long history. In part its source is a letter from Jerome to his friend Rufinus of Aquileia, written about 375, when Rufinus was travelling around Egypt. Jerome writes as follows:

Oh, if only the Lord Jesus Christ would suddenly grant me the swift passage of Philip to the eunuch⁴⁹ or of Habacuc⁵⁰ to Daniel, how tightly would I clasp your neck with my embraces! How fervently I would kiss that mouth that has sometimes erred with me, sometimes uttered wisdom!⁵¹

Rather than reading these letters from Alcuin strictly as evidence for same-sex relationships in Carolingian monasteries (as Boswell 1980 does), these expressions can be seen as part of a late classical tradition of *amicitia*—male friendship. When Jerome wrote the letter to his friend Rufinus he was expressing the intensity of his desire to see his friend. In the same way, when Alcuin quoted part of the letter 400 years later, he was expressing how deeply he missed his former student in language

⁴⁶ Lewis (1960), p. 75. Hrothgar is king of Denmark in the Old English poem *Beowulf*.

⁴⁷ Letter 184: *Tertia causa ... itineris mei ... dulcissimam caritatis tuae videre faciem*: Dümmler (1898), 2, p. 309; transl. Allott (1974), Letter 65, pp. 78–79.

⁴⁸ Ep. 193: *O si mihi translatio Abacuc esset concessa ad te: quam tenacibus tua colla strinxissem, o dulcissime fili, amplexibus; nec me longitudo aestivi diei fessum efficeret, quin minus premerem pectus pectore, os ori adiungerem, donec singulos corporis artus dulcissimis oscularer salutationibus. Sed quia hoc peccata mea impediunt, ut in tardo corpore fieri valeat, quod possum, instantius efficiam; pennam caritatis lacrimoso intingens gurgite, ut suavissima salutationis verba scribantur in cartula; ut per manus currentis viatoris veniat ad filium caritatis meae, qui est pater meritis, frater caritate, filius aetate, ut me legat lugentem, quem non aspiciet laetantem*; Dümmler (1898), 2, p. 319; Allott (1974), Letter 143, p. 146.

⁴⁹ For the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch see Acts 8: 26–40.

⁵⁰ Some of the manuscripts read Ambacum, others Abbacuc. On the name see Adriaen (1969–1970), Prol. 1 (p. 579): *corrupte apud graecos et latinos nomen ambacum prophetae legi, qui apud hebraeos dicitur abacuc, et interpretatur amplexus, siue ut significantius uertamus in graecum, περίληψις, id est amplexatio*.

⁵¹ Ep. 3: *o si mihi nunc dominus lesus Christus uel Philippi ad eunuchum uel Ambacum ad Danihelum translationem repente concederei, quam ego nunc arte tua stringerem colla complexibus, quam illud os, quod mecum uel errauit aliquando uel sapuit, inpressis figerem labiis!* Hilberg (1996), p. 13; translation: Mierow (1963), p. 31.

that was both passionate and erotic, because it would convey his feelings most eloquently (See Dronke 1968, 1, pp. 192–220; Bullough 2004, pp. 115–117; McGuire 1988, pp. 117–127).

Monasteries brought together men of all ages and this sometimes created sexual difficulties. The most poignant kind must have been created by the system of oblation, in which parents gave a child to a monastery along with sizable gifts of land, not just so they could be educated, but as permanent gifts to God. The Venerable Bede was an oblate in the seventh century monastery of Wearmouth and Jarrow; Alcuin, too, was an oblate in York in the mid-eighth century; and Hrabanus Maurus was an oblate in Fulda in the late eighth-century. Such children occupied a very special place in the monasteries, in part because they were generally innocent when they became part of the community, and this purity—which included sexual purity—along with the education they received, made them particularly good candidates for the priesthood. Although the Rule of St. Benedict devoted very little attention to children, this was not the case in Carolingian commentaries on the Rule. Hildemar of Corbie, for example, provided an extensive commentary on the Rule which has come down to us in a number of recensions, all of which go back to notes taken by his pupils.⁵² It is clear from his commentary that children were to be closely supervised at all times, in part to prevent the more serious sins, including sexual transgressions such as those perpetrated by older youths on younger children, and sins committed with younger children and youths by adults. It is particularly those sins that could bar someone from becoming a priest. It is also clear from Hildemar's commentary that they could not be completely prevented. As Augustine had insisted, because of original sin, children could not be totally innocent. It is in this light that we must see Hildemar's provision that if someone over 15 years old fornicated with a child, the child was to be beaten, whereas the sin of the older boy was considered a minor one, especially if the act took place under the influence of alcohol. Moreover, if it was an isolated incident, both the child and the older boy could still become priests. Only if the behaviour was frequent were they to be barred from becoming priests, or removed from the priesthood if they were already priests (Hildemar 1880, cap. 25, p. 350).

Bodily Secrets in Spiritual Poetry: *In Honorem Sanctae Crucis*

Hrabanus's cycle of poems in honour of the cross, *In honorem sancte crucis*, is a collection of 28 *carmina figurata*, poems specifically constructed so that their letters and words form images or figures; in other words, images and figures enclose or encapsulate text, which can be read in a number of different directions and ways,

⁵² Hildemar (1880). See also De Jong (1996), pp. 145–155, on Hildemar and child rearing in monasteries.

and within a number of different segments of the images⁵³ Most of the poems in the cycle have the same number of lines as letters per line. Letters are highlighted in colour in such a way as to form a variety of figures, some very elaborate. Hrabanus's model for the *carmina figurata* was a cycle of poems on political and imperial themes probably composed for the Emperor Constantine by Publius Optatianus Porfyrius in the early fourth century (Polará 1973; Ernst 1991, pp. 97–127). Hrabanus composed this cycle of poems for his teacher Alcuin, although he only completed it more than a decade after the latter's death in 802. Like some other near contemporaries such as St. Boniface and Theodulf of Orléans, Alcuin composed some *carmina figurata*, including one in praise of the cross that may have provided additional inspiration for Hrabanus, but no-one has composed a more elaborate and extensive cycle than Hrabanus.⁵⁴ Each of the poems is accompanied by a description of the figures, a summary of the contents and meaning of the poem and an explanation of the different ways in which the poems can be read.

Each of the prose *explicationes* ends with specific instructions for reading the text enclosed by the figures, in order to ensure that a reader will grasp the various meanings as Hrabanus intended them. These explanations are essential for understanding how to read the text enclosed by the images. For example, Carmen 23 is one of the most elaborate of the geometrical figures. The primary figure is a large Chi Rho, a figure made up of the first two Greek letters of the word ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (“Christ”), with the X superimposed on the lower part of the stem of the P (see Fig. 1), which Christians had used as a monogram for Christ at least since the days of Constantine (fourth century).⁵⁵ The bowl and stem of the Rho, and the Chi that transects the lower part of the stem, are all constructed from a series of Greek letters.⁵⁶ Only by following the instructions in the prose explanation does it become clear in what order to read the Greek letters: a reader has to begin at the lower end of the bowl of the Rho, follow the letters around to the top, then read down the stem of the Rho. Doing so produces the following Greek text: Ο CHP IH CYC ΑΑΗΘΙΑ;

⁵³ Critical edition: Perrin (1997). It is important to understand how Perrin has numbered the various parts of *In honorem sanctae crucis* in his edition: the prefatory poems, the preface, and the *capitula* are numbered A1–A9, the 28 poems of the cycle are numbered B1–B28, the facing page prose explanations are numbered C1–C28, and the prose paraphrases in Book 2 (Perrin 1997, pp. 225–287) are numbered D0–D28. Perrin's edition is accompanied by a separate folder (CCCM 100A) containing photographs in colour of all the images in Città di Vaticana, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 124. This copy probably dates from about 830, and has been corrected and annotated by Hrabanus himself. The entire tradition of the *carmina figurata* is discussed by Ernst (1991).

⁵⁴ Copies of *carmina figurata* by Boniface, Alcuin, Joseph Scottus and Theodulf are preserved in Bern, Bürgerbibliothek, MS 212. This MS also contains many of the *carmina figurata* by Optatianus. See Ernst (1991), p. 171, Abb. 50, for an image from the MS of a poem on the cross by Alcuin; and p. 184, Abb. 54, for one by Josephus Scottus.

⁵⁵ Eusebius of Caesaria in his *Vita Constantini* (1, 31) gives a description of it. See Cameron and Hall (1999), p. 81.

⁵⁶ Figure 1, taken from Perrin (1988), shows *Carmen* 23; the arrows and numbers (red in Perrin 1988) provide a visualization of how to read the figure.



Fig. 1 Carmen 22, with numbers and arrows to guide reading (from Perrin 1988, p. 217). (With permission of Berg International)

with the *nomina sacra* abbreviations⁵⁷ expanded, this becomes O COTHP IHCYC ΑΛΗΘΙΑ (ὁ σοτήρ Ἰησους ἀλήθεια=“o Saviour, Jesus, Truth”). The text displayed in the X says: ΘC XPC IHC, which becomes ΘEOC ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΙΗCOYC (θεός χριστός Ἰησους=“God, Christ, Jesus”). As if this is not complex enough, Hrabanus uses *gematria*, a system of counting using values associated with each of the Greek letters, to explain that when the values of the letters in the Rho (the “P”) are added together they total 1255. If we add to that the value of the Δ (=4; the shape of the bowl of the Rho resembles a Δ), and the value of the stem of the Rho (=1, the value of the Latin letter, not the Greek letter), we get 1260. This number

⁵⁷ *Nomina sacra* (holy names) is a technical term used to describe the widely used abbreviations for the names of God and Christ in both Latin and Greek manuscripts. See especially Traube (1907) for a discussion.

represents the number of days in which the “Gentiles” will trample the porch of the temple underfoot (Apoc. 11, 2); it also represents the number of days that the woman representing the church and the Blessed Virgin is to be fed in the wilderness (Apoc. 12, 6);⁵⁸ and it represents the number of days (three and a half years), that Christ preached on earth. The second number represented by the Chi Rho is 1335, mentioned in Dan. 12, 12: “Blessed is he that waits and comes unto a thousand three hundred thirty-five days.”⁵⁹ Hrabanus derives this number by adding the values of the Greek letters contained in the X that straddles the lower half of the stem of the the Rho: the words ΘEOC XPICTYC IHCYC, using the values of the *nomina sacra* as they appear in the Chi (ΘC XPC IHC) give a total of 1227; to this must be added the value of the Eta (8) from ‘ἀλητία’ at the crossing of the Chi (which is not needed to read the words in the arms of the X), and the value of the Rho itself (100), to make a total of 1335.

Some might argue, that Hrabanus is being manipulative, in that he sometimes uses *nomina sacra*, mis-spells words such as XPICTYC and IHCYC (which usually have an O before the Y), mixes two languages (Greek and Latin), and on top of that he sometimes has to be selective in what letters he uses. However, he makes very clear that he wants the values to add up to those two particular numbers, and is not much concerned with how he gets there; and he guides his readers to that goal with the specific instructions and explanations in the accompanying *explicatio*.

Hrabanus’s *In honorem sanctae crucis* is in many respects a very personal work, focused on Hrabanus himself and his relationship to Christ and the cross. For example, in one of the opening dedicatory poems (*Intercessio Albini pro Mauro*) he refers to himself and the place he is living (Fulda) as someone of the nation of the Franks, and an inhabitant of the Bochonian forest [*Ipse quidem Francus genere est, atque incola sylvae/Bochoniae*].⁶⁰ In another prefatory poem (*Musa cita studio gauda*) he secretly embeds his own name by highlighting every seventh letter in every seventh line; the text of these highlighted letters reads: *Magnentius Hrabanus Maurus hoc opus fecit* [Hrabanus Maurus of Mainz made this work].⁶¹ The *carmen figuratum* that ends the cycle (Carmen 28), portrays Hrabanus himself kneeling at the foot of the cross. In some of the earliest copies he is not looking up at the cross, nor down at the ground in humility, but back towards the left side of the page, clearly suggesting

⁵⁸ Apoc. 12, 6: *Et mulier fugit in solitudinem ubi habet locum paratum a Deo ut ibi pascant illam diebus mille ducentis sexaginta* (Weber and Gryson 2007, p. 1893). See Meyer and Suntrup (1987), col. 857–858; and Taeger (1970), pp. 17–19. Bede links the number with the length of Christ’s ministry: *Isto dierum numero, qui tres semis annos facit, Omnia christianitatis tempora complectitur; quia Christus, cuius haec corpus est, tantum in carne temporis praedicauerit* (Bede, *Comm. in Apoc. 2*, 19 (Gryson 2001, p. 391), an interpretation based on Primasius *In apoc. 3*, 12 (Adams 1985, p. 183).

⁵⁹ Dan. 12, 12: *Beatus qui expectat et pervenit ad dies mille ducenti nonaginta* (Weber and Gryson 2007, p. 1368). On this number see Meyer and Suntrup (1987), col. 858; and cf. Taeger (1970), pp. 17–19. Cf. also Jerome, *Comm. in Dan. 4* (12, 12) (Glorie 1964, pp. 943–944, who cites a lost treatise by Porphyrius, *Contra Christi*, 12.

⁶⁰ *In hon. A2*, 7–8 Perrin (1997), p. 5. The *sylva Bochonia* is where Boniface founded the monastery of Fulda in 744.

⁶¹ *In hon. A8* Perrin (1997), p. 21.

that, although he is in a prayerful and humble position, he is at the same time looking back towards the *opus* he has created.⁶² On his body, highlighted in red letters, is a prayer: *Rabanum memet clemens rogo Christe tuere o pie iudicio*;⁶³ in the accompanying *declaratio* he asks readers of the work to pray for his soul, and indeed, if they trace out the letters on his body, and recite the prayer, they are repeating the prayer. There is nothing quite like it in the early medieval poetic canon, not even the cycle of poems by Publilius Optatianus Porfyrius, the fourth-century Roman poet who wrote a cycle of *carmina figurata* that appear at least to have inspired Hrabanus's method of composition.⁶⁴

The entire purpose of composing this work is personal. It began as a gift for his teacher Alcuin, as we learn from a note the latter wrote Hrabanus shortly before he died, in which he reminded him that he had not yet received the completed work he had promised.⁶⁵ Next, Hrabanus returned to Fulda in 802, shortly before Ratgar (802–817) became abbot. Through a rigid application of the regulations in the Benedictine Rule, Ratgar caused a precipitous drop in the number of monks and novices housed in Fulda; repeated petitions to remove him from the position were unsuccessful until Ludwig the Pious succeeded his father as emperor in 814, and Ratgar was deposed in 817. Indeed, 20 years later Hrabanus still vividly recalled having his personal notebooks confiscated by Ratgar after he returned to Fulda from studying with Alcuin in Tours in 800 because monks could not own individual property.⁶⁶ As he reported to his friend Candidus-Brun, Hrabanus used the composition of the cycle of poems as a way to fill the hours when he had few if any students. Finally, the cycle represents a public statement of his belief in the complexity and efficacy of the cross.

The magnificent figure of Christ that opens the cycle of poems (see Fig. 2) contains both wonderfully mysterious things, and personal elements pertaining to Hrabanus. Moreover, while the figure of Christ at the beginning is largely mysterious (though in personal ways, since the process of understanding the meaning of the figure depends on tracing its outline), it invites readers to contemplate the body of

⁶² Carmen 28; *In hon.* B28; Perrin (1997), p. 217–218. See for example, Vat. lat. 124, fo. 35v (probably ca. 830), and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 652 (prob. ca. 842), fol. 33v. The Vienna manuscript is easily accessible in a facsimile edited by Holter (1973). In Colvener 1626, the figure is staring resolutely to the left of the page as well (p. 1: 336).

⁶³ *In hon.*, C28, lines 62–63: “O Christ, in your mercy and your holiness, I beg you, protect me, Hrabanus, on the day of judgment” (Perrin 1997, p. 221). For the influence of this poem and image in Anglo-Saxon England, see Gneuss (1978).

⁶⁴ See note 60 above. In the Prologue Hrabanus notes (A7, line 65–67; Perrin 1997, p. 19) that he has followed the example of Porphyrius in treating-*us* endings and suspended *m*. Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 212, contains among other things, a nearly complete copy of Porfyrius's *carmina*, as well as *carmina figurata* by Boniface, Alcuin, and other Carolingian figures.

⁶⁵ Alcuin, *Ep.* 142 Dümmler (1899), pp. 223–224; Allott (1974), Letter 134 (p. 139).

⁶⁶ See also the response from Hrabanus to Candidus (Bruun), incorporated into a letter from the latter to Modestus (Reccheo), in which he complained about his solitude during this period. Hrabanus's example for dealing with the solitude by composing *In hon.* inspired Candidus to compose his two books of the *Vita Aegilii* (MGH, Poetae 2 Dümmler (1884), p. 94). See Perrin (1997), p. xvii.



Fig. 2 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 652, fo. 6v; Christ (Perrin 1997, B1). (With permission of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

Christ, while the figure of Hrabanus kneeling at the foot of the Cross in the last *carmen*, through the inscription on the body literally invites the reader to pray for Hrabanus’s soul. The figure of Christ stands with arms extended, forming a cruciform, though this is not a figure of Christ on the cross. Instead, the arms are extended widely, as if inviting an embrace, in a traditional stance indicating public prayer, with palms facing the reader. Indeed, although there is no physical cross present, the cruciform shape of Christ’s body suggests that Hrabanus had in mind a figure of *Christus crucifixus* (Christ crucified). There is a stylized cross behind the head of Christ, with the letters A, M, and Ω, indicating the beginning, middle and end of all

things, as Hrabanus explains at the end of the prose *explicatio*. In the corona around Christ's head are the words *Rex regum et dominus dominorum* (King of Kings and Lord of Lords). There is an inscription around the outline of the body of Christ; the prose explanation invites readers to trace the outline of Christ's body, thus literally creating, by imitation, the *corpus Christi*, making Hrabanus, in a stunning example of meta-meta creativity, the "creator" of this "creation."

Tracing the outline of Christ's body and reading the text inscribed on that outline, reveals five hexameters. The first begins with the middle finger of the right hand, follows the top of the arm, and ends at the top of Christ's head. The text reads: *Dextra Dei summi cuncta creavit Jesus* (Jesus has created all things by the right hand of the most high). The second verse begins with the top of Christ's head, and ends at the middle finger of the left hand, revealing the text *Christus laxabit e sanguine debita mundo* (Christ shall pay with his blood the sins of the world). The third verse begins with the ring finger of the right hand, follows the bottom of the arm, descends down the right side of the body, and ends with the right foot; the text reads: *In cruce sic positus desolvens vincla tyranni* (Placed thus on the cross, he delivers us from the chains of the tyrant). The fourth verse first circles the right foot (*aeternus*), moves up the inside of the left leg (*dominus deduxit ad astra*), and finally circles the left foot (*tra beatos*). Put together the text reads: *Aeternus dominus deduxit ad astra beatos* (The eternal Lord has guided the blessed to the stars). The final verse moves up the outside of the left leg, follows the outline of the body above the loin cloth, and moves along the bottom of the left arm and terminates with the ring finger of the left hand. The text states: *Atque salutiferam dederat Deus arce coronam* (And God has placed the crown of salvation in the sky).

Finally and crucially, there is the pair of verses on the loin cloth of Christ (see Fig. 3).⁶⁷ From the top of the cloth to the bottom they read:

*Veste quidem parva hic tegitur qui continet astra,
Atque solum palmo claudit ubique suo.*

A small cloth covers what holds together the stars
And with his palm he himself encloses the entire world.⁶⁸

In a method also used in the other *carmina figurata*, Hrabanus creates the figure of Christ and the loin cloth by highlighting letters in the lines of poetry that run from the left edge to the right edge of the page. When we try to read the words on the cloth we are at the same time tracing out the body of Christ, with our hands stumbling as we go since the words enclosed by the colour of the loin cloth are both part of the underlying poetry, and have a distinctive reading on the cloth. In a masterful process in which the Word literally becomes Flesh, a reader caresses the body and tries to make sense of the text on the loin cloth at one and the same time. The

⁶⁷ For figure 1 of Hrabanus Maurus' *In honorem sanctae crucis*, See Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Reg. lat. 124, fol. 8v. Reproduced and discussed in Perrin (1997) (the original Latin of the loin cloth poem appears on p. 33); for a reproduction of figure 1, see Perrin (1997), vol. 100A, B1. The cycle must have been popular. Approximately eighty manuscript copies survive, some of them from Hrabanus' own lifetime. For other colour reproductions of the Christ figure, see Holter (1973) and Coons (2012), plate 4.

⁶⁸ *In hon.* C1, lines 132–133: Perrin (1997), p. 33.

Fig. 3 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 652, fo. 8v, detail. (With permission of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)



figure of Christ is an imposing one, clearly meant to inspire awe, but the caressing movement of a reader's hands expresses love, at the same time that, following the instructions provided in the prose text, a reader begins to make sense of the figure. This becomes even clearer through the three movements along Christ's legs: the first movement follows the outside of the right leg, then moves up the inside of the left leg; then, as if thinking better of the motion, Hrabanus forces the hand to move to the left foot (if the reader is still following the written instructions), and then up the outside of the left leg, skips over the loin cloth and moves up the body to Christ's left hand.

It is particularly startling that the first letters of the word *astra* in the middle of these three movements occur at the very bottom of the loin cloth: the expected movement is a sweep further up the right leg, which in the earliest copies is always a strongly drawn male leg. Indeed, the way the loin cloth is draped emphasizes that the desired movement is upward: the curves of the drapery point towards the top of the loin cloth. The remainder of the word *astra* continues at the heel of the left foot; but the word also returns in the inscription in the centre of the loin cloth where it engages the reader's full attention, especially after that attention peaking on the word *astra* has just been broken while tracing the outline of the body of Christ.

But what exactly does Hrabanus mean to say with these clearly sensual if not erotic references to caressing movements, broken movements, and references to stars in the centre of the loin cloth of Christ? The temptation, of course, is to conclude immediately that something intentionally erotic is meant; indeed, that *astra* is intended as an indication of what lies beneath the loin cloth, namely Christ's

manhood. The very position of the inscription invites such an interpretation, and it is one I'm sure Hrabanus must have been aware of, even if he never says so in so many words.⁶⁹ But there is a broader explanation as well. The poem that forms the foundation for the image of Christ offers further clues that expand the meaning of *astra* in this particular context. The lines are as follows (the italicized words are the ones used in the two elegiac verses on the cloth):

Induta en ueritas *ueste*, *quid* dogmate Christus
 Indicat exponam: *legem parua* haec quoque uestis
 Significat, namque *hic tegitur* in grammate raro
 Summipotens auctor, *qui continet* omnia rector.
 Ad quem mundus *pertinet*, *astra* ac pontus et aether.
 Nostraque natura arte *atque sociate* creanti est,
 Nam auctorem haec *illum, palmo* qui claudit et arua
 Obtegit humano aut *claudit uisu* ecce potentem.
 Ipse tamen ostensus *ubique suo* est opere orbi huic.⁷⁰

Some of the lines contain ambiguities that are not easy to translate without further explanations, but the reason for this resides not just in the Latin poetry, but also in the ambiguity that Hrabanus has introduced. A line for line rendering follows:⁷¹

Here is Truth clothed in a *garment*, *which* Christ with his teaching
 reveals with his teaching: this *small* garment the *Law*
 signifies, for with a few letters *it covers* [or: hides]
 the all-powerful Creator, the Ruler *who contains* all things.
 To him the world *relates*, *the stars* and the sea and the air
 Our limited [*arte*] nature *is linked* with our Creator,⁷²
 For it (covers) that creator, *who* holds the dry land *in his palm*
 protects it and makes it visible to mankind by his power
 For he is revealed everywhere in this world through his work ...

The general direction of meaning in these lines suggests God or the Law covering Truth, God as the all-powerful Creator who has fashioned and revealed all the created world. But Hrabanus never lets go of the literal meaning of a small cloth (*parua ... uestis*) covering that which creates or procreates, Christ's penis, which is

⁶⁹ Coon (2010) discusses the "divine pudenda" [*sic*], "God's phallus" and the "divine phallus" hidden by the loin cloth are discussed in terms of their connection to interpretations of the Torah (219–220.)

⁷⁰ *In hon.* B1, lines 22–30; Perrin (1997), p. 29.

⁷¹ The translation is mine, with some assistance from the translation into French that Perrin provides in his edition; see Perrin (1997), p. 294. Cf. Perrin (1988), p. 49. In the translation I have tried consistently to underline the words that translate those that appear in Latin on the loincloth. Sometimes this erases the continuity and internal rhyming links the Latin provides. This can be seen clearly, for example, in, the fourth and fifth lines, where the beginning of *continet* appears on the cloth, and the second half of *pertinet* completes the first word, *continet*. A similar effect might be achieved by using the archaic "containeth" and "pertaineth;" the lines could then read: [... who containeth all things/and to whom the world pertaineth.]

⁷² The word *arte*, among other things can mean: limited, narrow in scope; or: dense, brief; or as an adverb: closely, tightly. This line could therefore also be translated: Our nature is closely linked with our Creator; or: Our nature is skilfully linked with our Creator. "Creator" in this particular line is not a noun, but a present participle: *creanti* (dative or ablative singular) from *creans*, one who creates.

not just a penis, but also the creator (or the creative power) who makes the created world visible for mankind. The poem is intimately linked with the text on the cloth: the latter uses words or parts of words from the underlying poem, and it both makes clearer and emphasizes that the words on the cloth are to be read both literally and in a mystical sense.

In honorem sanctae crucis was Hrabanus's first composition. Although he created other *carmina figurata* as occasional poems (for example, the dedication of his commentary on the Book of Judith, which he wrote at the request of the Empress Judith), Hrabanus never again completed a work of comparable complexity and beauty. In the figure of Christ, the first and thus the most important poem in the cycle, hints of sexuality in several ways: through the text of the poem itself, through the text forming the outline of the figure of Christ, and that is present on the loin cloth. Both the letters that form the body of Christ, and that appear on the loin cloth are made up of letters and words from the text of the underlying poem. The poem itself only hints at the treasures (the *astra*) beneath the cloth. In addition, the invitation to trace the outline of the body of Christ is at first a way of beginning to understand the mysteries of the body of Christ. With Hrabanus's instruction it first becomes a way to fuller understanding, and then an only partly suppressed sensuality that links the text on the cloth and what it hides to the creation of the entire universe. This is a far cry from the practicality and unvarnished crudity of the penitential handbooks and the canons of church councils. It comes closer to the passionate sensuality expressed through some of Alcuin's letters to Arn of Salzburg. But at the same time *In honorem sanctae crucis* is a set of poems that is *sui generis*: the sensuality expressed there hints at the passionate meditations of later medieval poetry, when sexuality and passion are often used to express the power of devotion to Christ.

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On the Bridling of the Body and Soul of Héloïse, The ‘Chaste Whore’

Laura French

The Héloïse d’Argenteuil (1101–1164) of her ‘personal’ letters to estranged husband Abelard is a study in contradictions. As she seeks to re-establish the connection they have lost, she also reveals a private struggle of intellect, religion, morality, sexuality, and—above all—a crisis of identity. Changes of identity may become problematic when the new identity contrasts strongly with the original one, or the individual’s old and new traits conflict in a way that is difficult to resolve. This is certainly the case when it comes to Héloïse, an influential abbess whose private letters express distinctly unorthodox moral views and a yearning for the passionate relationship she shared with Abelard in her youth. These letters portray a conflict between her original self, before their transformative relationship, and the self that is exhibited at the time of writing; in order to obey Abelard’s wishes, Héloïse has created a new outward identity which belies the true desires of her body and soul.

We are thoroughly familiar with romances that threaten the social order, the lives of others, or the lives of the lovers themselves. However, the letters of Héloïse put higher and more complex stakes on the table of romance; she gives up her true identity, and the needs of her body and soul as she describes them, at her lover’s request. This raises the question not of the conflict between body and soul—the division which seems too crude to explain what seems to be happening in Héloïse’s mind— but of something altogether more complex, and more feminine; the type of conflict where body and soul are united in two diametrically opposed sets of needs which remain morally conflicted.

We know from the historical record, and her writing, that Héloïse was a highly educated individual of outstanding character (Mews 2005, p. 58). She had formulated deep personal convictions on the basis of philosophical influences such as Cicero, Plato and St. Augustine, as well as the guidance of Abelard. Foremost amongst these convictions is love, as a guiding principle, and the ethics of intention. However, her ideals are thrown into conflict by the end of her romance with Abelard, and

L. French (✉)
The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
e-mail: laura.french@research.uwa.edu.au

the religious life he commands her to lead. She becomes paradoxically chaste and licentious, religious and blasphemous, sincere and hypocritical, self-denying and supremely self-asserting. Ultimately, she is both defined and destroyed by love, the ultimate among her values.

As is well known, the young Héloïse was entrusted into Abelard's tutelage by her uncle, a Parisian canon named Fulbert. Peter Abelard was considerably older, and a highly respected scholar. The two fell in love and embarked on a passionate affair, of which Abelard later wrote, 'We left no stage of love untried in our passion, and if love could find something novel... we tried [it]' (Abelard and Héloïse 2007, p. 12). When Héloïse fell pregnant, Abelard sent her away to give birth to the child in secret. To appease Fulbert, Abelard married Héloïse; nonetheless, he was punished by castration by an unknown member of her family shortly afterwards. Following his castration, Abelard apparently lost interest in his wife, coercing her into taking religious vows as a nun, before entering religious life himself. They had no further contact for a considerable amount of time¹, until she received a copy of his autobiographical letter *Historia Calamitatum* (History of My Calamities), which was addressed, not to her, but to an unnamed friend. Héloïse replies to his letter, beginning their personal correspondence after a long hiatus.

Héloïse's personal transformation can be gleaned from her first two letters to Abelard from this series, after she received his *Historia Calamitatum*, generally accepted as being by Héloïse. (I have excluded the early letters connected to the couple's love affair because, although they could provide valuable insight into Héloïse in the formative years of their relationship, their authorship is under debate. Constant Mews provides a compelling case for a young Héloïse and Abelard as the writers (Mews 1999), but their origins remain controversial.) The two letters Héloïse wrote immediately after she received *Historia Calamitatum* are particularly useful as they contain far more personal information than her later correspondence. Abelard does not respond favourably to her outpouring of emotion. He explains at the outset of his first reply that his lack of contact 'was not because of negligence on my part but because of your own wisdom, in which I have always had implicit trust. I did not believe you needed these things from me when God has given you all you need' (Abelard and Héloïse 2007, p. 63), and he urges Héloïse to turn her focus back to God. As a result, she announces her intention to stop writing of her feelings at the outset of her third letter. The wording of this intention is, however, highly ambiguous:

Since there must never be the slightest cause for you to find fault with my obedience, a bridle has been set upon my words, although my grief itself is still untamed... If only the heart that grieves were as ready to obey as the hand that writes. (Abelard and Héloïse 2007, pp. 105–106)

Brook Findley notes that, although what follows is not dishonest, this statement 'has the effect of cutting the reader off from an implied author who has, up to this point, seemed seductively present in the text' (2005, p. 289). In other words, with

¹ Historical sources differ as to the exact length of time between their separation and written correspondence, but the general consensus is 10–15 years.

these few passages Héloïse makes a point of validating the genuineness of what has already been said, while putting the reader on notice that what follows will be ‘bridled’, therefore not free, not honest and not heartfelt. The first two letters, as an outpouring of the unbridled truth of Héloïse’s otherwise suppressed feelings, are fertile ground for an investigation of this public figure’s true identity and the ways in which her relationship with Abelard transformed her.

In these two letters in particular, Héloïse presents herself as a person whose soul is deeply at odds with the self that she shows publicly. It is made clear that she has been significantly transformed by her relationship with Abelard; her values and desires have remained essentially the same, but she can no longer voice them as she used to. The false identity she has cultivated, in order to do what Abelard thinks she should, conflicts with her personally held values, creating acute moral discomfort. For instance, Héloïse values sincerity, but lives a hypocritical life in which her words are “bridled”; she believes in the ethic of intention, which both validates and condemns her choices. Above all, she believes in love, but love is denied her. The chasm between her internal and externally represented selves and the resulting struggle is a significant ethical problem, which she tries to make sense of in these letters.

It is significant that Héloïse speaks of having destroyed her true identity and denied the needs of her body and heart in taking religious vows at Abelard’s command:

...at your command, I changed my habit along with my heart, to show that my body along with my heart belonged only to you. (Abelard and Héloïse 2007, p. 55)
 ... you are the sole cause of my sorrow, and you alone... have the power to make me sad (or) bring me happiness or comfort; you alone have so great a debt to repay me, particularly now when I carried out all your orders so implicitly that when I was powerless to oppose you in anything, I found strength at your command to destroy myself.²

Héloïse’s emotional words about self-destruction do not refer to suicide and are not meant literally, for as Brooke Findley argues, ‘Héloïse, with her libidinous body and rebellious thoughts, is characterized by her refusal to give up and go away’ (2005, p. 287). In these first two letters, despite her protestations, Héloïse’s true self persists in showing itself, and is expressed strongly. But we must not take too much comfort in her outspokenness; the fact is that, when writing these lines, she is already very much a suppressed individual, having stripped herself of her former external identity of wife and mother in order to take on the role of nun as per Abelard’s command. What emerges from these two letters is a picture of the young, idealistic, opinionated and passionate Héloïse trapped in the body, clothing and expected ideological sphere of a nun.

Having established that Héloïse’s identity is the locus of conflict, and that this conflict troubles her, the natural question to ask is what led her to accept this difficult moral position. She makes it clear that she willingly put herself in this situation

² *The Letters of Abelard and Héloïse* (1974), p. 113. Hereafter, all quotes from the letters are from this translation unless otherwise stated.

for Abelard's sake; first, when it came to marriage, and later when it came to taking religious vows. Of both choices, she reminds him:

It was not my own pleasures and wishes I sought to gratify, as you well know, but yours.
(p. 113)

Héloïse acknowledges that she had full understanding of just what she had given up in taking religious vows at his command:

...my love rose to such heights of madness that it robbed itself of what it most desired beyond hope of recovery, when immediately at your bidding I changed my clothing along with my mind, in order to show you the sole possessor of my body and my will alike.
(p. 113)

In so doing, Héloïse committed herself to following Abelard into a life which would guarantee she would never have what she wanted; a life which would separate her from him and their son, and require a divorcing of her internal and external selves. Despite the immense amount of pain this had caused her, she notes:

I would have had no hesitation, God knows, in following you or going ahead at your bidding to the flames of Hell. (p. 117)

Héloïse's continued commitment to the unwanted life required by this decision is the ultimate proof of her dedication to love. In saying this, it is important to bear in mind that, to Héloïse, love is not simply an emotion, but a philosophical ideal and guiding principle; her ethics of true love are strongly related to Cicero's ideas on friendship. Cicero's *Laelius de Amicitia* defines true friendship as one that is 'not because we are attracted to it by the expectation of ulterior gain,' (p. 14) which is 'between good men,' (p. 20) and 'a complete accord on all subjects human and divine, joined with mutual goodwill and affection.' (p. 11) There is a clear connection between this definition of friendship and Plato's earlier representations of heavenly love in *Symposium*, both of which were originally applied only to men:

Our customs, then, provide for only one honourable way of taking a man as a lover. In addition to recognizing that the lover's total and willing subjugation to his beloved's wishes is neither servile nor reprehensible, we allow that there is one... further reason for willingly subjecting oneself to another which is equally above reproach: that is subjection for the sake of virtue... Both these principles... must be combined if a young man is to accept a lover in an honourable way. (Plato 1989, p. 18)

Héloïse abandons the homosocial aspect originally inherent in these theories, applying them directly to her relationship with Abelard. She draws on two major elements in developing her own ethical philosophy; first, as she repeatedly says, true love and her love for Abelard in particular is not selfish or for personal gain. The second is an aspect which both sources share and that Héloïse picks up in deed if not in word—the notion of “complete accord” and “total and willing subjugation” to the beloved.

Héloïse shared many of Abelard's values and beliefs originally; his values and his excellent teaching of those values were apparently, to a great extent, the reason she was attracted to him in the first place. However, when Abelard's values changed

following his castration, Héloïse found herself obligated to follow him through the change of beliefs that was not her own, joining an austere religious life for which she admittedly had no personal calling. That choice may confirm the quality of her love from Plato’s perspective, but it also leads to the moral dilemmas associated with a soul tormented by conflicting values.

An astute philosopher, Héloïse attempts to reconcile the duality of her moral stance, and resolve the resulting discomfort, through her belief in the ethic of intention. She surmises this stance in her first letter:

It is not the deed but the intention of the doer which makes the crime, and justice should weigh not what was done but the spirit in which it is done. (p. 115)

Intriguingly, this belief of Héloïse’s—that one’s intentions rather than actions are the measure of morality—both confirms and condemns her choices. Elizabeth Zimmerman connects her belief in the ethics of intention to both Abelard and Augustine of Hippo (Zimmerman 2006, p. 252), and it seems that these two influences correspond to her conflicting judgements of her own intention. Héloïse writes with the understanding that Abelard will agree with her on the matter of intention; she states, ‘Wholly guilty that I am, I am also, as you know, wholly innocent’ (p. 115). This confidence on her part strongly suggests that the ethics of intention had been discussed between them during the time in which he was her teacher.

In fact, Abelard would go on to take this ideology even further than Héloïse does in the letters, and was tried for heresy based on his later writings in *Ethics* (1139),³ in which he insisted that ‘God... considers not so much what is done as in what mind it may be done [and] truly considers the guilt in our intention’ (p. 41). For Héloïse, their shared interpretation of this belief system validates her course of action, which is now, ironically, considered hypocritical. Having first loved Abelard, and resolved that her love for him must be unselfish and obedient, she was compelled to accept taking religious vows as a nun, despite feeling no divine calling. Her intention, to adhere to unselfish love as her highest good, affirms that decision. Nowhere in the letters does Héloïse question these choices; she can only lament their emotionally and ethically inadequate results. She believes that she could not have done otherwise, yet the outcome of moral wholeness is not forthcoming, and the feelings of personal hypocrisy torment her. This ethical discomfort is, in large part, due to the fact that Héloïse’s concept of the ethics of intention also condemns her actions. The chastity for which she is so lauded is morally worthless to her, given that her intent is to serve Abelard, rather than true religious piety. Zimmerman points out (2006, p. 262) that St Augustine also differentiates between chastity of the flesh and of the spirit in *De Bono Coniugali* in which he says, ‘Continenence is a virtue not of the body but of the mind’ (Augustine 1997, p. 47). Accordingly, Héloïse laments:

³ Who influenced who in this case is unclear; certainly, they were of a mutual understanding at the time of these letters. In *The Lost Love Letters of Héloïse and Abelard* (1999), Constant Mews argues that Héloïse made significant contributions to Abelard’s later writing on ethics, although her input is unacknowledged.

Men call me chaste; they do not know the hypocrite I am. They consider purity of the flesh a virtue, though virtue belongs not to the body but to the soul... I can earn praise before men but deserve none before God, who searches in our hearts and loins and sees in our darkness. (p. 133)

Therefore, although Héloïse can rationalise the choices which led to her “hypocritical” life, she cannot feel comfortable with them. The ethics of intention, along with her principle of love, have led her to a moral stalemate.

Héloïse’s moral difficulties are intimately bound up in her conflicting values of religious piety and pagan philosophy, as well as chastity and licentiousness. At the time of writing, she was a widely respected Abbess, a position of considerable power for a woman. J.T. Muckle notes that ‘Héloïse enjoyed a good reputation among the religious leaders of the time (of writing) from the Pope down’⁴, which likely could not have been the case had her opinions and feelings as expressed in the letters become publicly known. This reputation is corroborated by the letters of Peter the Venerable following his visit to the Paraclete after Abelard’s death. It is clear that Peter respects Héloïse precisely for the faith she has admitted to Abelard she does not have:

I am drawn to you by what many have told me about your religion. If only our Cluny possessed you... I would have preferred your wealth of religion and learning to the richest treasures of any kings, and would rejoice to see that noble community of sisters still further illuminated by your presence there. (Abelard and Héloïse 2007, pp. 280–281)

He also praises her lavishly for what he saw as a clean transition from a secular to Biblical scholar:

...you turned your zeal for learning in a far better direction... you left logic for the Gospel, Plato for Christ, the academy for the Cloister. (Abelard and Héloïse 2007, p. 278)

However, as we see from her letters to Abelard, this transition took place only publicly. The private Héloïse still yearns for physical love, subscribes to many classical theories, and expresses a disdain for religion:

I am judged religious at a time when there is little in religion which is not hypocrisy, when whoever does not offend the opinions of men receives the highest praise. (pp. 133–134)

In this Héloïse is clear about her true feelings about her faith, although she does respect the Bible and God. She quotes Scriptures to support her reasoning several times throughout the letters, and expresses discomfort with her own religious ‘hypocrisy,’ manifested by knowledge, but unsupported by true faith. She laments repeatedly that God knows, and would be displeased by, her lack of devotion to him.

However, her ideas on what constitutes good intention and bad intention—influenced by other philosophers, and even more so by her personal inclination to value love over all else—allow for some highly unconventional interpretations of the Biblical canon, incompatible with strict Catholicism. For example, Héloïse expresses clearly unorthodox views on the matter of sex. She writes of having tried to dissuade Abelard from legitimizing their relationship with marriage, noting that

⁴ J.T. Muckle, qtd. in Findley (2005), p. 283.

he ‘kept silent about most of my arguments for preferring love to wedlock and freedom to chains.’ (p. 114) Héloïse justifies her argument, in line with her adaptation of Cicero’s unselfish friendship, by her belief that remaining unmarried would be better for Abelard and his career in philosophy; yet her point is in conflict with the traditional Christian viewpoint that sex outside of marriage is a mortal sin. She invokes the example of Biblical men such as Adam, Sampson, Solomon and Job in her second letter, noting that ‘the easiest path to ruin for men is always through their wives’ (Abelard and Héloïse 2007, p. 77), but neglects to quote the scriptures she would surely be painfully aware of, condemning fornication (1 Corinthians 6:9–10). This cognitive dissonance, corresponding to the conflict between her earthly desires and heavenly commitment, forms part of the chasm between Héloïse’s internal and external selves.

Héloïse concedes that her fornication with Abelard was sinful from a Biblical perspective, although disliking that term for what they shared, calling it an “ugly but expressive” (p. 130) word. However, she wonders why they remained unpunished by God in their unwed state, but experienced his wrath in the form of Abelard’s castration shortly following their marriage:

But when we amended our unlawful conduct by what was lawful, and atoned for the shame of fornication by an honourable marriage, then the Lord in his anger laid his hand heavily upon us, and would not permit a chaste union though he had long tolerated on which was unchaste. (p. 130)

This confusion is also expressed as anger:

O God—if I dare say it—cruel to me in everything! O merciless mercy! ...I can find no penitence whereby to appease God, whom I always accuse of the greatest cruelty in regard to this outrage. (p. 139)

This destruction of what to Héloïse was most sacred—her relationship with Abelard, indeed Abelard himself—caused her to mistrust God, and made her position as Abbess all the more uncomfortable. As a committed and high-ranking Christian, she deferred to God in all things; but as a young woman and philosopher for whom love is the ultimate truth, she raged against the God who she thought had unjustly punished them. The timing of this ‘punishment’ further confuses her private feelings about the morality of their love affair and marriage.

Héloïse’s anger towards God is further compounded by her feelings of guilt at being unable to atone for her sins, primarily those relating to her sexual relationship with Abelard. She does not deny that the Bible condemns her sexual past, but what is even more troubling to her is that she still cannot honestly repent. Despite having maintained her religious vows for over a decade, she rejects the idea that her ‘chastity of the flesh’ amounts to anything of moral value. Héloïse considers her chastity and religious devotion as worthless, because both are done for earthly love rather than piety. While acknowledging her hope that she may deserve *some* credit for her physical penitence (p. 134), she nevertheless cannot consider herself on good terms with God, as both abstaining from sin and doing good are “vain if not done for love of God,” (p. 134) whereas she has “done nothing yet for the love of him” (p. 117).

Her feelings toward God are dominated by an uncomfortable combination of anger, blame and guilt.

Closely interrelated with Héloïse's religious guilt is her internal conflict regarding questions of chastity and licentiousness. Héloïse has conflicted thoughts about her sexual relationship with Abelard—her body is chaste, or “continent”, but in her mind and heart she proudly remains Abelard's whore:

The name of wife may seem more sacred or more binding, but sweeter for me will always be the word mistress, or, if you will permit me, that of concubine or whore. (p. 113)

Despite her passionate firmness on the subject of their love, Héloïse elsewhere admits to feelings of intense guilt over her inability to repent for their licentiousness. She laments:

In my case, the pleasures of lovers which we shared have been too sweet—they can never displease me, and can scarcely be banished from my thoughts... even during the celebration of the Mass, when our prayers should be purer, lewd visions of those pleasures take such a hold on my unhappy soul... I should be groaning over the sins I have committed, but I can only sigh for what I have lost. (p. 133)

In line with her expressed belief in the ethics of intention, she reasons:

How can it be called repentance for sins, however great the mortification of the flesh, if the mind still retains the will to sin and is on fire with its old desires? (p. 132)

Again, these feelings of longing and guilt directly correspond to the conflict between Héloïse's identities; the internal, suppressed, authentic Héloïse and the external, pious fabrication.

The final result of these conflicting aspects of Héloïse's values is an opposition between sincerity and hypocrisy, an issue that is of the utmost ethical concern to her. Brooke Findley focuses on this issue in a 2005 article, stating that Héloïse ‘repeatedly examines her own sincerity and hypocrisy, ultimately refusing to decide between the two and embracing the identity of the “sincere hypocrite”’ (Findley 2005, p. 282). Findley goes on to assert that Héloïse considers herself sincere, or innocent of true hypocrisy, insofar as she destroyed herself for Abelard's sake. However, Findley argues, Héloïse evidently has not been destroyed; in the first two letters she expresses many thoughts, desires and values attributable to the scholar and lover—not the austere abbess. As such, Findley surmises, Héloïse is not a hypocrite because she leads a false life for love, but rather, because she has stopped short in the destruction of her original ‘self’. (2005, p. 291)

It should be noted, however, that Héloïse can only be considered a hypocrite in this regard if we accept her premise that the destruction of her original self was necessary to show the genuineness of her love. Héloïse's own view on this is not clear; at times she blames herself for her hypocrisy, but at other times she is more generous to herself, allowing that she may try and fail to suppress her inner self at times, yet still be sincere in her devotion.

Regardless of where Héloïse ultimately stood on this issue, for her reader to judge her insincere one would have to accept that Héloïse really thought and was right in thinking that the absolute destruction of her ‘self’ was necessary for genuine

love. I believe that most readers would find Héloïse sincere and extremely wholehearted in her love. She may simply have held unrealistic expectations. Rather than the continued existence of her original self being proof of her insincerity in love, it might be seen simply as evidence of her humanity, and the impossibility of willing away one’s deeply held beliefs and desires. Findley also seems to abandon the conclusion of *Sincere Hypocrisy* in a later article, returning to the idea of Héloïse as a self-identified ‘sincere hypocrite’ (2006, p. 250).

Héloïse remains a woman whose primary value of unselfish love compelled her to act against secondary values, such as honesty and personal integrity. She suffered acutely at the conflict of values and identity traits that this choice brought about, but persisted in her philosophical ideal of unselfish love, and the false persona that she took on with genuine intention. Upon taking up the veil, it became necessary to suppress her inner desires and to project, instead, the wise and pious woman of religion that was so universally admired; she reminds Abelard that ‘For a long time my pretence deceived you, as it did many, so that you mistook my hypocrisy for piety’ (p. 134). She willingly and consciously sacrificed her true identity, as well as her future, to love.

This knowing and wilful abrogation of self is disturbing to many readers of Héloïse’s letters, especially given that Abelard ended any possibility of a real relationship between them when he commanded her to take religious vows. Héloïse expresses a great deal of clarity and realism about this situation in the letters; she rationalises that Abelard never truly loved her, but that his passion was only lust (p. 116), and acknowledges the hopeless misery of her life:

Of all wretched women I am the most wretched, and amongst the unhappy I am unhappiest. (p. 129)

Look at the unhappy life I lead, pitiable beyond any other, if in this world I must endure so much in vain, with no hope of future reward. (p. 134)

On top of this painful reality, Abelard then confirms his indifference, persisting in addressing her with religious rather than romantic endearments in his replies⁵, and expressing discomfort with her emotional words. This response, following more than ten years of silence, would be enough to convince any intelligent woman—as Héloïse certainly was—that their romantic relationship was over. As discussed at the outset of this chapter, however, Héloïse concludes her ‘personal’ correspondence by declaring her continued obedience, with a determination bordering on the perverse:

Since there must never be the slightest cause for you to find fault with my obedience, a bridle has been set upon my words, although my grief itself is still untamed. (Abelard and Héloïse 2007, p. 105)

Marilynn Desmond offers an explanation of Héloïse’s continually self-destructive choices as symptomatic of her masochistic nature. Desmond builds upon Abelard’s references to physical violence in *Historia Calamitatum*, claiming that the text

⁵ For example, Abelard greets Héloïse in his first letter as his “dearly beloved sister in Christ,” (p. 199) in contrast to the closing words of her first letter, “farewell, my only love.” (p. 118)

establishes Héloïse as a ‘submissive [...] and masochistic lover, roles [she] later performs in their letters’ (Desmond 1998, p. 38). Héloïse continues her extreme submission to Abelard, according to Desmond, because his ‘rhetorical violence... textually re-enacts’ their initial erotic relationship of “*magister* and *discipula*,” or master and female disciple (Desmond, p. 37); in other words, she continues to engage with their sexual relationship in the only way she can, through extreme submissiveness. Héloïse’s final act of submission to Abelard, in silencing her bodily and emotional needs, is perhaps the most tragic of all.

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Keeping Body and Soul Together: Gender, Sexuality and Salvation in the Works of Jean LeFèvre de Resson

Karen Pratt

If, at the general resurrection, we shall rise again with our bodies intact, and if therefore Adam's rib is restored, what will become of Eve and women in general? It was this conundrum, expressed humorously by the narrator of Jean LeFèvre's *Lamentations de Mathéolus* that alerted me to the fascinating interaction in medieval thought between sexuality and salvation, the gendered body and the soul.

The lamenting protagonist Matthew, a henpecked husband who has lost his clerical privileges because he has married a widow, addresses this thorny question about the resurrection of Eve to God during a dream vision in Book 3 of the *Lamentations*.¹ He immediately asks for forgiveness, claiming that distress makes him pose such a theologically erroneous question. However, he goes on to challenge God (in what is to modern readers a shocking, but amusing way) by asking Him why he has made marriage a sacrament which cannot be broken, and why men cannot have wives on probation. God replies that marriage is a purgatory which purifies husbands to such an extent that in the afterlife they will be placed above celibate virgins in heaven's hierarchy. This passage is no doubt meant to be comic, but it also reflects serious debates that were taking place in the Middle Ages about the connection between the body and soul, the conditions of the general resurrection, the superiority of virginity and celibacy over marriage, and the role of sexual reproduction as a means of fulfilling God's plan for the human race. As we shall see, in medieval clerical texts the corporeal was often inextricably linked with the intellectual and moral, especially when bodily language was employed to describe spiritual matters.

¹ See van Hamel ed. (1892, 1905). On 'bigamous' clerics whose privileges were withdrawn if they indulged in behaviour not condoned by successive thirteenth-century popes, see D'Avray (2005), Chap. 4.

K. Pratt (✉)
King's College London, London, UK
e-mail: karen.pratt@kcl.ac.uk

These topics and linguistic strategies are all to be found in the writings of Jean LeFèvre from Ressons-sur-le-Matz, who practised as a *procureur* (defence lawyer) at the royal parliament in Paris in the second half of the fourteenth century.² Most of his works were translations of Latin works, including the reputable school texts the *Ecloga Theoduli* and *Disticha Catonis* (his *Théodelet* and *Caton*). He also translated the less canonical, but nevertheless very popular *Lamentationes Matheoluli* by Matthew of Boulogne and the pseudo-Ovidian *De vetula* (*The Old Woman*), sometimes attributed to Richard de Fournival.³ The latter two Latin sources date from the 1270s, and were thus near contemporaries of Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Roman de la Rose*, another text exploited liberally by LeFèvre a century later.⁴

In his translations (*Les Lamentations de Mathéolus* and *La Vieille*) LeFèvre has in most cases rendered passages on the body and soul quite faithfully, and has sometimes even elaborated further on the meaning of his sources. However, he then re-uses much of this material in two original works, his palinode in defence of women, the *Livre de Leesce* (c. 1380) and especially his *Respit de la mort*, produced in the 1370s. So it seems that the philosophical and theological debating points found in his thirteenth-century sources were still deemed relevant enough in the late fourteenth century not only to be retained in his translations, but also to be incorporated into new works. Moreover, in the *Respit*, usually viewed as a serious work on death and salvation, LeFèvre quotes extensively from his often comic and bawdy *Vieille*, which makes the tone and function of these quotations in the *Respit* difficult to interpret. It is quite possible that the lengthy theological and scientific passages found in LeFèvre's own texts and in his preferred sources, including the *Rose*, reflect a medieval predilection for the encyclopaedic. However, Peter Godman has suggested that the pseudo-Ovidian *De vetula* may be a parody of this impulse, poking fun at the 'ideal of united learning erected by Bernardus Silvestris and Alan of Lille, only to be undermined by John of Hauvilla'.⁵ If this was the way *De vetula* was generally received by thirteenth-century readers, one wonders whether LeFèvre recognised and retained the parodic element in his later translation, *La Vieille*.

In the following I should therefore like to consider what theological and philosophical issues relating to the body and soul most concerned Jean LeFèvre and his predecessors, and what contemporary scholastic debates and authoritative sources they were invoking. We shall also see to what extent these themes are intercon-

² For further biographical details, see the introduction to Hasenohr-Esnos ed. (1969).

³ Since the attribution is by no means universally accepted, I shall treat this work as if it were anonymous; see Klopsch (1967) and Robathan ed. (1968). All quotations from *De vetula* are taken from the Robathan edition. When p. and pp. are used in references to editions, they refer to pages containing editorial comments. The absence of such abbreviations indicates that the reference is to a line in the edited text.

⁴ The intertextual relations between *De vetula*, Matthew's *Lamentationes* and Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Rose* are complex, but the works are likely to have been composed in that order since the *Lamentationes* refers explicitly to *De vetula*. However, when Jean LeFèvre came to translate the two Latin texts a century later, he took further material from Jean de Meun's vernacular compendium of knowledge, thus bolstering the authority of his translations. See Pratt (1999).

⁵ Godman (2000), Chap. 9, especially p. 326.

nected by noting how the bodily affects the moral and how corporeal language is used both literally and figuratively to express the spiritual. Moreover, we shall examine the role these controversial topics played within each individual text, how seriously they were being treated and who their ideal readership could have been. Clearly the Parisian lawyer's translations were able to convey to lay audiences current doctrinal debates, and given the import of issues relating to the Christian teaching on salvation, these were no joking matter. LeFèvre may therefore have imitated the method and rhetoric of serious scholars in order to render his own works more authoritative. On the other hand, it is quite possible that he, taking the lead perhaps from the authors of his immediate sources, was poking fun at scholastic methods, parodying the style without necessarily undermining the content of scholastic writing. Indeed, these clerical writers may well have been indulging in rhetorical games and dialectical pyrotechnics with the aim of enhancing the entertainment value of their works, while nevertheless instructing their readership. So, in order to gauge what sort of response passages relating to the body and soul may have elicited from their readers, special attention will be paid here not only to the presentation of these interconnecting themes, but also to the somewhat incongruous contexts in which they find themselves.

A seminal work within my clerical corpus is the pseudo-Ovidian *De vetula*. It is a medieval fake—a work which supplies a highly fictionalised biography for a famous writer⁶ and a fabricated explanation for the text's own existence as the poet's last output. In many manuscripts, the Latin text is accompanied by a sort of *accessus* to the poet's whole *oeuvre*. It is unclear whether or not this was by the original author,⁷ but LeFèvre clearly thought it was and has incorporated it into his translation, placing it between his own translator's prologue and the text proper.⁸ The ensuing first-person narrative, supposedly in the voice of the classical poet, outlines in three books his transformation from a young man engaged in a variety of pursuits, including hunting, fishing, dicing and womanising, into a mature scholar, who has given up women in order to pursue his studies. In fact, so successful is Ovid in abandoning the pleasures of the flesh, that he becomes a proto-Christian, prophesying the virgin birth.⁹ The cause of the protagonist's radical mutation is his failed attempt to seduce a beautiful young woman, thwarted when an aged go-between substitutes herself for the lovely virgin in bed (see Pratt 2007, pp. 321–342). This very funny episode involving the eponymous old woman constitutes, however, a brief interlude

⁶ There are similarities here with contemporary Occitan *vidas*, which supplied prose biographies of questionable authenticity for the troubadour poets whose lyrics were included in the same manuscripts. See Egan ed. (1984).

⁷ Godman (2000), p. 327, thinks it was and sees it as ironizing 'the hair-splitting techniques of scholastic method', p. 329.

⁸ See Cocheris ed. (1861). Since *La Vieille* is a fairly close translation, the following synopsis is relevant to both source and translation. However, the more detailed analysis below is based on the Middle French text, with the occasional reference to the Latin source usually when LeFèvre strays significantly from it.

⁹ Henceforth I shall use the name Ovid to refer to the protagonist of source and translation (and, of course, to the real classical author), and pseudo-Ovid to refer to the author of *De vetula*.

in Book 2 and is surrounded by a wealth of encyclopaedic information, which dominates Books 1 and 3. One therefore wonders how far the humorous sexual and somewhat misogynistic narrative was perceived as integral to a work dealing largely with matters medical, astrological and theological. The structure in three books may, however, provide a clue as to contemporary analogues and possible modes of reception. For it shares this tripartite structure with Andreas Capellanus's *De amore*, another Latin book purportedly on love, which likewise ends with an anti-love, anti-women section reminiscent of the real Ovid's own *Remedia amoris*.¹⁰

Despite these similarities, Andreas's text is evidently about *amor*, while the main theme and purpose of *De vetula* is less obvious. It was clearly very popular, having survived in at least 45 manuscripts and fragments dating from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. However, 11 of the 45 (9 of them copied in the fifteenth century) contain only Book 3, which suggests that the work's perceived value changed over time and that later readers preferred the more serious subject matter.¹¹ In fact, two fifteenth-century Cambridge manuscripts (Jesus College Q. G. 22 and Sidney Sussex Δ 3.11) explain that Books 1 and 2 have been suppressed because they contain much scurrilous material ('multa scurrilia') (Robathan ed. 1968, p. 30). Yet many manuscripts contain scholia for *all three* books: scholarly annotations including definitions, relevant citations and source identification, and some of these scholia acquire authority as they are copied from manuscript to manuscript. This would suggest that the whole of *De vetula*, but especially Book 3, was frequently treated as a reliable source of knowledge, and indeed the thirteenth-century philosopher Roger Bacon cites it in his *Opus Maius* (1260s) as an authority on the relationship between Aristotle and astronomy.¹² It seems to have acquired the status of a school text, since it circulated from an early date in university and monastic circles, and was owned by important Church figures (Robathan ed. 1968, pp. 23–29; Klopsch 1967, pp. 160–183). *De vetula*'s transmission along with serious philosophical and religious material, as well as with authentic Ovidiana, suggests, though, that it could give rise to a variety of different readings and may well have been viewed differently depending on its manuscript context and circumstances of reception.

¹⁰ Godman (2000), p. 331, also sees *De amore* as offering 'a precedent for the send-up of prescriptive style in *De vetula*'. Moreover, he argues that *De vetula* undermines the author portrait offered by Ovid's *Tristia*, 2, pp. 353–356, where the poet claims that his poetry is far less moral than his own life.

¹¹ The statistics on manuscripts quoted here are based on Robathan ed. (1968), pp. 23–30, but corrected with information taken from M. L. Colker's review of her edition in Colker (1970). Colker pointed out that Robathan had missed 8 further witnesses, including those in Escorial, Manchester, Paris Arsenal and London Congregational Library, but as he gives no information about the contents of these manuscripts, I cannot include them in my figures for manuscripts containing Book 3 only. However, we can add manuscripts mentioned by Klopsch (1967), pp. 160–182, to Robathan's findings: i.e. Budapest, Bern, Frankfurt (not noted by Colker, but actually a fifteenth-century copy containing only Book 3), Melk and Naples, plus a second manuscript in Budapest unknown to all these scholars: see Tóth (2006). So, while my figures may not be complete, they do give us a good indication of the number of fifteenth-century manuscripts containing only Book 3 as a proportion of all extant copies.

¹² See Robathan ed. (1968), pp. 13–14, for a list of references in the works of Bacon.

Jean LeFèvre, in translating all three books, seems to reflect the attitude prevailing in the fourteenth century towards *De vetula*, in that he preserves its erudition, but also its entertainment value. To this end, as elsewhere in his *oeuvre*, he frequently increases the humour and scurrilousness of his source.¹³ Yet, in his translator's prologue he stresses the usefulness of translating in order to pass on the knowledge of the ancients, and seems to ally himself with those who translated the Bible from various languages, and even with St Jerome, who relied on these translators when producing his Vulgate version. This dual function is present in his concluding remarks, which place as much emphasis on entertainment as they do on intellectual utility:

I'm doing it for the entertainment of my lords, and those who love knowledge.¹⁴

For LeFèvre, then, his *Vieille* was an amusing and bawdy pseudo-biography of a famous classical poet, a compendium of knowledge on serious topics, an opportunity to show off his erudition and training in the seven liberal arts, and perhaps also a knowing parody of overconfident scholasticism.¹⁵

The majority of the scholarly material in *De vetula* is to be found in Book 3, which relates the protagonist's post-erotic pursuit of knowledge of God through the study of the liberal arts, especially the quadrivium.¹⁶ However, the first two books also present much learned information on the natural sciences, integrated loosely into his account of his amorous pursuits. For instance, the narrator, preparing himself for love, claims that although he is going to shave, his strong beard is a sign that he will be a good lover:

You can judge performance in the trousers from the thatch on the chin.¹⁷

He is thus invoking the well-known distinction between the male and female sexes based on hairiness which can be found, for example, in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, but he is also pointing to the contrast between the masculine and non-masculine man, which will become relevant when he moves on to discuss eunuchs (see Cadden 1993, pp. 181–182). Since, unlike them, he is able to propagate the species, he manages to present his dubious amorous activity rather pompously as the divinely ordained means to save the human race from extinction:

¹³ See, for example, line 310, where he employs the phallic metaphors of flaming torch and stiff candle to describe the defloration of a virgin and lines 115–116 quoted below.

¹⁴ '... je le fais pour l'esbatement de mes seigneurs et ceuls qui aiment science.' *Vieille*, 3. All English translations, unless otherwise cited, are mine. *La Vieille* is quoted in this essay from Cocheris ed. (1861) and *De vetula* from Robathan ed. (1968).

¹⁵ I am using the term parody here to cover attitudes towards the source material ranging from the highly critical to the gently amused. LeFèvre as translator definitely imitates humorously, but it is difficult to ascertain to what extent he is critical of some of the virtuoso methods and techniques he shares with his predecessor—slight exaggeration or elaboration may not imply ridicule.

¹⁶ This is a commonplace of twelfth-century Chartrean philosophy.

¹⁷ 'Car à la chaume du menton/L'essay des braies congnoist on' (115–116). LeFèvre's version is wittier than the Latin text which speaks of a 'silva' or wood for the beard; see *De vetula*, I, 62.

Through which, there is no room for doubt, the divine race will be saved through natural inclination.¹⁸

Within a few lines we have gone from immoral seduction to man's natural duty to procreate, so it is perhaps no surprise to find in the next line a comparison between the eternity of the soul and the mortality of the body, whose continuation throughout history is procured through sexual reproduction:

The soul is divine and immortal, but the body is in charge of creation... everything strives to procreate so that every species continues.¹⁹

In order to encourage this, we are told, sex is made pleasurable for both male and female (149).²⁰ To render yet more authoritative his justification of his dubious plans LeFèvre's Ovid then quotes Aristotle (161) in saying that intercourse does not give rise to love, but love is unnatural and brutish if it does not lead to intercourse.²¹ In this section of Book 1, sex and philosophy are two carefully interwoven strands. A description of Ovid's bedchamber contains a discussion of different types of light, hence enlightenment: external knowledge coming from the world outside through the window and accessed through the senses ('la sensible', 260) is presented as inferior to the inner illumination ('vertu... intellectuelle', 254–255) coming from 'lumiere de doctrine/Qui l'entendement enlumine' (263–264)—doctrinal enlightenment leading to greater understanding.²² The 'lumiere de doctrine' is represented by the arts of the quadrivium and other subjects which are painted on the walls of Ovid's bedchamber; maths, science, philosophy, metaphysics, ethics and astronomy all being topics which are covered later in *La Vieille*. This academic, somewhat unconventional bedroom decor allows the narrator to pass seamlessly into a disquisition on loving different types of women: widows, married women and virgins—all advice with which his readers would have been familiar from studying Ovid's *Amores* and *Ars amatoria*.²³ By turning bodily pleasures into an academic subject, pseudo-Ovid and LeFèvre neatly join the intellectual with the corporeal. These are epitomised in the manly person of the protagonist; his beard marks him out as superlover, ready

¹⁸ 'Et par lequel n'en doitez mie,/Sauvee est l'espece divine/Par nature qui si encline.' (118–120).

¹⁹ 'Divine et pardurable est l'ame,/Mais le corps de former est dame.../En engendrant tout s'esvertue/Que toute espece continue.' (121–122, 125–126). The denial that this process is circular *Vieille*, 129; *De vetula*, I, 65 'non in se rediens') may be a response to the Averroism of a Siger of Brabant, especially his cyclical theory of time and the unity of the human intellect—theories refuted by Thomas Aquinas; see Jeaneau (1963), p. 100.

²⁰ On the role of pleasure in medieval medical literature on sex, see Cadden (1993), p. 64.

²¹ This remark is added to the source.

²² Here the source is Robert Grossteste's *De luce* according to Klopsch (1967), p. 62, and his *Summa philosophiae* (see Robathan ed. (1968), note to *De vetula*, I, 106): 'Quod virtus intellectiva omnino est immaterialis, licet eius obiectum est materiale' [Although the intellective force is entirely immaterial, yet its object may be material].

²³ Moreover, his comments on how some husbands end up raising the offspring of other men prepares us for the misogynous episode describing his betrayal by the Dipsas-like old crone. For a discussion of similarly antifeminist material favoured by LeFèvre in his translation of the misogynous *Lamentationes*, see Pratt (1999).

to serve Natura by seducing and impregnating the virgin he is pursuing.²⁴ Ironically the most detailed description of love-making occurs when the narrator *imagines* how he will obey the laws of nature with his beloved (*Vieille*, 581 ff.). In a manner both erotic and somewhat medical, foreplay and coitus are described, and orgasm is depicted according to contemporary medical knowledge: i.e. both parties ‘weep the tears of Venus’, 623, in other words ejaculate/emit seed.²⁵ Furthermore, orgasm is compared to a semi-death, for it seems as if their souls escape their bodies: ‘Tant qu’il semble que l’ame en saille’/Et qu’en ce point demi mors soient’ (627–628). It is striking that postcoital recovery is described in language associated with death and resurrection: when they return to their senses ‘quant leur esperit ressourt/Et que leur vie resuscite’ (636–637), they feel as if they are in an earthly paradise. Thus Ovid slyly expresses medical ideas about sexuality using theological vocabulary, thereby making his lust seem part of a grander design. LeFèvre’s readers are at once entertained by a lascivious story and provided with some rudimentary sex education and information on the natural sciences.

As in a true compendium of knowledge, the rest of Book 1 is taken up with descriptions of various noble pastimes, including hunting, fishing and dicing. The vicissitudes of gambling provoke comments on the laws of chance and mathematics, various games, including chess are described, and Ovid ends by lamenting that too few people are interested in philosophy, preferring instead to use their rhetorical skills to earn money, a notable example of this being lawyers.²⁶ Then, at the beginning of Book 2, the narrator launches into a diatribe against eunuchs. The inclusion of this subject may be justified by the fact that it fits in with the protagonist’s general theory of gender and reproduction, as well as his moral defence of sex on the grounds that it is necessary for the perpetuation of the species. Hence, there is a tenuous link with the narrator’s biography in that he, still possessing a strong beard, bears all the traits of a virile man, whilst the sex of a eunuch is indeterminate (see Cadden 1993, p. 181). Nevertheless, Ovid’s pronouncements on the castrated represent a (from our modern perspective) somewhat incongruous, lengthy digression of more than 500 lines in LeFèvre’s supposed biography of a famous poet. For the medieval mentality, however, it may have been perfectly acceptable to treat bodily imperfection as a reflection of one’s moral state.

Ovid begins by dividing eunuchs into three groups:²⁷ those who are born without genitals, and are therefore deprived by nature of all masculine attributes, including lust; those who have been castrated as punishment for their lechery; and those

²⁴ This idea, shared by Genius in Jean de Meun’s *Rose*, is highlighted by the rubric to this section of the translation in MS BNF, f. fr. 19138: ‘Comment le vult barbu monstre parfaitement l’omme estre naturel pour continuer son espece’ [How a bearded face perfectly demonstrates man’s natural disposition to perpetuate his species].

²⁵ On foreplay, see Ruth Mazo Karras (2005), p. 79, and on female emission of seed, see Cadden (1993), pp. 93–94.

²⁶ It is surprising, given his profession, that LeFèvre translates this section.

²⁷ The excessive systematicity with which both Latin and Middle French authors treat the subject may well betray their parodic intention, although the three types of eunuch recall a serious biblical text, Matthew 19, 10–12, discussed below. Klopsch (1967), pp. 59–60, argues on the basis of this and other passages that the author of the Latin source may have been a doctor—as indeed was Richard de Fournival.

who have had a medical problem cured by castration. Despite the ostensibly scientific approach to this question, LeFèvre cannot resist adding a lewd comment about such a man: ‘Jamais ne batera les croupes’ [he will never beat hindquarters] (2126; cf. Robathan ed. 1968, II, 20). Thus Ovid wonders whether these ‘demi hommes’ (2088, 2127) are male, female or possibly neuter, but since the natural world does not recognize an animal which is neither male nor female, he suggests they may be nothing at all (‘néant’, 2137). The narrator takes his scholastic reasoning to ridiculous extremes as he argues that if the eunuch is not an animal then he is not alive, nor is he a tree or a plant, as he has no seed. After an extended plant analogy whereby sperm equates to the seed of a plant, with the testicles as roots and the manly beard as leaves, he concludes that a beardless man is not worthy to procreate, being either castrated or (according to the theory of the humours) too cold (see Cadden, 1993, pp. 183–184). He concludes that the eunuch is a monster of nature (2180), which he then ‘proves’ within the disciplines of grammar, dialectic and rhetoric, followed by the quadrivium, physics, medicine, ethics, metaphysics and theology.

In the chapters on the eunuch as moral monster (ll. 2299 ff.) he states that a castrated man should not be allowed to teach, nor become a priest, let alone a bishop. This is because the castrated are guilty of every vice in the book, in particular envy and covetousness ‘pour leur froideur’ [because of their coldness] (2328). The latter reference introduces the idea that they are of indeterminate gender, indeed effeminate men, who have ‘le visaige/Com vieille qui mangue fromaige/Et la voix casse et feminine’ [a face like an old woman who is eating cheese and a weak and feminine voice] (2331–2333), leading to the question ‘is this a priest or a priestess?’ (2389), followed by the damning conclusion that such a deformed creature ‘emasculates’ or feminises altars: ‘beste diffourmee...les autelz affemine’ (2395–2397). Finally, by linking the consecration of a bishop with the benediction given by Old Testament patriarchs,²⁸ the author argues rather implausibly that a eunuch who becomes a bishop only in order to gain worldly power is like Isaac’s son Jacob, who, being hairless and therefore resembling a eunuch, deceived his father into giving him a blessing by placing animal skins on his neck and arms to recreate the hairiness of Esau.²⁹ Ovid further argues that a man who has never suffered sexual temptation should not be placed in the position of judging others, hence the eunuch should not be given the role of a bishop who imposes penance on sexually active sinners. The figure who wears the clothes of Aaron, but has the face of Marie has no right to judge others, he concludes (2306–2307). In this way the narrator speciously links anatomy with man’s morality, hence one’s prospects of salvation. Furthermore, not only does this exposition imply that the bearded narrator is indeed a virile man, but by arguing that the eunuch is morally unworthy, he seems to confer on himself a moral superiority arising from his intact masculine body, fit for purpose, so to speak.

²⁸ Rupert of Deutz, *In Genesim* VIII, 13 also does this; see Klopsch (1967), p. 56.

²⁹ This example is also given in the *Respit*, but there the aim is to prove the usefulness of translating biblical *exempla* into French. In this, LeFèvre’s later work of his own devising, Jacob’s mother is particularly criticised.

Klopsch has suggested that the anonymous author of *De vetula* must have had a personal antipathy against castrated bishops (Klopsch 1967, p. 57). On the other hand, it may be that this text is parodic and that the author has deliberately given his protagonist false reasons and excessive rhetoric in order to undermine his justification of dubious sexual behaviour. Yet Ovid, by arguing that he is not a moral monster because he is not a eunuch, placing instead his genitals in the proper service of procreation, may be invoking the authority of Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae* and of course the *Romance of the Rose* to exonerate himself.³⁰ Recognition of these possible intertexts, highly contentious in themselves, does not, however, resolve the ambiguity about what the author, translator and indeed readers of *De vetula* really thought of the young protagonist's justifications.³¹ While some may have received these musings as obviously outrageous and parodic, others may well have perceived within these works echoes of serious contemporary medical and theological discussions concerning the body, the priesthood and salvation. The first Council of Nicea in 325 treated male mutilation in its first canon, arguing that castration should only be an impediment to the priesthood if it was self-inflicted. So, in the thirteenth century when *De vetula* was composed it had clearly been a topic of debate since the early days of the Christian Church. Pseudo-Ovid may indeed have had in mind Deuteronomy, 23: 'Non intravit eunuchus, attritis vel amputatis testiculis et abscisso veretro, ecclesiam Domini' [A eunuch, whose testicles are broken or removed, or whose penis has been cut off, shall not enter the church of the Lord].³² Whilst eunuch is to be understood here in the spiritual sense, i.e. someone who does not (re)produce good works, some medieval theologians, concerned about the integrity of the body, seem to have interpreted the term more literally. Moreover, Leviticus 21,16 ff. and 22, 23, for example, specifically exclude eunuchs or any males with defective genitals from the priesthood, just as castrated animals are excluded from sacrifice. Indeed, this biblical passage is mentioned by Abelard in his *Historia calamitatum*, at the point when his castration has turned him into a 'monstrosity', although he nevertheless enters the priesthood shortly afterwards (see Muckle 1964, pp. 39–40). The argument against women being priests today seems to rely also on Christ having had an undeniably male body, and the *De vetula* clearly shows that the indeterminacy of eunuchs was troubling for medieval gender theory and theological questions relating to sex.

³⁰ It is interesting to note that Alan of Lille in his *De fide catholica contra hereticos* refers to heresies as monsters, and since the terms heretic and eunuch were often equated with sodomite in the Middle Ages, there is clearly evidence here of a semantic network covering all that is perceived as unnatural, hence heterodox. See Godman (2000), 307, note 71.

³¹ Rollo (2011) argues that although Alan of Lille's explicit message is an attack on homosexuality, his use of excessive rhetoric may identify him as a gay writer: 'Although vitriolic in denouncing homosexuality, Alain aligns himself with precisely the deviancy he decries, subverting the grammar of homophobia through his chosen means of rhetorical expression', p. 216. He also notes, (pp. 216–217) that at least one medieval scribe may have identified him as a 'sodomita profanus', thus supporting my view that his *De planctu naturae* was not received unambiguously in the Middle Ages.

³² Knight ed. (2013).

The use of the term eunuch in medieval theology to refer to the celibate may also help us to interpret these passages. A telling example is to be found in Jerome's *Ad-versus Jovinianum*. When asked whether or not it is advantageous to marry, Jerome invokes Christ's words from Matthew 19, 10–12: 'Some are eunuchs by nature, others by the violence of men. Those eunuchs please me who are not such of necessity, but of free choice. Willingly do I take them into my bosom who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake...' ³³ This praise of those who have chosen virginity over sexual reproduction, while reflecting the teaching of the Medieval Church, does not necessarily chime with the message, humorous or otherwise, promoted by the young Ovid and by Matthew, the narrator of the misogynous *Lamentations*, discussed below. ³⁴ It is possible therefore that the target of the vehemence against eunuchs expressed by pseudo-Ovid may actually be the avowedly celibate clergy.

A rather more orthodox treatment of the relationship of the body and soul is offered by book 3 of *De vetula*. Disappointed in love, but still feeling the prick of love's temptation, Ovid turns to the consolation of philosophy (*Vieille*, 3789, picking up an idea already expressed in line 263). After a section in which the mathematical board game Rithmomachy and other pastimes are described at length, but with enough accuracy for modern mathematicians to be interested in this text (see Moyer 2001), the narrator gives an extended description of the relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm based on thirteenth-century knowledge of Aristotle and Plato, supplemented by the medical teaching of scholars such as Albumasar and Maimonides. ³⁵ Topics covered include the influence of the planets on man and his anatomy, in particular his reproductive function; the nature of God; the immortality of the soul, and the last things.

On the nature of God pseudo-Ovid and LeFèvre follow the teaching of Thierry of Chartres. Their narrator claims that God can only be comprehended through study of His creation via the quadrivium (3843; see Klopsch 1967, p. 61 and Jeuneau 1963, p. 50). Hence Ovid learns about the divine will by contemplating the planets, God's agents. Using his powers of logic, he proves that God is the supreme primary cause (3859); as such He is omnipotent, therefore He must be the *only* God (3935). ³⁶

³³ Jerome is here quoted in the translation by Marx (1992), p. 66.

³⁴ It should be noted though that Ovid, in a chapter entitled 'Comment spadons ne vivent pas chastement' [How the castrated do not live chastely] (2351 ff.), considers those who become chaste through effort to be superior to those whose abstinence is enforced, and the mature narrator, having mutated from lover into philosopher, is envious of those who are not tempted by love.

³⁵ Klopsch (1967), 59–77, gives detailed information on the possible sources used by the Latin author throughout, showing how he was influenced by different currents of thought and adapted them to his overall plan, not always elegantly and sometimes oversimplistically. According to Klopsch, pseudo-Ovid handled ideas from the natural sciences and medicine more successfully than theological issues.

³⁶ Pseudo-Ovid follows Peter Lombard in arguing that all of these Christian truths can be proved using the tools of pagan philosophy, see Klopsch (1967), pp. 60–61. He is here also arguing against the heresy of Manicheism (see *La Vieille*, 4018) and Roman polytheism.

Though immortal himself, God in His benevolence created the world out of nothing (4071),³⁷ beginning with matter and light (4081), the latter imposing form on matter.³⁸

Within the cosmos, matter is found in the centre and light on the periphery. However, man, created in the image of the macrocosm (4324–4325), reverses this pattern: his delicate parts: the heart, brain and liver are inside, while the outer organs are more robust.³⁹ An exception though are the genitals, which have to be outside to function properly.⁴⁰ Each aspect of bodily and spiritual experience is controlled by a planet in a complicated system of influences: thus Venus controls the testicles, reproduction and also desire. This section of the text emphasises the way in which both body and soul/spirit/emotions are influenced externally by the macrocosm and internally by the elements (4429–4431). Indeed, everything is predetermined and can be read in the stars. It also presents the corporeal and the spiritual as two parallel systems, similar in many respects and inextricably linked.

Ovid's musings on man as microcosm lead him eventually into teaching on the soul and last things. He seems in particular to be concerned about the immortality of the soul and what happens to it between the death of an individual and the moment it is reunited with its original body at the time of the general resurrection. Pseudo-Ovid's theory of the immortality of the soul is based on Plato's notion of continuous motion. As Robathan explains, the followers of Averroes believed in the immortality of the soul, but did not believe that it returned to the body; the author of *De vetula*, on the other hand, followed Albertus Magnus and St Thomas Aquinas in refuting the latter part of the proposition (see Robathan ed. 1968, p. 160).

Ovid's account of events is the following: God set the whole world in motion (3977) and instituted the propagation of the human race. He gives to each individual a *vis speculativa* ('une noblesce/Qui est forte speculative', *Vieille*, 4548–4549), a sort of soul which, because it has no equivalent in the body, survives the body's death and is eternal.⁴¹ Yet, he asks, how can it be created in time, but live forever? He argues that despite the constant motion of the cosmos, God has imposed an end on the world and will, through the power of his word, stop all motion. At this point the resurrection of the bodies of the dead and final judgement will take place (4660–4670) and everything will be renewed in a motionless, eternal better world. While Ovid makes the Platonic objection that something that has been created in the best possible way by God should not result in total dissolution (4677), he replies that continuous reproduction would require the constant creation of new souls and

³⁷ The probable source for this idea is Johannes Scotus Eriugena.

³⁸ See Robert Grosseteste's *De luce* (Klopsch (1967).

³⁹ See Bernardus Silvestris's *Cosmographia*.

⁴⁰ Again LeFèvre cannot resist a lewd remark, perhaps another indirect attack on eunuchs, by saying that testicles are external to the body in order to aid reproduction provided that 'la bourse n'est mie wide' [the sack/purse is not empty] (*Vieille*, 4338); cf. *De vetula*, III, 237.

⁴¹ There is also reference to the soul as entelechia ('entelechie', 4683) of the organic body.

this is unacceptable to nature. Hence the end of the world is necessary, as is the general resurrection, when souls will be returned to their own bodies (4716) and live with God in eternal joy. There is no reason to fear death, since it will put an end to bodily suffering (4845–4850). However, for those who do not repent, things will not improve after death, especially if, as some argue, the soul cast into hell can suffer torment similar to the pain suffered by the body:

I am almost driven to distraction and frightened to death by the misguided opinion of some people who claim that souls are tortured and go to hell.⁴²

Yet Ovid is consoled by learning and returns to his study of the planets. He claims that Venus is associated with the pleasures of this world, while Jupiter is connected with eternal salvation, and the means by which this is achieved, namely faith and religion; since Jupiter can come into conjunction with six planets, this makes possible the birth of six religions. The sixth, which is influenced by the moon, is that of the Antichrist. So, drawing on the teaching of the Arab philosopher Albusar, Ovid ‘proves’ that the planets can predict the birth of religions and this leads him to prophesy the Incarnation and the Apocalypse.⁴³ His religious speculations on the mysteries of the Trinity, the birth of Christ, the Assumption of the Virgin, whose body he predicts will be resurrected without corruption, culminate in a prayer to the Virgin asking her to intercede for those who wish to win God’s grace.

As the foregoing analysis demonstrates, pseudo-Ovid and LeFèvre treat in Book 3 some weighty issues of great concern to the medieval Christian. Despite the somewhat incongruous context in which it is placed, the teaching is fairly orthodox. Moreover, the didactic intent is clear as the Socratic method of question and answer, here embodied in the protagonist’s examination of opposing philosophical arguments, leads Ovid towards enlightenment as heterodox views are rejected.

Although the authority of the protagonist of *De vetula* is somewhat undermined by his comic love-life, and his theological credentials are questioned by his status as a pagan, LeFèvre nevertheless thought it worthwhile to translate and even amplify upon the content of his source. Perhaps it is more surprising though that he drew on his *Vieille* for some of the philosophical and theological material relating to the body and soul he required for his original work, *Le Respit de la mort*, composed sometime after 1376. The *Respit* takes as its starting point the (in my view) probably fictional situation of the narrator’s illness, which prompts him to compose a work asking God for a reprieve from death. By analogy with a debtor who is able to claim insolvency and submit a legal request for an extension to his repayment deadline, the narrator constructs a petition to be delivered to the Royal Chancery, asking for a letter of reprieve which will force his divine creditor to postpone his death long enough for him to atone for his sins. The modern editor of

⁴² ‘Certes pres de confusion/Me met la vaine opinion/D’aucuns, qui forment m’espouvente./Qui racontent que l’en tourmente/Les ames, et vont en enfer.’ (*Vieille*, 4895–4899).

⁴³ A burlesque tone may be in evidence here, for, as Godman (2000), 332, states, Ovid’s ‘supposed conversion to Christianity... is occasioned by neither faith nor revelation but by a display of celestial science, designed to dazzle the poem’s readers’.

this text, Geneviève Hasenohr-Esnos, argues that LeFèvre was indeed ill in 1376 (as is mentioned in *Respit*, 39) and takes at face value his concern about death and indeed the negative comments he makes about his wife (2960).⁴⁴ I, however, feel that there is no more reason to think he was unhappily married just because here and in the *Lamentations de Mathéolus* he complains about his nagging wife, than to believe that in 1376, having supposedly passed the age of 50 (375–376) he starts to fear death and its consequences for the salvation of his soul. Whether this scenario is fact or fiction, it seems fitting that in the *Respit* LeFèvre the lawyer uses the legal petition as a framework for his work, in the same way that he uses a courtroom context for his defence of women in the *Livre de Leesce*. Another similarity with his other works is the humour with which he treats serious subjects like death (not unlike François Villon in his mock last will and testament). LeFèvre's sense of humour is, in my view, an attractive characteristic of his writing often overlooked by modern readers.⁴⁵

The petitioner begins by presenting himself as being in a worse position than those who have been impoverished by war, since he has been attacked by three enemies: the flesh, the world and the devil (2971), not to mention his wife (2960)! This has resulted in the loss of his worldly wealth, but more importantly he has lost 'ma dame Prudence/...Attemprence... Force et Justice' (2981–2983). Whilst the human legal system of the time was willing to supply only one letter of reprieve to a creditor, the narrator's musings on divine compassion lead to the hope that God will reprieve him again and again, until he can achieve eternal life, for after all, God does not wish for the death of a sinner.⁴⁶ It goes without saying, therefore, that the overriding topic of concern to the narrator is what will happen to his soul after death, and his desire to do as much as possible in this life to avoid eternal damnation.

Within this legal and theological framework LeFèvre discusses a number of subjects which we have already seen in his *Vieille*. He is particularly exercised by the idea or 'oppinion vainne' (140, cf. *Vieille*, 4896 quoted above) expressed by pagan philosophers that the souls of the dead go to hell and burn there, which means that the bodily suffering of this life would not cease:

I am very frightened and distressed by the erroneous opinion of some people who say that our souls go to hell and are tortured by its flames so that men and women would suffer from all directions both in this life and the next.⁴⁷

He is comforted however by alternative theories: that of Pythagoras (14 comments he makes about his wife 6), who argues that when the soul leaves the body, it leaves humanity behind and exists as pure divinity; and that of Macrobius (in his commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*), who claims that only after the soul has left the body and has been delivered from its prison can it see the doorway to heaven

⁴⁴ The *Respit* is quoted from Hasenohr-Esnos ed. (1969).

⁴⁵ Evidence for this comic approach has already been identified in his adaptation of *De vetula*.

⁴⁶ This commonplace of medieval penitential literature can be traced back to Ezechiel 33, 11.

⁴⁷ 'Trop m'esbahist et donne paine/des aucuns l'oppinion vainne./disans qu'en enfer vont lez ames/et sont tourmenteez de flamez/doncques seroient en exil./de cha, de la, celle et chil./et en ceste et en l'autre vie.' (*Respit*, 139–145).

(151–155). Finally, he invokes his *Vieille* by mentioning ‘Ovidius, *De Vetula*’ (157), who claims to have seen the entrance to heaven, talks of our resurrection and applies reason to prove that the soul is eternal (162). Aristotle’s advice to avoid sin and subjugate the pleasures of the flesh in order to approach one’s creator without fear of death, is, he claims, supported by Cato (175), who sees death as putting an end to life’s pain and suffering. LeFèvre’s narrator is clearly perturbed by the contradictory views held by ‘Les philosophes anciens/et les grans astronomiens’ [the ancient philosophers and the great astronomers] (179–180), whose ‘oppinions diversez’ he humorously characterises as ‘blanches et noires, jaunez et perses’ [white and black, yellow and blue].⁴⁸ However, unlike the pagan Ovid in *De vetula*, the narrator of the *Respit* is able right from the beginning to place his faith firmly in Christian doctrine, with its hope of eternal salvation offered to those who overcome sin (192). Nevertheless, the fate of the soul after death is a recurrent source of anxiety for him, to which he returns in lines 459–472. Here, the narrator expands on Africanus’s words to Scipio in Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis*, 14: the body is the prison of the soul, and only when the soul escapes is it able to live, see and understand the riches heaven has to offer. Thus the body should be despised and death should be welcomed as life-giving.⁴⁹ The narrator seems to agree with this view even though the denigration of the body was problematic in medieval theology given that Christ chose to adopt that form to redeem mankind.⁵⁰

The lengthy section on the corruptibility of the sublunary world owes a great deal to the scientific knowledge LeFèvre has already translated in his *Vieille*. On the macrocosm we find an explanation of the creation of the two spheres, the influence of the planets on human beings, the ninth heaven which sets everything in motion, the eternal nature of the heavens, and the vanity of the worldly. Man as microcosm reflects in miniature the macrocosm, but reversed, as we know from *De vetula*. Yet once again LeFèvre cannot resist joking about man’s genitals, which complicates our response to his argument about man’s divinely instituted duty to procreate (‘des chieulz l’office’, 898):

... and his balls are outside to aid the reproduction process; whether he is trotting or walking they bump into each other near the orifice.⁵¹

As before, the planet Venus is associated with the testicles (923), generation and desire (966)—thus each planet again has an influence both on the bodily (‘vertus naturelles’ (955) and what we might nowadays call man’s emotions or temperament,

⁴⁸ Indeed, his situation resembles that of medieval scholars, who spent most of their time trying to harmonise the views of the pagan *auctores* with Christian belief.

⁴⁹ Line 468 ‘Quant l’ame est hors du corps ravie’ [when the soul is snatched from the body] is quoted verbatim in his, *Livre de Leesce* 2094 (see van Hamel ed. (1892, 1905)), but in the latter work the author is making fun of Orpheus’s attempt to rescue Eurydice from the underworld. He argues that it would be against nature for a mortal creature to be revived after death, joking that no amount of playing of instruments could make any difference.

⁵⁰ See Raskolnikov (2009), p. 22.

⁵¹ ‘Et les couillons sont par dehors/pour aidier a l’engendreire;/o par le trot ou par ambleüre/se joignent pres de l’orifice.’ (894–897).

but which LeFèvre calls ‘des animaulx’ (956), i.e. the spiritual. God, we are told, created man with his own hands (1081) and placed an eternal soul in his mortal body, for although his bodily strength dies, the virtues of the soul remain after death (1088). LeFèvre, however, resists commenting on the difference between the spirit and the soul (1095) wishing to avoid either praise or blame—this is clearly a thorny theological question. Reciting the same arguments he had earlier found in *De vetula*, he notes that although the soul has a beginning, it will last forever, unlike the body, which takes its nourishment from the elements (1104). Despite Job’s claim that no man can continue beyond his time (1105–1106), the narrator adds in jocular fashion that good health can certainly lengthen one’s life.

LeFèvre’s discussion of man as microcosm reminds one of the anatomical details preserved in his *Vieille*. However, his division of the soul into three parts, each corresponding to a part of the body, is not found there. This is a neo-platonic idea, disseminated in the Middle Ages by reading the likes of Plotinus, Proclus and Apuleius.⁵² In LeFèvre’s narrator’s words, his illness has attacked him with three swords—in the head, heart and feet. The head is free will, which controls his actions; the heart provides discernment and advice; the feet, being the lowest part of the body, are carnal desire.⁵³ He further elaborates that free will, the most noble of faculties, is made in the image of God and is eternal like Him (1174–1192); one’s will rules even over reason.⁵⁴ Moving on to the heart, LeFèvre claims that man’s thoughts—both good and evil—reside there and that it is a source of life. This life force is further divided into three types of spirit (1293): ‘animal’, i.e. intellectual spirits, which are found in the head, ‘natural’ spirits in the liver and ‘vital’ spirits, which are in the heart.⁵⁵ The fact that they are not to be found in the genitals is ‘proved’ by the story of the carpenter who castrates the priest found in adultery with his wife (1316–1322).⁵⁶ The priest survives without his genitalia, but loses his beard and here LeFèvre recycles more material from his *Vieille* when he describes the ‘eunuch’s’ face as ‘fronchié... plus que vielle qui vent fromage’ (1325–1326) [more wrinkled than an old woman selling cheese].⁵⁷ Thus we see LeFèvre incorporating a discussion of the different functions of three bodily organs into his description of the central part of the soul, represented by the heart. This parallel between the corporeal and the psychological/spiritual is cemented by the use of a simile (compare 1362–1368):

⁵² See Hasenohr-Esnos ed. (1969), pp. 166–167, and Apuleius’s *De dogmate Platonis*: I, XVIII and XIII (for the text, see *The Latin Library* online).

⁵³ According to Hasenohr-Esnos ed. (1969), p. 167, this allegorical interpretation of the feet can be found in the *Reductorium morale* of Pierre Bersuire: ‘Per pedes, in *Scriptura*, intelliguntur affectus’ [in Scripture the feet are to be understood as the emotions].

⁵⁴ This discussion of free will, which invokes Abelard (1235) and St. Augustine (1264), but which is based on St Bernard’s *De gratia et libero arbitrio* according to Hasenohr-Esnos ed. (1969), p. 167, is summarised in the *Livre de Leesce*, 2027–2070.

⁵⁵ According to Hasenohr-Esnos ed. (1969), pp. 169–170, this medical knowledge is derived from Galen.

⁵⁶ This is reminiscent of the fabliau entitled the *Prestre crucifié*.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Vieille*, 2331–2332: ‘spadons ont fronchié le visaige/Com vielle qui mangue [variant vent] frommaige’ [eunuchs have wrinkled faces just like an old woman eating/selling cheese].

But just as a man would not be able to live without a heart and would in fact, die, so every action, if not governed by good intention, ought to be judged as dead, if he is not encouraged and incited to do good by good judgement.⁵⁸

Finally, in line 1359, we are told that the foot represents desire, ‘charnel appetit’, which can lead astray a man’s ‘corage’ (which he confusingly equates with ‘l’esperit/qui les choses het ou cherit’ [the spirit which loves or hates things] (1383–1384)).⁵⁹ ‘Appetit’ leads eventually to most of man’s vices.

In this lengthy and complex passage we see LeFèvre attributing those aspects of man’s character which are associated with the soul to parts of the body, thus demonstrating how closely the two parts of man were interlinked in medieval thought. Indeed, in medieval iconography the soul was represented as a naked body, a conceptualisation which would have opened up the possibility of the soul suffering bodily pain in purgatory while waiting to be united with the original body at the general resurrection.⁶⁰ No wonder LeFèvre’s narrators in his *Vieille* and *Respit* are so concerned with the torments of the soul.⁶¹ In the latter work, though, we are reassured that patience in suffering is rewarded, leading to 30 benefits, including salvation.

Having acquired ‘la lumiere de doctrine/qui l’entendement enlumine’ [the light of doctrine which illuminates our understanding] (1837–1838), a phrase and concept familiar to us from the *Vieille*, the narrator indulges in some estates satire, including a discussion of married people. Here, ideas already expressed in the *Lamentations* are repeated: marriage is a martyrdom; procreation may help to perpetuate a family name, but it does not prevent the parents from dying, and children are a great burden. Realising that God’s reprieve from death will not last for ever, the narrator turns to the ladder of penance, for which grace is the ultimate reward. The main idea here is that any suffering experienced by the body will also have repercussions for the soul. LeFèvre suggests the translating of biblical *exempla* into French for lay people as one act of penance (3195–3198) and the text ends with the narrator’s hope that God through his grace will grant him respite from death—without his having to pay a penny (3736–3737)! Thus LeFèvre shows the same desire to provide encyclopaedic knowledge in the *Respit* as he found in the source of his *Vieille*. Although there are glimpses of humour in his later original work, purportedly on the imminent death and hoped-for salvation of an elderly man, he nevertheless seems to treat the theological issues seriously, no doubt responding to a demand by the laity for this sort of philosophical and doctrinal knowledge in the vernacular. What also

⁵⁸ ‘Mais si com l’omme ne porroit/vivre sans cuer, anchois morroit,/tout aussi chascune action,/s’il n’y a bonne intencion,/doit estre jugie pour morte,/se bon conseil ne li ennorre/et a bien faire ne l’excite’ (*Respit*, 1331–1337).

⁵⁹ It is interesting to note that the mutable nature of man’s heart, influenced by his passions, is described in a similar way to misogynistic literature’s description of the fickle nature of women; see Fiero, Pfeffer and Allain (1989).

⁶⁰ Of course the body was also employed as a metaphor for political organisation by the Greeks (Plato and Aristotle) and by John of Salisbury in his *Polycraticus* (1159).

⁶¹ Bynum and Freedman (1999), in their introduction to *Last Things*, refer to a thirteenth-century shift ‘from emphasis on resurrection of the literal, material body... to stress on the experience of the separated soul after death... increasingly imaged as bodily (somatomorphic)’, p. 6.

seems to be quite orthodox in his writing is his presentation of aspects of the soul using corporeal language—a method that jars with modern sensibilities.

While it is not surprising to see theological discussions on the relationship between the body and soul in a work about the narrator's preparations for death, it comes as more of a surprise to find similar preoccupations in another original work by LeFèvre, his defence of women *Le Livre de Leesce*.⁶² This palinode to his translation of the *Lamentationes Matheoluli* not only quotes extensively his earlier misogynous work (the *Lamentations*), but also recycles material on the body and soul from his other writings. As the *Leesce* draws to a close, the narrator suddenly exhorts women to avoid vice and pursue virtue, and embarks on a digressionary sermon (3215 ff.) covering a variety of theological issues. He preaches on the immortality and omniscience of God, the trinity, the possibility of man's resurrection, the creation of the angels, the fall of Lucifer. He tells us that God created man, then woman to help him; both were given 'ame... sensitive/raisonnable et intellective' (3257–3258)⁶³ as well as memory, understanding (especially of that which we cannot see) and free will (3261–3263). The property of the rational soul is to be able to choose between good and evil (3275–3276), and just as God cannot be comprehended by any creature, so the soul cannot be comprehended by any 'visible' creature. Yet the latter is able to understand spiritual matters. The body is made of four elements (3303).⁶⁴ God created two creatures, one spiritual (the angels), one corporeal (humans) (3329–3330). The fall of the angels and man was foreseen by God, who wished not only to reveal Himself as a judge of their morality, but also to produce the great good of the Incarnation out of Adam's fault (3349 ff.). After Christ's resurrection, ascension and pentecost, his return for the last judgement is awaited (3385). Men should therefore prepare for their salvations and not sin.

Especially relevant in this context is the narrator's conviction that God will judge slanderers, and their words will count against them on the day of judgement (3411). This enables him to return from his theological digression to his main subject by concluding that Matthew, who has slandered women, will be in danger of damnation if he does not repent. This conclusion, however flippant, was taken seriously by the fifteenth-century anonymous author of the *Purgatoire de mauvais maris*, a defence of women produced in Bruges before 1467.⁶⁵ Drawing on motifs from LeFèvre's *Lamentations* and *Leesce* the author depicts a character called Matheolet and his disciples in the most painful part of purgatory reserved for bigamous clerics. His crime is, of course, to defame women, and no amount of suffering at the hands of a nagging wife in this life has exempted him from a most terrible punishment in the next.

⁶² References to *Le Livre de Leesce* and *Les Lamentations de Matheolus* are from van Hamel ed. (1892, 1905).

⁶³ van Hamel ed. (1892, 1905), II, p. 254, cites Thomas Aquinas as a source for this material on the *anima intellectiva*, but LeFèvre found similar ideas in *De vetula*; see *Vieille*, 255, discussed above, p. 216.

⁶⁴ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, Part 1, quest. 91; *Vieille*, 1104; *Respit*, 972.

⁶⁵ See Colombo-Timelli ed. (1998).

Although the *Livre de Leesce* is a defence of women, LeFèvre spends little time on women's salvation, lingering instead on the effects the defamation of women will have on men's souls.⁶⁶ Yet this final point hardly seems to justify the 200-line exposition of Christian mysteries just summarised, and again it seems that LeFèvre cannot resist any opportunity to lecture his readers and share with them the fruits of his knowledge, even if they are placed in a humorous and somewhat incongruous context.

The final LeFèvre text to be discussed here is his *Lamentations de Mathéolus*, with which I began. In it he follows his predecessor Matthew of Boulogne in allowing his lamenting and lamentable narrator, a married man and bigamous cleric, to dispute with God on various theological subjects.⁶⁷ Matthew, in a series of *quaestiones*, begins by criticising the Lord (even asking Him at one point if He is asleep or just an idiot, 690, cf. 904) saying that if He operates within eternity (84–85), He must have foreseen the Fall, so why create the first married woman and why make all men suffer for Adam's sin (106–113)? Why institute marriage (122–124), and even suggest that a man should leave his mother and father to join a woman, when Christ did not get married himself (181)? Whereas priests and monks have a year to decide whether they wish to pursue their vocation, why is there no let-out clause for married men, who are not allowed to divorce their wives (320)? Surely this gives the unfortunate impression that spiritual links can be broken more easily than carnal ones (510)? Not only are married men therefore expected to suffer for ever in this life, but, according to Christ's teaching, they will not be allowed to approach the heavenly banquet in the next life either (961–965). Matthew here wilfully misinterprets the husband's words in Luke 14, 20: 'Et alius dixit: Uxorem duxi, et ideo non possum venire' [I have taken a wife and therefore I cannot come].⁶⁸ Since the banquet has earlier been interpreted (*Lamentations*, II, 1272) as 'souper en pardurable vie' [eating for ever at heaven's table], the narrator erroneously concludes that God has ruled out salvation for married men:

We are dead, body and soul: our bodies are tormented by our wives and our souls are not allowed access to you.⁶⁹

Thus there is no point in Christ's redemption, for, he claims, eternal punishment will ensue just for getting married (1220–1221). Moreover, why has God promoted an institution which is not necessary for procreation, for in fact a man can propagate

⁶⁶ See the three short pro- and anti-feminist texts in Fiero, Pfeffer and Allain (1989), which also concentrate on the ill or beneficial effects women can have on men.

⁶⁷ In the following I shall use the name Matthew to refer to the narrator of both Latin source and Middle French translation. All references are to Book 3 of the *Lamentations* (van Hamel ed. (1892, 1905)).

⁶⁸ Whereas the wife in the biblical passage is used as an excuse by the husband to postpone his adoption of correct moral behaviour in order to save his soul, Matthew interprets his married state literally as an impediment to salvation. LeFèvre has Leesce attack Matthew's reasoning in his *Livre de Leesce*, 1905 ff.

⁶⁹ 'Mors sommes en corps et en ame:/Le corps est tourmentés par femme,/L'ame ne puet a toy aler.' (955–957).

the species more effectively without being tied to one wife (1053 ff.)—a view Matthew shares with Genius in the *Rose*. His distorted logic leads him to argue that God, through His mercy, should save everyone, except for women of course, and it is at this point that he speculates that the ‘gendre femenin’ [the female sex] (1437) might revert to nothing if Adam gets his rib back—a comment he immediately retracts as theologically unsound, but resulting from his marital distress.

Eventually, God is allowed some words in His defence, namely that not everyone should be saved, for man has free will so that he can choose good or evil, and be rewarded accordingly. Moreover, marriage is a purgatory, which must be endured by husbands, Job-like, until they are rewarded in heaven (1688–1692). When the narrator gives up arguing and asks instead for forgiveness, God takes him in a vision to heaven to see the reward that awaits him. Here Matthew makes the highly controversial claim that husbands will be seated next to martyrs in heaven and win a higher place in the celestial hierarchy than the celibate priesthood (2774). Moreover, since union between man and woman is necessary to perpetuate the species, God wants to publicise the fact that husbands will be rewarded for their sacrifice (2795). Thus canon law is wrong (2859) to suggest that Paradise will be filled with virgins; both heaven and the world would be empty were it not for married men carrying out this chore (2885). Yet just in case the narrator’s words seem to be heretical, he reminds us that sadness leads him astray (2893–2895). The dream vision culminates in Matthew being accompanied by a legion of married men and bigamous clerics (2911 ff.) to a heavenly throne, where he is crowned by God (3085). Though convinced by this divine argument, Matthew is still upset to find, on awakening, his nagging wife at his side, and claims he would willingly forfeit some of his heavenly reward for more peace on this earth.

Matthew of Boulogne’s dream vision was no doubt influenced by Alan of Lille’s *De Planctu naturae* and his *Anticlaudianus*, whose overt message is that heterosexual sex is a natural human activity. He and his translator LeFèvre, who adds to his source the explicit reference to virgins in the heavenly cortege (2771), is clearly alluding humorously to the contemporary discussion about the superiority of virginity, known in particular through Jerome’s *Adversus Jovinianum*, ‘(I.12) Christ loves virgins more than others, because they willingly gave what was not commanded them.’⁷⁰ The idea that marriage is superior to virginity is well suited to the persona of bigamous cleric which LeFèvre and Matthew adopted for their *Lamentations*, and the latter clearly used this figure to criticise the withdrawal by successive thirteenth-century popes of privileges from clerics who had married widows.⁷¹ However, it is unlikely that these two writers were seriously arguing that marriage was the preferred state. More likely is that the overriding tone of the Latin and French texts

⁷⁰ Jerome is quoted here from Blamires, Pratt and Marx (1992), p. 66. See also the discussion above on eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven.

⁷¹ Matthew of Boulogne attended the Council of Lyon in 1276 when the pope decided to withdraw privileges such as tithe exemption from bigamous clerics. The resentful attitude towards priests expressed by his narrator in the *Lamentationes* is also to be found in Adam de la Halle’s *Jeu de la feuillée*, in which so-called ‘clers bigames’ claim that marrying a widow has disadvantaged them hugely while priests take mistresses with impunity; see Dufournet ed. (1977), 428–513.

is comic, and that LeFèvre and Matthew enjoyed using their skills in rhetoric and dialectic to contribute playfully to the debate without undermining the soul composed of matter e Church's teaching on sexual matters (see Pratt 1994, pp. 57–66).

What I hope to have shown is that in the works which LeFèvre produced in the late fourteenth century, whether translated or original, several issues relating to the body and soul, sexuality and salvation, marriage and virginity, recur. He seems to enjoy taking every opportunity to include these erudite passages in his writings, however incongruous the context, perhaps to confer authority on his work. So, for example, the discussion about the suitability of the castrated for the priesthood (and it is striking that Abelard is nowhere mentioned in *De vetula*, although he is in *Leesce*, 2786) is linked in LeFèvre's works to serious questions about gender (a concept which seemed to rely on the integrity of male/female bodies) and salvation, the fate of the body and soul at the Last Judgement. He is constantly preoccupied with what Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman (*Last Things*, 5 ff.) call the three eschatologies: the judgement of the individual at death, again at the Last Judgement and the collective fate of the human race faced with the imminent Apocalypse. These slightly conflicting models of salvation raised urgent questions such as what happened to the individual soul, judged once already, while waiting for the end of the world, and would some souls have long enough to make amends for their sins through purgatorial cleansing or intercessional prayer if their owner died shortly before the Last Judgement?

Another topic which preoccupied LeFèvre was how to reconcile the doctrine on the different natures of the body and soul with the prevalence of somatomorphic terms to envisage the soul's suffering.⁷² He was not the only writer to struggle with the teaching on the general resurrection, which argued that when the soul returns to the body, only the latter needed to be resurrected since the soul was immortal. As we have seen, LeFèvre presents his narrators with conflicting evidence, for some philosophers argued that the body was the prison of the soul and therefore the soul would not want to be reunited with it. Yet this denigration of the body was heretical, irreconcilable with the Incarnation. It was therefore necessary at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 to state dogmatically that 'all men, whether elect or reprobate, will rise again with their own bodies which they now bear about with them'. It seems that this doctrine needed constant refinement and reiteration in the Middle Ages and was a rich source of material for clerical debate.⁷³

LeFèvre is no different from any other educated medieval Christian in his preoccupation with the afterlife and man's proper preparation for it. Indeed, if one

⁷² See St Augustine, who in his *City of God* says of hell: 'For that death, which means, not the separation of soul from body, but the union of both for eternal punishment, is the more grievous death.' This is 'dying for all eternity', quoted from Mills (2005), p. 92.

⁷³ Clearly this had been a controversial subject even before the time of St. Augustine, who claimed that 'No doctrine of the Christian Faith...is so vehemently and so obstinately opposed as the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh' (In Ps. lxxxviii, sermo ii, n. 5), see Maas (1911). On the issue of female resurrection raised by Matthew, see Augustine, *De civitate dei*, XXII. 17 (quoted in Blamires, Pratt and Marx (1992) 81) who says clearly that women will be resurrected as women, but men and women will not be married in heaven.

compares the issues which exercised LeFèvre with the subjects covered by Thomas Aquinas's *quaestiones* in his *Summa theologica*, one notes a remarkable similarity in content. There are questions on the union of the body and the soul such as 'Is the intellectual principle multiplied numerically according to the number of bodies or is there one intelligence for all men?' (*Summa*, Part 1, Question 76, see Knight Ed. (2008)) and on the nature of the soul, e.g. 'Is the soul a body?' or 'Is the soul composed of matter and form?' (Question 75, 1 and 5). Question 81 deals with the quality of those who rise again:

1. Will all rise again in the youthful age?⁷⁴
2. Will they be of equal stature?
3. Will all be of the same sex?
4. Will they rise again to the animal life?

and in Part 1, Question 92 on 'The production of the woman' Thomas asks the following four questions:

1. Should the woman have been made in that first production of things?
2. Should the woman have been made from man?
3. Of man's rib?
4. Was the woman made immediately by God?

In light of this type of philosophical interrogation Matthew's fantasy that the whole female sex might disappear at the general resurrection seems not quite so far-fetched.

Not only is LeFèvre's subject-matter the stuff of scholasticism, he also adopts the dialectical method practised by the likes of Abelard in his *Sic et Non* and Aquinas in his *Summa theologica*, whose aim is to examine opposing views and arrive at a synthesis. Aquinas often refers to the philosopher (usually Aristotle), and similarly LeFèvre and his sources quote philosophical opinions or objections in order to defend or refute them. Thus we find Ovid in *Vieille*, 4671–4692, employing rhetorical questions and *anteoccupatio* in order to ascertain the truth.⁷⁵ All of these writers are concerned with harmonising ancient philosophical teaching and more modern Christian doctrine. However, one wonders to what extent LeFèvre's dialectic is really in the service of the truth. Given that the context for much of his musing is humorous, it is very difficult to judge whether he is parodying scholasticism or simply imitating it. In the latter case, proving his mastery of the dialectical method would be more important to him than the outcome. Thus, in the *Lamentations* the question form enables Matthew and his translator to exemplify the techniques of the Schools, although clearly the conclusion arrived at is not meant to be taken seriously.

Our interpretation of these texts is further complicated by the comic contexts and genres into which much of this serious material is introduced. LeFèvre has used the

⁷⁴ Medieval theologians in fact speculated that since Christ died at the age of 33, this would be the perfect age for resurrected bodies.

⁷⁵ *Anteoccupatio* is the rhetorical device by which a character can respond to a possible objection raised by an imaginary interlocutor.

entertaining genres of pseudo-biographical, anti-matrimonial and mock penitential literature to treat important doctrinal and theological issues which were current at the time. Like his predecessor Matthew, he seems to be making a serious point about the withdrawal of clerical privileges from those who had remarried or married a widow. Similarly, he cannot resist the opportunity to challenge the claim that the celibate priesthood was superior to the married clergy, when much anticlerical, satirical literature suggested the opposite. However, LeFèvre's repeated allusions to the negative effects of virginity on the propagation of the human race, remarks that we might be tempted to read as a joke, become more problematic when read against the remarks by Alan of Lille on homosexuality and the proper use of the sexual organs, and of course, against the highly ironic and ambiguous pronouncements of Genius in the *Romance of the Rose*. In the *Vieille*, Ovid, as an erotic adventurer and pagan may be an unreliable narrator. Obviously, he only has the tools of pagan philosophy at his disposal in order to arrive at the truth and it is therefore up to each reader to decide whether Ovid is a suitable witness to the revealed truth of Christianity.

Finally, we turn to the evidence of manuscript context, ownership and annotation in order to consider how LeFèvre's works may have been received. As Hasenohr-Esnos has shown, the manuscripts of *Le Respit de la mort*, especially Paris, BNF f. fr. 1543, and the early printed edition made in 1533 contain scholarly notes identifying the biblical, classical and theological sources LeFèvre seems to draw on.⁷⁶ This would suggest that the factual content of his work was taken seriously by at least some readers and by a sixteenth-century publisher. This impression is supported by the fact that the text often travels with translations of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* and other moral and philosophical works, especially on death. In Brussels MS 4373–4376, it precedes Christine de Pizan's *Epître d'Othéa*, two didactic texts intended for girls, and a work justifying tyrannicide. In a scribal colophon in fr. 1543, dated 1402, the scribe is named as Alixandre Dannes and his patron as Mahieu de Hangest, a knight and lord of Genly and Maigny in Picardy. The latter fought loyally for two kings of France, Charles V and VI, and was frequently a litigant at the Parisian Parliament. Perhaps that is why he wanted a copy of LeFèvre's *Respit*.

The Parisian Parliament provides a connection with another owner of a LeFèvre manuscript, Arnaud de Corbie (1325–1414), who was counsellor to Charles V and VI of France, a cleric at the Parlement and Chancellor of France in 1388. He owned a copy of the *Vieille*, now BNF, f. fr. 881.⁷⁷ Thereafter the codex was owned by various urban moneychangers. LeFèvre's translation is transmitted in this manuscript along with a French version of the *Ars amatoria* and ballads and rondeaux by Machaut, which might suggest that the moneychangers had a taste for erotica.

⁷⁶ See Hasenohr-Esnos ed. (1969), pp. 210–221. The surviving manuscripts offering a complete copy of the *Respit* are Paris, BNF, f. fr. 1543, 994, 1445, 24309 and 19137, plus Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, 4373–4376.

⁷⁷ The *Vieille* has survived in three manuscripts dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries now in the BNF: fr. 881 (A), 2327 (B) and 19138 (C); see *Traduction de Jean Le Fèvre*.

In BNF, f. fr. 19138 two poems on the Virgin Mary, ‘un dit de la rose’ and a ‘salve regina en françoiz’, appropriately follow Ovid’s prayer to the Virgin at the end of the *Vieille*, thus giving this copy a more pious context; and in BNF, f. fr. 2327 the *Vieille* has been copied on its own. Clearly its Ovidian, but also its religious content was important to those who copied or commissioned it. As for the *Lamentations de Mathéolus* and *Livre de Leesce*, both fairly substantial works, especially the former, they were often copied on their own or together, but rarely with other texts. It is interesting to note that the British Library codex of both works, Royal 20.B.XXI, belonged in the early sixteenth century to George Boleyn, brother of Anne. One wonders how the siblings received this pro- and anti-feminist material. They seem to have shared the manuscript with Thomas Wyatt, whose name appears on the flyleaf, and who was later implicated in charges of adultery against Anne. From this brief survey of the reception history of LeFèvre’s works, one might argue that their philosophical and religious importance was recognised, but they were also prized for their entertainment value.

To conclude, it seems to me that Matthew of Boulogne in his *Lamentationes Matheoluli* uses erroneous theological reasoning in order to create a humorous context for his defence of clerical marriage at a time when it was being attacked by Church officials. The author of *De vetula* gives overblown rhetorical and dialectical treatment to some spurious and some serious doctrinal and philosophical material in order to parody the *accessus ad auctores* and his contemporaries’ fascination with encyclopaedic knowledge. LeFèvre employs this material in his translations and original works to produce rhetorically and dialectically sophisticated works of entertainment. Nevertheless, he conveys much important (and often authoritative) philosophical, scientific and theological information, challenging his readers to reflect not only on the arguments, but also on the very methods available to the scholar to arrive at the truth. In the process, he provides us with insights into the great scholarly questions of the time, revealing the complex ways in which the body and soul are linked in medieval language and thought.

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Paul, Augustine, and Marital Sex in Guilielmus Estius' Scriptural Commentaries

Wim François

Early modern debates on the ethics of sexuality in marriage raged not only amongst representatives of different schools of thought such as the humanists, Protestants and Catholics, but also amongst theologians working within particular confessional traditions. Everybody felt obliged to take a stance on Augustine's doctrine of *bona excusantia*, or extenuating goods of marital sex, which had thoroughly permeated the Christian tradition: the *bonum proles* ("the good of procreation"), *bonum fidei* ("the good of fidelity") and *bonum sacramenti* ("the good of the sacrament").¹ Somewhat peculiar is Augustine's illustration of this doctrine in his *Confessiones* (*Confessions*), where he defended that the pleasure of sexuality should not be separated from the good of procreation any more than the pleasure of eating should be separated from the goods of nourishment and health; in either case, Augustine argued, it was sinful to seek the pleasure in its own right, without reference to the accompanying good.²

This view was repeatedly challenged by members of the early modern Paris Faculty of Theology. Influenced by Aristotelian philosophy and the growing spirit of humanism and renaissance, the spirit which took all human experience—including the experience of married life—seriously, theologians argued that married couples could legitimately have sexual intercourse with the *sole* purpose of enjoyment, and that this should not be considered sinful. This position was first put forward by Martin Le Maistre (1432–1481), but the theory was further developed and given authority by Jean Mair (1469–1550) in his *Quaestiones utilissimae in Quartum Sententiarum* (*Most Useful Questions on the Four Books of Sentences*, by the medieval

¹ Augustinus (1894), *De genesi ad litteram* 9.7, pp. 275 l. 24–276 l. 4; Augustinus (1900b), *De bono coniugali* 24.32, pp. 226 l. 25–228 l. 13; Augustinus (1892b), *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1.11.13; 1.17.19, p. 225 l. 25–28, p. 231 l. 12–23; Augustinus (1841a), *Contra Iulianum* 5.12.46, col. 810.

² See Meilaender (2001), pp. 3–18, with a reference to Augustinus (1981a), *Confessiones* 10.31.43–47, pp. 177–180.

W. François (✉)

Research Unit: History of Church and Theology, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies,
KU Leuven, Belgium

e-mail: Wim.Francois@theo.kuleuven.be

master Peter Lombard) 31.1 (1508). Mair was of the opinion that it was no more sinful to copulate with your spouse for pleasure than “to eat a good-looking apple for the pleasure of eating it.” By using this phrase, Mair cleverly adapted Augustine’s symbolic comparison between food and intercourse to suit his purpose.³ Mair also thought that prevention of fornication was another legitimate reason why married couples should have and enjoy sex, rejecting Augustine’s opinion that sex not intent on procreation was a sin (albeit a venial, not a mortal one⁴). Mair’s interpretation of Paul’s famous words in 1 Cor 7:2, “...for fear of fornication, let every man have his own wife: and let every woman have her own husband,” was clearly much more positive than Augustine’s. Probably in order to justify the discrepancy between his views and Augustine’s, Mair proposed that the “authorities of the non-canonical saints must be interpreted narrowly where they speak extremely,”⁵ while at the same time acknowledging the pastoral value of the saints’ severe words, given human susceptibility to sexual temptations above all others. Jacques Almain, one of Mair’s Paris students who died young in 1515, defended related ideas, also defining his position in opposition to Augustine’s.⁶

Humanists voiced similar new ideas on sexuality in marriage, as well as on holy virginity (an individual’s decision to take orders and remain celibate for the rest of his or her life). Foremost among them was Erasmus of Rotterdam, whose *Encomium matrimonii (In Praise of Marriage)*⁷ appeared in 1518 as a part of his *Declamationes*.⁸ Erasmus’ views in *Encomium matrimonii*, as well as those in *Annotations* (1516–1535) and *Paraphrases to the New Testament* (1517–1524), *Institution of Christian Marriage* (1526) and *Colloquia (Conversations)* (1518–1533) gave rise to years of controversy with theologians from Paris, Louvain and other universities. In his *Dilutio (Refutation)* against the Paris theologian Josse Clichtove (published in 1532, but containing materials he had begun to collect by 1526) Erasmus wrote that, in principle, he was prepared to recognize the traditional superiority of holy virgin-

³ Mair (1516, repr. 1521), *In quartum sententiarum quaestiones utilissimae*, d.31, q. unica, conc. 7, fol. 204v. See e.g. Meilaender (2001), with a reference to Augustinus (1981a), *Confessiones* 10.31.43–47, pp. 177–180.

⁴ Augustinus (1900b), *De bono coniugali* 6.6, pp. 194 l. 25–195 l. 24: “When the performance of the marriage duty is insisted on unreasonably, so that they have intercourse even when it is not for the purpose of having children, the apostle allows this as something that can be excused, though it is not something he lays down as a command. So, even if a perverted morality motivates them to have intercourse like that, marriage still saves them from adultery or fornication. It is not that conduct of that kind is accepted because of marriage, but it is forgiven because of marriage ... Marital intercourse for the sake of procreating is not sinful. When it is for the purpose of satisfying sensuality, but still with one’s spouse, because there is marital fidelity it is a venial sin.” (English translation: Augustinus (1999), pp. 37–38).

⁵ Mair (1516, repr. 1521), *In quartum sent.*, d.31, q. unica, conc. 7, fol. 204v.

⁶ See Klomps (1964), pp. 50–57; Noonan Jr., (1966), pp. 306–312; and Vereecke (1986), pp. 364–367, p. 516, pp. 534–537.

⁷ For more on Erasmus’ view on marriage and sexuality, see: Bedouelle (2001), pp. 213–221; and Weiler (2004), pp. 149–197.

⁸ Which in turn, was a revision of an earlier version from 1498–1499. Erasmus (1975), *Encomium matrimonii*.

ity, if assumed voluntarily and out of love for holy life⁹; but that, in practice, many people led monastic lives of dubious morality,¹⁰ to which a faithful marriage was highly preferable. Erasmus argued that, in Gen 2:18, God ordained that man should not be alone, which shows that marriage had been established before the Fall; on these Biblical grounds he highly valued mutual affection, as well as propagation of the human race (Gen 1:22) and education of children. He further argued that genitals, and the related feelings of pleasure, had been given to human beings by God as a part of the natural order, and were meant to function as they do amongst animals, where there is no sin. After the Fall, however, human flesh became prone to rebellion.¹¹ Although Erasmus did not deny the superiority of holy virginity *in se*, he considered clerical celibacy—as different from a religious life under vows—devoid of purpose and benefit, as many clerics failed to equate single life with abstinence. Renouncing double standards, Erasmus argued that celibacy should be abolished as unnatural and untenable, and proposed that priests, and even monks, be granted the right to marry “in certain circumstances,”¹² without however explicating these circumstances.

Martin Luther, who upheld the link Augustine made between original sin, *concupiscentia* (concupiscence) and procreation as a consequence of Adam's sin, continued to accept that man was confronted with concupiscence, the rebellion of the genitals against the higher faculties of will and reason being its most particular expression; this sinful constitution was passed down to subsequent generations of men through (sexual) procreation.¹³ Luther's *Lectures on Genesis* of 1535–1545 show many references to Augustine, although not, specifically, to Augustine's most important passages on sexuality and marriage. Where the Catholic tradition sees a life spent in sexual abstinence and devoted to religion as a way of curbing sexual urges, Luther and the first generation of reformers considered abstinence too difficult for the ordinary believer to maintain, and, at best, a special gift of grace. Luther also believed that marriage and sexual procreation belong to the natural order of things created by God (Gen 2:18), and, consequently, that they are the most natural way of living a Christian life.¹⁴ True to his philosophy, Luther abandoned his orders

⁹ Erasmus (1968), *Dilutio eorum quae Iodocus Clithoveus scripsit aduersus declamationem Des. Erasmi Roterodami suasoriam matrimonii*, p. 70, compare p. 74, where Erasmus refers to a number of works in which he admits that in absolute terms, continence is superior to marriage; also: Erasmus (1998), *Refutation of Clichtove*, p. 121; further Erasmus (1968), *Dilutio*, p. 81, and p. 86.

¹⁰ Erasmus (1968), *Dilutio*, p. 77.

¹¹ Erasmus (1975), *Encomium matrimonii*, pp. 386 l. 41–48, pp. 398 l. 190–400 l. 194, pp. 406 l. 253–410 l. 319; Erasmus (1968), *Dilutio*, pp. 85–87; compare pp. 91–94. On sexual stimuli, belonging to the natural order, see also Erasmus (1962), *Apologia pro declamatione matrimonii*, fol. 109c. For further references, see Bedouelle (2001), pp. 216–217.

¹² Erasmus (1975), *Encomium matrimonii*, pp. 402 l. 224–404 l. 227; compare Erasmus (1968), *Dilutio*, pp. 82–84.

¹³ Cahill (1985), pp. 123–137; Brundage (1987), pp. 552–557; Wiesner-Hanks (2000), pp. 63–64; Farr (1996), especially pp. 50–52.

¹⁴ All references to Martin Luther throughout this chapter come from Luther (1883–1993), *Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*; in particular sections *Werke* (1883–1993), henceforth abbreviated as WA, and *Tischreden* (1912–1921), henceforth abbreviated as WATR.

See for example *Vom ehelichen Leben 1522*, WA 10-II, pp. 294 l. 27–295 l. 8, with a reference to Gen 2:18.

as an Augustinian monk and married Katharina von Bora in 1525. In time, Protestants began to view marriage as a part of the natural order, and not a sacrament, as Catholics continue to see it.

However, along with most reformers in his wake, Luther remained in agreement with Augustinian views on concupiscence—that, after the Fall, natural sexuality came to be characterised by inordinate lust. Crucial to Luther's view here was the doctrine of the “non-imputation of sins”: God's grace does not take away man's sinful disposition—which continues to mark or characterize all man's doings and dealings—but He takes it no longer into account, precisely because marriage and sexuality were the works of his creative hands. This way, Luther channelled the Augustinian tradition, which extols the goods of procreation, fidelity and sacrament of marriage, to reinforce—rather than undermine—the idea that human sexuality needs to be contained within the holiness of the marriage.¹⁵ Elsewhere, Luther also linked the three *bona* (goods) of marriage with Augustine's instruction on the good of the widowed state (*De bono viduitatis*, *On the Good of Widowhood* 9.12), which stipulates that whoever is not able to live a life of sexual abstinence should marry and face the final judgement with a good conscience. His doctrine of the “non-imputation of sins” added to that strength: re-married Christians, Luther argued, will not be free of the sinful character of sexual desire, but God will not hold it against them.¹⁶ Marriage became something of a *remedium infirmitatis*, a remedy for human weakness since the Fall.

Much like Erasmus, Luther also regularly emphasized that marital sex serves to strengthen the affection and fidelity in the marital relationship, and to promote harmony in the household. In this way, he set the Protestant tradition on a track that led away from Augustine's exclusive emphasis on marriage as a vehicle for procreation, fidelity and sacrament, while at the same time using Augustine's doctrines to support his views. This new approach is found also in Luther's *Von ehelichen Leben* or *Concerning Married Life* (1522),¹⁷ from which Augustine's original thought is almost completely absent.

Jean Calvin, married to Idelette van Buren for 9 years between 1540 and 1549, was similarly convinced that marriage and sexual procreation were instigated by divine providence, that Adam and Eve's sexual relationship was a facet of their original righteousness, and that marriage, not celibacy, is the natural state of humankind.¹⁸ In his commentary on Gen 2:18, in which, interestingly, he cites

¹⁵ See for example *Winterpostille 1528, Ein ander Sermon am andern Sonntage nach der Erscheinung Christi*, WA 21, p. 69 l. 19–21; also in the *Lectures on Genesis* or *Vorlesungen über 1 Mose*, WA 42, p. 477 l. 33–34.

¹⁶ See for example *Tischrede* 2867, WATR 3, p. 39 l. 32–40, p. 40 l. 20–24; also in the *Vorlesungen über 1 Mose*, WA 43, p. 454 l. 23–36. Augustine's view on postlapsarian marriage as a *remedium infirmitatis*, voiced in Augustinus (1900c), *De bono viduitatis* 8.11, p. 317 l. 13 (compare Augustinus (1894), *De genesi ad litteram* 9.7, p. 275), is also quoted by Luther in *Tischrede* 5282, WATR 5, p. 43 l. 4.

¹⁷ *Vom ehelichen Leben*, WA 10-II, pp. 267–304.

¹⁸ Biéler (1963), pp. 35–88; Bouwsma (1988), pp. 136–137; Brundage (1987), pp. 552–557; Farr (1996), especially p. 51. References are to Calvin (1963–1900), henceforth abbreviated as CR, and

Augustine more often than Luther does, Calvin argues that God meant conjugal life for man's benefit, and not to his ruin. By this view, Calvin distances himself from Jerome's notorious book *Adversus Jovinianum* (*Against Jovinian*), which praised holy virginity and sexual abstinence above marriage.¹⁹ Calvin, too, felt that, as a result of the Fall, sexuality was affected by sin and decay which left their mark not only on the relationship between the spouses, but also on the society as a whole; but in this context, he saw sex in wedlock as *remedium concupiscentiae*, a remedy against immoral urges: offset by the goodness of marriage, sexual intercourse ceases to be sinful among baptized Christians. Instead, it becomes something pure, holy and good, believed to have been created by God in order to allow man and wife to foster their mutual affection and even sensitivity to each other's needs²⁰—although Calvin also advised moderation in the frequency and intensity of marital sex:

For though honourable wedlock veils the turpitude of incontinence, it does not follow that it ought forthwith to become a stimulus to it. Wherefore, let spouses consider that all things are not lawful for them. Let there be sobriety in the behaviour of the husband toward the wife, and of the wife in her turn toward the husband; each so acting as not to do anything unbecoming the dignity and temperance of married life. Marriage contracted in the Lord ought to exhibit measure and modesty—not run to the extreme of wantonness. This excess Ambrose censured gravely, but not undeservedly, when he described the man who shows no modesty or comeliness in conjugal intercourse, as committing adultery with his wife.²¹

Radically, Calvin thought that a view of sexual desire as tainted by sin and decay even within marriage,²² the Augustinian outlook which had pervaded Catholic thinking for centuries, in fact contradicts the very doctrine it is supposed to support: that marriage is a sacrament. Calvin then uses this perceived contradiction to argue against the sacramental nature of marriage.²³

As for the Catholic Church, the great moral theological schools of the sixteenth century adhered, with some minor individual variations, to the two main, commonly held views since Thomas Aquinas' interpretation of Augustine: one, that abstinence from sexuality and marriage for the sake of God is morally superior to married life; and two, and that the primary purpose of marital intercourse is to produce offspring. The accompanying sexual pleasure, conceded Catholic thinkers, belongs to the natural order as God has originally ordained it, and is completely good; but

Calvin (1928–1936), henceforth abbreviated as OS.

¹⁹ See Calvin, *Commentarius in Genesim* 2:18, CR 51, p. 46. Rejection of the celibacy of priests also in *Institutiones*, 1559, 4.12.23–28, OS 5, pp. 232–237—note here also the explicit criticism on Jerome's position—and repudiation of religious vows in *Institutiones*, 1559, 4.13.3, OS 5, pp. 239–241.

²⁰ *Vom ehelichen Leben*, WA 10-II, pp. 267–304.

²¹ See his commentary on the seventh commandment in *Institutiones*, 1559, 2.8.44, OS 3, pp. 383–384. English translation: Calvin (1536, repr. 2001). The quotation is from Ambrosius' *De sacramento regenerationis sive de philosophia* fr. 5 [preserved in Augustinus (1841a), *Contra Iulianum* 2.7.20, col. 687], Ambrosius (1974), p. 259.

²² Augustinus (1900b), *De bono coniugali* 6.5–6.

²³ See for example Calvin, *Institutiones*, 1559, 4.19.36, OS 5, pp. 469–470.

since the Fall has made concupiscence rebel against reason, it becomes impossible to determine whether sexual desire is legitimate without asking whether a spouse is pursuing intercourse because they wish to have children. Sexual intercourse *solely* for pleasure, and not procreation—even within the bounds of marriage—must be considered a sin, even if only venial.

However, St Paul's teaching in 1 Cor 7:2–4, that sex in marriage—when undertaken for pleasure, not procreation—has a legitimate function in avoiding fornication, gained influence in the Thomistic schools under the leadership of Dominican friars of the sixteenth century. The main proponents of this view were the Italian theologian and Cardinal Thomas de Vio Cajetan o.p. (1469–1534), as well as Francisco de Vitoria o.p. (1492–1546) and Domingo de Soto o.p. (1495–1560), both from the Spanish school of Salamanca. In his *Quartum Sententiarum* (*Commentaries on the Four Books of Sentences*) 31.1 (1557–1560)²⁴ and elsewhere, Domingo de Soto defends marriage by drawing on Augustine's authority, particularly *De genesi ad litteram* (*Literal Interpretation of the Genesis*) 9.7, in appealing to the *tria excusantia bona*, three extenuating goods of marriage, in order to protect marital sex from ethical "heresies" that were antagonistic to it. (Nevertheless, De Soto does not go as far as accepting the theories of Jean Mair, which he thought were also those of the German controversialist theologian Johannes Eck, and which he considers too bold). De Soto's views found their way into the Roman Catechism of 1566, written by Dominicans, which tacitly abandons the strict Augustinian emphasis on procreation.²⁵

A similar point of view which is associated with the thought of Thomas Aquinas and, while citing Augustine, actually moves away from a strict Augustinian emphasis on procreation, can also be found in Jesuit writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, it is present in the writings on the Fall, *concupiscentia* and grace by Robertus Bellarminus (1542–1611), and further interpreted by Thomas Sanchez (1550–1610) in his masterpiece *De sancto matrimonii sacramento* (*On the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony*) (1602–1605). However, Sanchez's work is riddled with contradictions. For instance, on one hand, he proposes that spouses do not sin when they intend "only to copulate as spouses,"²⁶ because, being in a state of grace after receiving the sacraments and adopting a virtuous lifestyle, they can be seen to be free of evil intentions; consequently, Sanchez no longer sees the need for marital sex to be excused by either procreation or the prevention of fornication, and pioneers a view in which spousal affection is a perfectly valid motivation for coitus. On the other hand, however, Sanchez does not hesitate to write that marital sex intent on pleasure *alone* is a venial sin, and to support this view by citing Augustine's *De bono coniugali* (*On The Good of Marriage*) 6.6 and *Contra Iulianum* (*Against*

²⁴ De Soto (1557–1558; 1560), *Commentariorum in quartum sententiarum tomus primus/-secundus*.

²⁵ Klomps (1964), pp. 58–63; Noonan (1966), pp. 312–315, pp. 321–322; Vereecke (1986), pp. 511–515, pp. 537–539.

²⁶ Sanchez (1601–1602, repr. 1605), *De sancto matrimonii sacramento*, lib. 9, disp. 8.

Julian) 5.9.²⁷ To resolve the apparent contradiction, it is necessary to consider the word “alone” in its early modern context: sex motivated by pure lust, without a possibility of conception, was very difficult to imagine in the period, and therefore hypothetical. Insistence on lust *alone*, therefore, places lust firmly outside the natural order of things, which condemns it. Sanchez also argued that it is not sinful for one spouse to refuse to pay the *debitum coniugale*, conjugal debt, to the other, if this refusal is motivated by desire to avoid conception and safeguard the economic well-being and education of existing offspring; De Soto for his part treated such refusal as a venial sin.²⁸ Sanchez also went further than his predecessors (Cajetan, amongst others) in explicitly allowing spouses to indulge in embraces, kisses and caresses to show and foster mutual love, even with a foreseeable risk of extra-vaginal ejaculation.²⁹ He also considered it *parvitas materiae*—“parvity or lightness of matter,” and therefore merely a venial sin—for men and women, whether married to each other or not, to derive pleasure from kissing and playful touches—as long as there was no danger of reaching orgasm or of consenting to a graver carnal deed.³⁰ Unsurprisingly, this view was short-lived: in 1612, Claudio Acquaviva, the superior general of the Jesuits, expressly forbade the members of his order to teach it.³¹

In the course of the seventeenth century, several less renowned authors once again took up the anti-Augustinian doctrine of Jean Mair and the Paris theologians. In order to avoid contradicting Augustine directly, they used the moral category of “probable opinion”: they argued that a view in which sexual pleasure can be the only motivation for marital sex, and that no sin, not even venial sin, is attached to such a motivation, may be a “probable opinion,” but that other, “more probable” opinions also exist. “Probabilists,” as members of this school of thought were called, maintained that, if someone had to decide on a course of action in an ethical dilemma, they were allowed to act on the basis of a “probable opinion,” even if alternative, “more probable” views existed.

Elaborate explanations of what constituted “probable” or “more probable” opinions were available in manuals of casuistry, in which specific cases were considered in the light of general rules. Such manuals were used in the seminaries in the training of confessors, a new form of moral theological education in the wake of the Council of Trent. Defenders of the idea that pleasure was legitimate as the sole motivation for marital sex included, among others, the Augustinian friar Basilio Ponce de León (1570–1629) and Juan Sanchez (d.1624), both of Salamanca. The latter, however, argued that the pursuit of *excessive* pleasure in marital sex, of a kind which may jeopardise the spouses’ health, was a mortal sin. In the tenth chapter of his *De sacramentis et censuris* (*On Sacraments and Censures*, 1633), concerned with questions of marriage, Gaspar Hurtado (d.1647) interpreted Augustine’s *De*

²⁷ Sanchez (1601–1602, repr. 1605), *De sancto matrimonii sacramento* 9.11.

²⁸ Sanchez (1601–1602, repr. 1605), *De sancto matrimonii sacramento* 9.25.

²⁹ Sanchez (1601–1602, repr. 1605), *De sancto matrimonii sacramento* 9.45, esp. nr. 38.

³⁰ Sanchez (1601–1602, repr. 1605), *De sancto matrimonii sacramento* 9.46, esp. nr. 10.

³¹ Klomps (1964), pp. 63–67, pp. 70–72; Noonan (1966), pp. 323–326, pp. 333–334; Vereecke (1986), p. 539; Boyle (1987), pp. 12–16.

boni coniugali 6.6 to mean that marital intercourse inspired by too great a desire, or focused on achieving too great a pleasure, is a venial sin.³² Also in keeping with the views of Mair, Almain, Ponce de Léon and J. Sanchez were the views of Antonino Diana (1585–1663), whose manual of casuistry in twelve volumes, the *Resolutiones morales* (*Moral Resolutions*) (1629–1656), went through innumerable editions both in its full version and in diverse summaries.³³ Jesuits in Louvain, amongst whom Leonard Lessius (1554–1623) and his pupil Gilles De Coninck (1571–1633), adhered to the common opinion as defended by the school of Salamanca (Francisco de Vitoria and Domingo de Soto) and their fellow Order member Thomas Sanchez, that marital sex and the accompanying pleasure are legitimate when intent on procreation or on avoiding fornication, but that sexual intercourse motivated *solely* by pleasure must be considered a sin, even if only venial.

At the same time, however, Augustine's views on marriage and sexuality continued to be upheld by more "rigorist" teachings of leading Catholic theologians at the universities of Louvain and Douai in the Spanish Low Countries, who disagreed with the Jesuits on more than one issue. As large colonies of exiled Irish and British Catholics also lived there, Augustine's teachings took root in these communities as well. The term "rigorism" is used in opposition to the "laxism" which these Catholic thinkers thought was exhibited by the manuals of casuistry and related confessional practices. Rigorists believed that they were voicing a genuinely Catholic response to the misguided and erroneous views of the humanists and Protestants. By citing Augustine and insisting that marital sex is fully legitimate only when intent on procreation, and that, when intent on both procreation and pleasure (for example, when avoiding fornication), it was to be considered a venial sin.³⁴ Giving in to sexual pleasure of any kind was seen as giving in to *concupiscentia*, the consequence of original sin, which lives on in mankind and acts as an incentive to sin further. The rebellion of the genitals against the higher faculties of will and reason is a particular expression of *concupiscentia*; and—as in the past—the doctrine makes detailed reference to the Biblical commandment *non concupisces* (*thou shalt not covet/desire*) (Ex 20:17; Dt 5:21). Such a strictly Augustinian perspective was advocated by Michael Baius (1513–1589) in Louvain. Although Baius did not devote a specific treatise to the subject of sexuality in marriage, there are important indications of his position in his *De peccato originis* (*On Original Sin*, 1566), which overflows with citations of Augustine's writings. In one example, Baius elaborates on the Pauline contrast between the *lex membrorum* (the law of the members) and *lex mentis* (the law of reason) (Rom 7:7–25), of which the post-lapsarian disobedience of genitals to reason is the best example.³⁵ Baius substantiates his point by referring to

³² Hurtado (1633), *Tractatus de sacramentis et censuris*, disp. 10 de matrimonio, di. 2.

³³ See Klomps (1964), pp. 67–73; Noonan (1966), p. 326; and Vereecke (1986), pp. 541–543.

³⁴ It is very rare, however, to find early modern authors who bluntly state that intercourse engaged in by married people for the sake of satisfying lust or obtaining pleasure *alone*, might be considered as mortal sin, as did extreme rigorists in the Carolingian Era and the High Middle Ages. See Makowski (1977), pp. 99–114, especially pp. 102–106.

³⁵ Baius (1696, repr. 1964), *De peccato originis*, in *Michaelis Baii, celeberrimi in Lovaniensi Academia Theologi, Opera*, Caput 15, pp. 16–19.

Augustine's *De nuptiis et concupiscentia (On Marriage and Concupiscence)*: "One who has licit intercourse makes good use of an evil."³⁶

William Hessels van Est, or Guilielmus Estius (1542–1613) was notable amongst the rigorists in Douai as a teacher of strict views on marital sexuality as proposed by Augustine and, even more radically, the ascetic Jerome. Estius was educated in Louvain, but left for Douai in the 1580s to become professor at the University there; he also became President of the Royal Seminary established by King Philip II. Estius' Biblical commentaries were highly prized and reprinted many times until well in the nineteenth century; as a result, he has become one of the most influential Catholic theologians and Bible commentators for more than three centuries. His most important teachings on virginity, marriage and sexual abstinence can be found in his *Quartum librum Sententiarum Commentaria (Commentary on the Four Books of Sentences)* 31 (1616)³⁷ and his *Commentary on Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1614),³⁸ both published posthumously.

In commenting on St Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, Estius' uses his own exegetical method and sources. As his first aim is to establish the most accurate possible reading of the Latin text, he compares the Greek text of the Pauline epistle, and the variations passed down in the work of the Greek (and other) fathers of the ancient Church, with the Latin translation of the *Vulgate* authorised by the Council of Trent as the official text of the Roman Catholic Church. Estius realised that a minor variation in translation can result in a significant shift of meaning, which makes an accurate translation the best starting point for pursuing the literal meaning of the Scriptures; and this, in turn, is the only possible foundation for a coherent theology.

Estius regularly refers to the commentaries by old Church fathers on the passages he studies. In the case of 1 Cor 7:1–9, Estius shows a particular preference for works written in response to the thought of Jovinian, a monk who gained considerable influence around 390 AD. Protesting against what he saw as excessive asceticism of the Western Church, Jovinian argued that a committed, faithful marriage was as pleasing to God as virginity, and that people who had consecrated their lives to celibacy had no reason to consider themselves superior to married people. Jovinian's writings were passed on to Pope Siricius by Pammachius, a friend of St Jerome's, and were subsequently condemned as heresy first at a synod in Rome, and then at another in Milan convened by Ambrose in 393. Pammachius also passed Jovinian's writings on to Jerome, who, in the same year, wrote a refutation in two books entitled *Adversus Jovinianum*. Here, Jerome extols virginity and disparages marital sex, allowing that it is a lesser evil than fornication.³⁹ Pammachius was not happy with Jerome's work and confronted him on this point. Jerome then wrote

³⁶ Augustinus (1892b), *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 2.21.36, p. 290 (English translation: Augustine (1998), *Answer to the Pelagians II*, p. 76); Augustinus (1974), *Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum* 3.142 and 170, pp. 447–448, pp. 471–473. See also Klomps (1964), pp. 85–96; and Vereecke (1986), pp. 522–523.

³⁷ Klomps (1964), pp. 76–79.

³⁸ References are to Estius (1614), *In Omnes Divi Pauli Apostoli Epistolas Commentariorum Tomus Prior*.

³⁹ Hunter (2007).

Pammachius two extensive letters (*Ep.* 48 and 49) aiming to clarify his position and defend his refutation of Jovinian. Some years later, probably in 401, Augustine too became involved in this controversy by way of two books, the already mentioned *De bono coniugali* and *De sancta virginitate* (*On Holy Virginity*), in which he opposes both Jovinian and Jerome: Jovinian, by claiming that consecrated virginity is indeed a higher state of life; and the overly ascetical Jerome, by viewing marriage as fundamentally good.

The commentaries Estius used to support his views on 1 Corinthians further include those of the Church fathers Chrysostom, Ambrose, the medieval master Thomas Aquinas, in addition to the early modern writer Thomas de Vio Cajetan, amongst others. Estius also appeals to Sedulius Scotus, a classical grammarian and teacher of Irish origin working in Saint-Lambert in Liège in the Carolingian period and author of a *Collectaneum in Apostolum* (*Collection of Commentaries on Paul's Epistles*): his authority was possibly useful to Estius in lending legitimacy to his writings in the eyes of the large colonies of Catholic refugees from the British islands living in Douai, Louvain and elsewhere in the Low Countries. But it was Jerome's refutation of Jovinian and some of Augustine's views that Estius found to be essential in bolstering his crusade against the "laxism" he saw to be promulgated by manuals of casuistry and the Jesuit practice of confession. Estius is voicing what he firmly believed to be a genuinely Catholic rejection of the views of the humanists (headed by Erasmus) and the leaders of the Reformation—groups which the rigorists called "neo-Jovinians"—and their privileging of marriage which they saw as being in conformity with God's will at creation, and their belittling of chastity, the traditional ideal of the Catholic Church.

Estius begins his discussion of 1 Cor 7:1 by reminding his readers why it was that Paul needed to comment on questions of sexuality and marriage in this Biblical passage: this happened, he explains, because a number of Church members in Corinth had claimed that a true Christian man should abstain from all sexual relations, including those with his wife, in order to give himself completely to prayer and piety. "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," Paul's first verse, means, suggests Estius, "it is good for a man not to have sexual intercourse"; this verse contains a *consilium continentiae*—an advice favouring abstinence, an interpretation supported by referring to Erasmus and Cajetan. Estius then clearly contrasts this view with the views of the *sectarii* (the Protestants, primarily Calvinists, and Erasmus), who do not recognise abstinence as a moral and spiritual good leading directly to piety and salvation, but view Paul's *consilium continentiae* as to be modified in the light of Gen 2:18, "It is not good for man to be alone." Estius refutes this by arguing that the text of the Genesis applied to a time when the earth was not yet sufficiently populated and procreation had to be given priority; but that, by the time Paul wrote, the earth was full of people. Paul, argues Estius, gave his *consilium* primarily with the question of individual salvation in mind. Further, Estius argued that Adam, in his original state of integrity, would not have been compelled to have sexual intercourse; but that the Fall made lust stronger than reason, adding an element of sin to marriage. To renounce marriage, therefore, and embrace abstinence for the sake of God, liberates man from its unworthy subjection to the desires of the

flesh.⁴⁰ To support this basic view, Estius refers to Paul's subsequent remarks in 1 Cor 7:34: "The unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord: that she may be holy both in body and in spirit."

Although Estius, in opposition to the Protestants and the humanists, explicitly confirms the superiority of consecrated virginity to marriage, citing Augustine's *De sancta virginitate*, he also expresses his reservations about a number of passages in Augustine on the grounds that they, too, are too lax. For instance, he shies away from Augustine's enthusiastic encouragement of married couples to do "that which is honourable" (conceive children), as well as from his statement that the father who gives his virgin daughter in marriage chooses what is good, but he who chooses not to give her in marriage, makes an even better choice.⁴¹ Estius feels that such moderate views are inapplicable to the sinful nature of the earthly life after the Fall, and sees Augustine calling marriage a good choice to be a statement "expressed too strongly and alien to Paul's spirit." Estius agrees that the good of marriage whereby it is being proper and fitting ("*bonum commodum*") may be applicable, but not also the good of being honourable ("*bonum honestum*"). Estius found likeminded thinkers in the Latin Church father Tertullian,⁴² who might be the source of inspiration of the ascetical Jerome, whose *Adversus Jovinianum* he cites: "If it is good for a man not to touch any woman, it is therefore wrong to touch her."⁴³ An action need not be a sin to be evil, argues Estius; but an evil it is since touching a woman or having sexual intercourse in the post-lapsarian world, full of corruption, must include immoral and inordinate lust. This evil is then excused ("*excusatur*") by the good of a marriage, understood as *bonum commodum*.

Concerning the permission to have marital sex in order to avoid fornication, Estius addresses it in his discussion of Paul's famous statement that marital intercourse was conceived primarily as a safeguard against fornication:⁴⁴ "...for fear of fornication, let every man have his own wife: and let every woman have her own husband" (1 Cor 7:2). In his commentary on this verse, Estius lashes out against the "heretics" who use this verse to argue that it was the duty of all Christians to marry. Anticipating 1 Cor 7:6 ("But I speak this by indulgence, not by commandment"), Estius points out that Paul intended the verse 7:2 as a concession ("*secundum indulgentiam*") and not as an order ("*secundum imperium*"), and cites Jerome's *Against Jovinian*,⁴⁵ Chrysostom's commentary on 1 Corinthians⁴⁶ and others in support of this view. In other words, Estius believes that, although it is good for a man to not

⁴⁰ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:1*, fol. 313A: "Ab hac enim sive inordinata affectione, sive indigna servitute, quam adfert homini carnalis concupiscentia coniugio per peccatum adhaerens, liberat abstinentia coniugii propter Deum."

⁴¹ Obviously, reference is made to Augustinus (1900d), *De sancta virginitate* 12.12 and 18.18, pp. 244 l. 19–245 l. 3, pp. 250 l. 23–252 l. 11; Augustinus (1900c), *De bono viduitatis* 5.7, pp. 310 l. 16–312 l. 6.

⁴² Tertullianus (1954c), *De monogamia* 3, p. 1231 l. 11–12.

⁴³ Hieronymus (1863), *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.7, col. 229 l. 11–13.

⁴⁴ Makowski (1977).

⁴⁵ Hieronymus (1863), *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.7, cols. 229–230.

⁴⁶ Chrysostomus (1862b), *In Epist. I ad Cor. Hom.* 19.1, p. 152.

touch any woman, even his wife, it is nevertheless permissible (as opposed to advisable) for every married man and married woman to “use” (“*uti*”) their spouses in order to safeguard against fornication and all sort of impurity.⁴⁷ At this instance, Estius added that not only active using of the married partner (“*uti*”), but also the passive receiving of the married partner (“*accipere*”), were included with the things that were permissible as a concession, in order to avoid fornication. This distinction between the active using and the passive receiving would, in line with the Catholic tradition, play a further role in Estius’ argumentation.

The duty of man and wife to pay the marital debt (*debitum coniugale*) to each other—a euphemism, in Estius’ mind, for the shame of the carnal intercourse—was the subject of the important verse 3. In this verse, Paul states that it is the husband’s duty to perform sexually at the request of his wife, and the wife at the request of her husband, so that fornication, or the desire for it, may be avoided. Estius urges both spouses to keep the danger of fornication, as well as the weakness of the spouse who feels immoderate desire calling for the debt to be paid, in mind when asked to fulfil their conjugal duty.⁴⁸ For legitimate reasons to avoid paying the conjugal debt, Estius referred to Thomas Aquinas. Among these reasons the angelic doctor subtly dealt with illness endangering the physical integrity of one of the spouses, a sexual act just performed, menstruation—it was believed that coitus could endanger the life quality of possible offspring—vows taken by reciprocal consent, and, of course, holy days.⁴⁹

Estius emphasized that it was according to a certain justice (“*ex iustitia quadam*”) that man and wife owed the conjugal debt to each other. The reason for this was given by Paul in verse 4: “The wife hath not power of her own body: but the husband. And in like manner the husband also hath not power of his own body: but the wife.” Estius argues that “the body” here means sexual organs, citing Augustine’s *Contra Iulianum* book 5, chapter 5,⁵⁰ and explains the verse to mean that, after marriage, spouses can no longer view their bodies as their own, and no longer have the freedom to decide to abstain, or to have sex with any person of their choice. Rather, the husband possesses the right over the body of his wife, and, reciprocally, the wife possesses the right over the body of her husband, in light of which neither is allowed either to fornicate or to refuse a request of conjugal debt.⁵¹ What Paul

⁴⁷ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:2*, fol. 313B: “Quamvis dixi bonum esse homini mulierem, etiam uxorem, non tangere: tamen propter fornicationem & omne genus immundicie vitandum, permittitur atque indulgetur, ut unusquisque maritus sua utatur uxore, eique commisceatur, & unaquaque uxor suo marito.”

⁴⁸ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:3*, fol. 314B: “Item propter fornicationem iam non in se vitandam, sed à coniuge avertendam, vir debitum coniugale reddat uxori: similiter & uxor viro; intellige, dum exigitur; & omnino quoties infirmitas coniugis ob incontinentiam periclitantis id admonet.”

⁴⁹ See especially Aquinas (1858), *In Sent. IV. 32.1.1–5*, pp. 959–965.

⁵⁰ Augustinus (1841a), *Contra Iulianum* 5.5.19, cols. 795–796.

⁵¹ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:4*, fol. 314AB: “Uxor non habet potestatem, sive ius sui corporis ... ita scilicet ut liberum ei sit pro sua voluntate, vel continere, vel alteri cuiquam se coniungere; sed maritus ius habet corporis uxoris suae: & contrà, maritus non habet ius sui corporis, sed uxor: ut proinde neutri liceat alteri coniugale debitum poscenti denegare.”

meant by verse 5, "Defraud not one another," was, thought Estius, that whoever refused to render the conjugal debt acted contrary to justice ("*adversatur iustitiae*"), and contrary to Rom 13:7, "Render to all men their dues."

Although married partners, by virtue of the requirement of justice, should then not refuse each other the conjugal debt, they could, by reciprocal agreement, choose to abstain. Although Estius thought *permanent* abstinence preferable, he argued that 1 Cor 7:5 advocates temporary sexual abstinence to allow spouses time to "give themselves over to prayer." The reason for this was clear: the sexual act makes the spirit completely immersed ("*immergitur*") in the flesh and unfit for prayer whereby the spirit should be elevated ("*elevanda*") up to God.⁵² But since the Scriptures enjoin Christians to pray every day (Luke 18:1; 1 Thes 5:17), the question arises: what time then remains for sexual relations? Estius refers to Peter (1 Pet 3:7) and Paul in proposing that the prayer which demands abstinence to be the public prayer of Sundays and feast days Christians were required to attend, viz. the Eucharistic offer. Believers needed to know, on apostolic authority, that sexual relations prevented them from receiving communion.⁵³ In support of this view, Estius cites Jerome who, in his *Apologia ad Pammachium* (*Apology to Pammachius*),⁵⁴ defends at length, once again, his arguments on Paul's 1 Cor advanced in *Adversus Jovinianum*.⁵⁵ Further, Estius points out the old custom of the Roman Church whereby married couples who had had sexual relations during the night were expected not to receive communion and not to join the public gathering in a church where Mass was celebrated.⁵⁶ Estius reminds that Pope Anacletus had confirmed this custom by decree.⁵⁷ In evidence of this Roman practice, Estius cited Jerome's *Apologia ad Pammachium*⁵⁸ as well as the (rigoristic) answer given by Pope Gregory to Augustine of Canterbury, recorded in Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*.⁵⁹

Estius allows some exceptions to this avoidance of communion. He interprets Paul's words to mean that the partner who had not solicited sexual relations, but whose only involvement was to pay the *debitum coniugale* by accepting the spouse, should not be excluded from communion. This "distinction between the blameless act of rendering the debt and the venially sinful act of exacting it" had already been the way medieval canonists interpreted Augustine's views on the venial

⁵² Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:5*, fol. 315A: "Quippe coniugalis actus quo animus quodammodo carni totus immergitur, ineptum reddit hominem ad orationem, qua mens in Deum elevanda est." Compare Klomps (1964), p. 77.

⁵³ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:5*, fol. 315A: "Igitur ex consequenti monet uterque apostolus fideles, ne sic vacent operi coniugali, ut per hoc impediatur ab eucharistia statis diebus percipienda: praesertim cum maius sit accipere corpus Christi, quam simpliciter orare."

⁵⁴ The intended reference is Hieronymus (1996b), *Ep. 49. Ad Pammachium* 15, pp. 376 l. 4–378 l. 3.

⁵⁵ Hieronymus (1863), *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.7, col. 230 l. 24–26.

⁵⁶ Payer (1980), pp. 353–376, especially pp. 361–362, and p. 367.

⁵⁷ We were not able to verify this information.

⁵⁸ Hieronymus (1996b), *Ep. 49. Ad Pammachium* 15, p. 377 l. 6–12.

⁵⁹ Beda Venerabilis (1969, repr. 1981), *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* 1.27 (viii), pp. 94–98.

sinfulness of marital intercourse aimed at avoiding fornication.⁶⁰ Moreover, Pope Gregory the Great also allowed those spouses to receive communion who had sexual relations motivated solely by the desire to conceive children. This question of whether sexual relations made someone unfit to receive communion had also found its way into the *Decretum Gratiani* (*Gratian's Decree*), which stood at the beginnings of the codification of Canon Law.⁶¹ Another implication of Paul's 1 Cor 7:5, argued Estius, was to confirm the compulsory celibacy of priests: those who were to permanently devote themselves to divine service and prayer, were not allowed to marry, let alone have sexual relations.⁶² Here, once again, it was Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum* that was Estius' most important source.⁶³ The words that Pierre J. Payer used to describe medieval writers—"fundamental inability to reconcile sex and the sacred because sex was viewed as something unholy and unclean, making sexual relations inconsistent with the high ideas of the Christian life"⁶⁴—describe Estius' attitude equally well. In other words, Estius shared the view described by Payer that it was a Christian duty "to approach the altar with a pure body and mind"; abstinence was required for this as "sex was considered to have a contaminating effect, both physically and spiritually."⁶⁵ Once the time of Mass and prayer has passed, the married couples were to return to their customary married life ("*opus conjugale*"), in which avoidance of fornication was an important consideration. Estius believed that Paul encouraged believers to do so as the excess of desire may be exploited by the devil to tempt a spouse to adultery and other scandalous acts worthy of condemnation.

In 1 Cor 7:6, believed Estius, Paul did not mean for this returning to each other to be considered an order ("*imperium*") but as a concession ("*indulgentiam*") as the Latin Vulgate text reads. In this important verse, Estius argued, philological considerations took on the scope of moral theology: He observed that, translated literally from the Greek, the Latin should read "*secundum veniam, non secundum praeceptum*," since the original text has here: "κατὰ συγγνώμην οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγήν." Estius found support for his *secundum veniam*-reading with Augustine⁶⁶ and Cyprian.⁶⁷ This was very important to Estius since the words "*secundum veniam*" had the connotation of allowing a lesser evil in order to evade a greater one.⁶⁸ For obvious

⁶⁰ Makowski (1977), p. 100; compare with p. 104. Augustine had himself initiated the introduction of such a distinction in his *De bono coniugali*. Augustine (1900b), *De bono coniugali*, 10.11, p. 203 l. 5–7.

⁶¹ *Decretum Gratiani* (1897, repr. 1959), pars II, causa 33, quaest. 4, c. 7, cols. 1248–1249.

⁶² Estius (1614), *In 1 Cor 7:5*, fol. 315B: "Caeterum ex hoc loco Pauli rectè probant orthodoxi scriptores iis qui ex officio sacratoribus ministeriis perpetuò sunt addicti, id est sacerdotibus, uxores nec ducendas esse, nec habendas."

⁶³ Hieronymus (1863), *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.34, col. 269 l. 2–7.

⁶⁴ Payer (1980), p. 370.

⁶⁵ Payer (1980), p. 371.

⁶⁶ See amongst others, Augustine (1892b), *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1.14.16, pp. 228–229.

⁶⁷ Meant is Cyprianus (1972), *Ad Quirinum* 3.32, p. 127 l. 24.

⁶⁸ Estius (1614), *In 1 Cor 7:6*, fol. 316A: "Declarans igitur seipsum, affirmat se ea dixisse non ex praecepto, sed ex permissione & indulgentia quadam: qua nimirum solent minora quaedam mala concedi ad avertendum maiora."

reasons he took his distance from a reading that Erasmus had mentioned—albeit not necessarily favoured—(viz. in his Annotations to his *New Testament*), namely that some manuscripts had, instead of “κατὰ συγγνώμην,” “κατὰ γνώμην,” which should be translated as “*juxta sententiam*” or “*juxta consilium*,” “according to my opinion” or “according to my counsel.”⁶⁹ For both philological and theological reasons, Estius did neither favour that more positive reading.

It is on this particular verse 1 Cor 7:6 that rigorists, among whom Estius, based their notorious judgement that marital sex is almost always a sin, albeit a venial one.⁷⁰ Estius assumed that sex is always accompanied by immoderate desire, the consequence of original sin and punishment for it, as well as impetus to sin further. Even when marital intercourse is undertaken to avoid fornication, as discussed in 1 Cor 7:2 and 6, this had to be considered a venial sin. Sexual relations were only to be considered blameless when they were sought solely for the purpose of conceiving offspring.⁷¹ In support of this theory, Estius refers to the prayer spoken by Tobias to God: “And now, Lord, thou knowest, that not for fleshly lust do I take... [a] wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which thy name may be blessed for ever and ever” (Tobit 8:9). Augustine, patristic authority par excellence, was copiously cited to substantiate this thesis. One reference comes from his *sermo* 351: “Only for the sake of procreation is sexual intercourse without guilt”⁷²; and a further one from *Ep.* 130. *De orando Deo*: “since only the procreation of children justifies marriage.”⁷³ Further references come from *De bono coniugali* cap. 6 “and following” (undoubtedly the already quoted passage from *De bono coniugali* 6.6 is meant here); *sermo* 63. *De diversis* cap. 13,⁷⁴ and *sermo* 41. *De sanctis*—the so-called *sermo de igne purgatorii*, no longer considered authentic.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Augustine made it clear that when Paul spoke of “*indulgentia*,” which the Church father translated consistently as “*venia*”—there must be guilt involved. In this context, Estius cites from Augustine’s *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* (*On Christ’s Grace and Original Sin*),⁷⁶ *De bono coniugali*⁷⁷ and the *Enchiridion*.⁷⁸

Finally, Estius argued that not even procreation was a sufficient reason for sexual relations, without the intention to incorporate the newly conceived life into the body

⁶⁹ Erasmus (2003), *Annotationes in I Cor. 7.6*, p. 128 l. 474–482.

⁷⁰ Compare Klomps (1964), p. 79.

⁷¹ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:6*, fol. 316A: “Quocirca rectè B. Augustinus & alii patres, ex hoc loco colligunt ac docere non dubitant, concubitum coniugalem quando fit per incontinentiam, semper esse peccatum: etiamsi vitandae fornicationis causa fiat. Tunc autem solum culpa carere, quando non expetitur, nisi sobolis procreandae gratia.”

⁷² Augustinus (1845), *Sermo 351*, col. 1541 l. 16–17.

⁷³ Augustinus (1904), *Ep. 130. Ad Probam*, 15, p. 74 l. 14–15.

⁷⁴ According to the numeration of the Augustine edition, produced by the Louvain theologians (to which Estius had contributed as a student), and published by Christopher Plantin in Antwerp 1576–1577. At present: Augustinus (1981b), *Sermo* 51, pp. 20–46; here p. 37 l. 545–547.

⁷⁵ The text of this *sermo* can be found in *Decretum magistri Gratiani* (1897, repr. 1959), pars 1, dist. 25, canon 3, col. 93 l. 40.

⁷⁶ Augustinus (1892a), *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* 2.38.43, p. 201 l. 14–15.

⁷⁷ Augustinus (1900b), *De bono coniugali* 10.11, p. 202 l. 17–18.

⁷⁸ Augustinus (1969), *Enchiridion de fide, spe et caritate* 21.78, p. 92 l. 15–16.

of Christ. Here, too, Estius cites the texts from Tobit 8:9—mentioned before—and Augustine’s *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*:

... those who do not have children with this ... goal of transforming them from being members of the first human being into becoming members of Christ ... do not have true marital chastity. This is so, even if they so carefully observe the laws of marriage that they have intercourse only for the sake of procreating children.⁷⁹

To sum up, Estius interprets Paul’s statement in 1 Cor 7:3 to mean that when the conjugal debt was not sought, but only *rendered*, this was not a sinful act, but an act of justice.⁸⁰ The only sexual relations which are without sin are those motivated by the desire to have children *as well as* the desire to incorporate them into Christ’s body. However, when marital sex is *also* motivated by lust or incontinence, this—even though it may serve to prevent the greater evil of fornication—is to be considered as a sin, if only venial.

It is Estius’ clear view that it is the sacred duty of priests, monks and nuns (and would be preferable for all people) to remain unmarried. In 1 Cor 7:7, Estius interprets Paul’s words, “For I would that all men were even as myself,” to mean that Paul recommends that everyone should remain single, unburdened by caring for a family and other vicissitudes of this life, and free to dedicate themselves to God and “divine things”; Estius interprets Paul’s writing to mean that Paul considered the state of marriage and marital duty to be among the foremost burdens.⁸¹ Estius subsequently cites a series of Church fathers to support the hypothesis that Paul lived in continual chastity.⁸² Notable amongst those are some particular favourites: Epiphanius of Salamis’ *Panarion* on heresy 58, with regard to the Valesians⁸³; Jerome’s letters to Eustochium (22, on the superiority of chastity, which was very influential in the Catholic tradition⁸⁴), and to Celantia⁸⁵; Augustine’s *De gratia et libero arbitrio* (*Concerning Grace and Free Will*)⁸⁶ and Tertullian’s *Ad uxorem* (*To his wife*),⁸⁷ *De exhortatione castitatis* (*On the Exhortation to Chastity*)⁸⁸ and *De monogamia* (*On*

⁷⁹ Augustinus (1892b), *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1.4.5, pp. 215 l. 21–216 l. 2 (English translation: Augustine (1998), *Answer to the Pelagians II*, p. 30).

⁸⁰ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:6*, fol. 316B: “Dixi concubitus coniugalem tunc solum culpa carere, quando non expetitur nisi prolis generandae causa. Nam si non expetitur, nec debitum exigitur, sed tantum redditur, non peccatum est, sed actus iusticiae.”

⁸¹ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:7*, fol. 316B–317A: “Itaque quod hic dicit tale est: Adeo non praecipio coniugium aut coniugii usum, ut potius velim atque optem omnes sic esse ut ego sum: id est liberos & expeditos à curis & actibus huius saeculi, impediuntibus libertatem vacandi Deo, rebusque divinis; cuiusmodi inprimis est status & actus coniugalis.”

⁸² Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:7*, fol. 317A: “Ex hac parte sic generaliter intellecta, iam consequens est, quod patres ex ea colligunt & docent, Paulum ab omni concubitu sese continuisse, & in perpetua castitate vixisse...”

⁸³ Epiphanius of Salamis (1980), *Panarion haer.* 58.4.8, pp. 361–362. For a translation, see Epiphanius of Salamis (1994), *Panarion* 58.4.8, p. 101.

⁸⁴ Hieronymus (1996a), *Ep. 22. Ad Eustochium* 20, pp. 170 l. 15–171 l. 2.

⁸⁵ Hieronymus (1996c), *Ep. 148. Ad Celantiam* 29, p. 353 l. 24–25.

⁸⁶ Augustinus (1841b), *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 4.8, col. 886 l. 46–48.

⁸⁷ Tertullianus (1954a), *Ad uxorem* 1.3.6, p. 376 l. 42–44.

⁸⁸ Tertullianus (1954b), *De exhortatione castitatis* 4.3, p. 1021 l. 19–25.

Monogamy).⁸⁹ Estius also cited the commentaries of Church fathers on this Bible verse: Ambrose,⁹⁰ Sedulius Scotus,⁹¹ and Chrysostom.⁹² Estius strongly opposed Erasmus' view in his *Annotationes (Annotations)* to the New Testament, in which he, in reference to the same verse (1 Cor 7:7), concluded that Paul had entered into matrimony.⁹³

In relation to the continuation of verse 1 Cor 7:7, "But every one hath his proper gift from God: one after this manner, and another after that," where Estius confirmed in passing his notorious thesis that sufficient grace (*gratia sufficiens*) was not given to all men,⁹⁴ Estius stated that there were men who did not have the gift of continence: they found a fitting remedy in marriage ("*remedium ex coniugo*"). For people who had taken the religious vow of chastity (religious orders) or were bound to the ecclesiastical law of celibacy (clergy), the remedy of marriage was not permitted; and if such a person sought marriage, he would incur strong condemnation, which Estius argued could be found in Paul's statement in 1 Tim 5:12: "Having damnation, because they have made void their first Faith." "Their first faith" in this instance should be interpreted as the vow, by which they had engaged themselves to Christ. Estius used this passage regularly as a scriptural answer to Protestant views questioning the necessity for religious vows and celibacy of priests. If confronted with difficulty in resisting sexual urges (incontinence—*incontinentia*), people bound by a vow of chastity or the ecclesiastical law of celibacy had to find a remedy in other, holy means, such as fasting, prayer, vigils, holy reading, pious meditation, avoidance of idleness and honourable works.

Estius emphasized that those who did not possess the gift of continence ought not to feel that they were excused from the duty of observing its precepts. He insisted that it was possible to become continent, if a request was made to God for such a gift to be bestowed, according to that which the Lord had promised: "Ask and you shall receive." Characterising continence as a special gift of grace was very important to Estius: in this, he explicitly objected to the Pelagian views that God's grace was a natural possibility instilled in every person, allowing for people to make up their own minds, found, amongst others, in *Liber de castitate (The Book of Chastity)*, by Jacobus Salvator Solanius (first edition 1573), wrongly attributed to Pope Sixtus III.

⁸⁹ Tertullianus (1954c), *De monogamia* 3.1–3 and 8.5–6, p. 1230 l. 9–26, p. 1240 l. 29–36.

⁹⁰ Ambrosius (1845a, repr. 1993), *Exhortatio virginitatis* 4.22, col. 343 l. 1–5.

⁹¹ See Sedulius Scotus (1997), *In I epist. ad Corinthios* 7:6–7, p. 390 l. 6–9.

⁹² Chrysostomus (1862), *In Epist. I ad Cor. Hom.* 19.2, p. 153.

⁹³ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:7*, fol. 317A: "Valeat proinde Erasmus, qui in suis annotationibus ex hoc ipso loco coniiicit Paulo haec scribenti coniugem fuisse," which contains a reference to Erasmus (2003), *Annotationes in I Cor: 7.7*, p. 128 l. 483–487.

⁹⁴ On the basis of a commentary of Hugh of St.-Victor on 1 Cor 7:7 (Hugo de Sancte Victore (1854), *Quaestiones et decisiones in Ep. I ad Cor.*, qu. 67, col. 526c), Estius stated that there were many to whom nothing was given by which they might be saved. This denial of *sufficient grace* was a position that the Church, in the context of its opposition to Jansenism, was later to condemn. See also François (2012), especially pp. 262–271.

In interpreting the next verse, 1 Cor 7:8 “But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they so continue, even as I,” Estius devoted considerable attention to the correct scope of the Greek words “τοῖς ἀγάμοις” and “ταῖς χήραις,” where he seems to apply the first concept to the unmarried, regardless of whether or not they had ever been married, while the second seems to be more specifically applied to widows.⁹⁵ From that point on, Estius’ interprets Paul’s verses by following the views Augustine put forward in the already mentioned book *De bono viduitatis*. Estius argues that what Paul meant by this verse is that it is good for the unmarried and the widows—that is, better and preferable—that they remain unmarried. It is important to emphasize that “good” should be understood as “better” here—that the good of continence is, in its very nature, more excellent than the good of marriage: in this interpretation, Estius relies on Chapter 5 of Augustine’s *De bono viduitatis*.⁹⁶ This is not so in a total, absolute sense, but applies to man in his fallen state (“*in statu corruptionis*”), whereby marriage and the conjugal act were by necessity subject to carnal lust (*concupiscentia carnis*), always a sin. In the state of original integrity (“*in statu primaevae integritatis*”), the unmarried state was therefore not better, nor even simply more preferable. Whatever some of his contemporaries might have contended, Estius regarded the fact that Paul uses himself as an example in this verse of Scripture as strong evidence that Paul himself lived in continual continence.

The text of 1 Cor 7:9 then follows: “But if they do not contain themselves, let them marry.” Estius’ commentary of Paul’s verse suggests that people who do not control themselves due to the weakness of the flesh should take refuge in the remedy of marriage, and that this was offered as a concession (“*indulgentia*”), not an injunction. Estius emphasises that Paul did not say “if they *cannot* control themselves,” but “if they *do not* contain themselves”: Estius interpreted this as Paul’s intention to show that the problem of incontinence arises from the absence of a strong will and a firm decision to be continent. On the basis of Gregory the Great’s *Regula pastoralis* (*Rules of Pastoral Care*), Estius repeated that Paul’s advice on continence applied only to those who were able to marry and not bound by religious vows or by ecclesiastical law concerning celibacy.⁹⁷ To support this view, Estius refers to 1 Tim 5:12 once again: where Paul declares that certain widows, who are not able to exercise self-control and wish to remarry, will be damned as they have voided their first faith. Many Church fathers prior to Gregory the Great had come to the same conclusion: Epiphanius of Salamis, in his *Panarion*, on heresy 61 against Apostolics,⁹⁸ Chrysostom in his book *De virginitate* (*On Virginitate*), which refers to 1 Cor 7:9 directly,⁹⁹ Jerome’s *Adversus Jovinianum*,¹⁰⁰ Augustine’s *De bono*

⁹⁵ Augustinus (1900c), *De bono viduitatis* 2.3, pp. 306 l. 18–307 l. 19.

⁹⁶ Augustinus (1900c), *De bono viduitatis* 5.7, p. 311 l. 3–10.

⁹⁷ Gregorius Magnus (1992), *Regula pastoralis* 3.27, p. 456 l. 141–146.

⁹⁸ Epiphanius of Salamis (1980), *Panarion haer.* 61.6.8–10, p. 387 l. 1–10. For a translation, see Epiphanius of Salamis (1994), *Panarion* 61.6.8–10, pp. 119–120.

⁹⁹ Chrysostomus (1862a), *De virginitate* 39, pp. 561–562. Compare Chrysostomus (1862b), *In Epist. I ad Cor. Hom.* 19.6, pp. 159–160.

¹⁰⁰ Especially Hieronymus (1863), *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.13, col. 240.

*viduitatis*¹⁰¹ and *De adulterinis coniugiis* (*On Adulterous Spouses*),¹⁰² the commentaries of Sedulius Scotus¹⁰³ and Ambrose, or “*quisquis author*” (an unnamed author) in the book addressed to the lapsed virgin.¹⁰⁴ Estius also lashes out at priests and monks appealing on the Scripture passage 1 Cor 7:9 to exonerate the marriage to which they were tempted after having taken the vow of continence¹⁰⁵; Estius considers such marriage sacrilegious.

But here followed the notorious verse: “For it is better to marry than to be burnt.” This apparently suggests that it is better to use the remedy of marriage than to burn (be scorched by the fire of lust and the infernal fire). The person who burns is not the one tempted by the beginnings of sensual desire, but one who gives in to it and proceeds to sin by consent or by act (“*per actum vel consensum peccati*”). Estius supports this view by Augustine’s *De sancta virginitate*, which states that “to burn, is to be consumed by the dark flame of lust,”¹⁰⁶ and, particularly, Jerome, who, in the *Apologia ad Pammachum*, interpreted “to burn” as “to fornicate” (“*fornicari*”).¹⁰⁷ The term “fornication” was understood to encompass every sort of aberration of a sexual nature which a person who cannot control himself is likely to commit outside of marriage, and this is a definition that Estius adopted. He felt that Paul’s advice, “For it is better to marry than to be burnt,” was not to be regarded simply as a way to quieten the stimuli of the flesh, as the Protestants maintained. If this had been the case, Paul himself would have taken a wife; the apostle was, after all, himself susceptible to the drives of the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7: “... there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me”). But Estius was clear on the point that marriage was better than burning in lust only for those who were allowed to marry. Estius repeated himself by stressing that for those who had taken a vow of chastity or were subject to the ecclesiastical law of celibacy, entering into marriage was condemnable (Tim 5:12). For clerics or people in religious orders, marriage itself amounted to fornication (burning), as, by marrying, they added the sin of lechery to the sin of violated vow. Estius now found confirmation for this view also in a prayer attributed to Ambrose:

¹⁰¹ Augustinus (1900c), *De bono viduitatis* 8.11, 9.12 and 10.13, pp. 315–320.

¹⁰² Augustinus (1900a), *De adulterinis coniugiis* 1.15.16, p. 364 l. 21–24.

¹⁰³ Sedulius Scotus (1997), *In I epist. ad Corinthios* 7:9, pp. 391–394 l. 14.

¹⁰⁴ Obviously, this is a reference to Ambrosius (1845b, repr. 1993), *De lapsu virginis consecratae* 5.21, cols. 372–373. This work, also entitled *De lapsu Susannae*, can certainly not be attributed to Ambrosius, a fact of which Estius seems already to have been aware. It is sometimes suggested that this work comes from the hand of Nicetas of Remesiana (d. after 414) in light of a reference made by Gennadius of Marseilles to a *libellus ad lapsam virginem* by Nicetas. Klaus Gamber suggests that only the shorter version of this work is by Nicetas. In addition the question raises of the relation between this work, and the *Epistula ad virginem lapsam*, edited by dom Germain Morin. For the dossier, see Dekkers and Gaar (1995), nrs. 651 and 652; also Ambrosius (2011).

¹⁰⁵ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:9*, fol. 319A: “Sanè liquet ex his quàm perversè locum istum apostoli proferant apostatae sacerdotes & monachi, quo sacrilega sua connubia post continentiae votum attentata excusent.”

¹⁰⁶ Augustinus (1900d), *De sancta virginitate* 34.34, p. 274 l. 2–3.

¹⁰⁷ Hieronymus (1996b), *Ep. 49. Ad Pammachium* 17, p. 380 l. 19.

Those who are committing adultery in their heart and have not taken a vow of purity, are doing better, following Paul, to marry than to burn. But I beg you, Lord, that those who are not allowed to marry, may not be burnt.¹⁰⁸

This was the occasion for Estius to add that the remedy of prayer, along with a number of other remedies he lists in the commentary to 1 Cor 7:7, remains available for those who are not allowed to marry.

Estius also went a step further: although he, together with Paul and Augustine,¹⁰⁹ referred to marriage *in itself* as an honourable state (“*res honesta*”) established by God at creation,¹¹⁰ he considered marriage as a lesser evil, and permitted as a means of excuse (“*secundum veniam*”), in order to give no opportunity to the greater evil of immoderate lust. Marrying simply to offset a lack of self-control became considered a venial sin, in the same way as having sexual relations with one’s spouse because of a lack of self-control was a venial sin.¹¹¹ This strict perspective on the marriage of those who do not control themselves seemed to Estius to be the logical conclusion of the argument to be found in Jerome’s *Contra Jovinianum*¹¹² and *Apologia ad Pammachum* (“*Ideo melius est nubere, quia peius est uri*”: “only in this relative sense is it better to marry, because it is worse to burn”),¹¹³ Thomas,¹¹⁴ Martinus of Tours, Sulpicius Severus and Sedulius Scotus.¹¹⁵

In conclusion, Estius added that the fire of which Paul spoke could also be interpreted as the fire of hell (“*ignis gehennae*”), in the sense that “it was better to marry than burn in hell as a result of a life lived in fornication.” In support of his position he cites the humanist Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples,¹¹⁶ and patristic sources such as Sedulius Scotus, the commentary of Pelagius to the Epistles of Paul, in addition to the commentary on the same which he considered to have been written by Primasius of Hadrimetum, but which is now accepted to be a reworking of Pelagius’ commentary on the Pauline epistles by disciples of Cassiodorus.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁸ Actually Ambrosius Autpertus. See Ambrosius Autpertus (1979), *Oratio contra septem uitia* (Recensio A) 9, p. 941 l. 9–12.

¹⁰⁹ Augustinus (1900b), *De bono coniugali* 10.11, pp. 202–203, especially 203 l. 9–11.

¹¹⁰ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:9*, fol. 319B–320A.

¹¹¹ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:9*, fol. 320A: “Sic autem nubere est per incontinentiam nubere. Quod profectò tam est culpabile, quàm per incontinentiam misceri cum coniuge. Nam utrobique culpam inducit eadem circumstantia finis.”

¹¹² See especially Hieronymus (1863), *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.9 and 13, cols. 232–233 (quotation on l. 4), and col. 243.

¹¹³ Hieronymus (1996b), *Ep. 49. Ad Pammachium* 17, p. 379 l. 21.

¹¹⁴ Estius (1614), *In I Cor 7:9*, fol. 320A: “Thomas melius interpretatur magis tolerandum,” obviously a reference to Aquinas (1953), *I. Ad Corinthios* 7 lectio 1, vol. 1, p. 299 nr. 335.

¹¹⁵ Amongst others a quotation from Martinus of Tours is to be found in Sulpicius Severus (1866), *Dialogus* 2.10.6, p. 192 l. 20–22; and Sedulius Scotus (1997), *In I epist. ad Corinthios* 7: 9, pp. 391 l. 11–394 l. 15.

¹¹⁶ Faber Stapulensis (1512, repr. 1978), *S[ancti] Pauli epistolae XIV [quattuordecim] ex vulgata: adiecta intelligentia ex Graeco, cum commentariis*, fol. 115v, nr. 42.

¹¹⁷ Sedulius Scotus (1997), *In I epist. ad Corinthios* 7: 9, p. 394 l. 14–15; and Souter (1922); Dekkers and Gaar (1995), nrs. 728 and 902.

Wim François

As various outlooks concerning marriage and sexuality had found acceptance in the Western Church in the early modern era, differences of opinion thrived, not only between Protestants and Catholics, but also between different currents within Catholicism. Consequently, the outlook on marriage and sexuality within the Catholic Church was considerably more colourful than is often assumed. The “rigorists,” such as William Estius (1542–1613), reacted against the “laxism” which they felt had invaded the Catholic Church via the manuals of casuistry and confessional practice, and defended what was, in their eyes, the “orthodox” view. While all Catholics believed in the superiority of consecrated, celibate life, considerable variation can be found in the discussion on the role of sex in marital life. Commenting on 1 Cor 7:1–9, Estius defended the view that only the intercourse sought in order to produce offspring, and to incorporate this offspring into Christ’s body, was without sin; but when sexual relations were also motivated or stirred by lust, they are to be considered a sin—albeit a venial one—even though they help avoid the graver evil of fornication (1 Cor 7:2). This is why Paul refers to sexual relations within marriage as “*secundum indulgentiam*” or “*secundum veniam*” allowed as a sort of pardonable act, not as an injunction, in 1 Cor 7:6. *Not seeking*, but simply *rendering* the conjugal debt was also without sin, but an act of justice. Since sexual relations were more or less always accompanied by the immoderate desire which was the consequence of the Fall and an impetus to further sin, conjugal sex is also characterised by sin (albeit venial). Because of the contaminating nature of sex, believers were not permitted to receive communion the day after sexual relations had taken place. Estius found authoritative support for his view in Augustine’s *De sancta virginitate* and *De bono coniugali*, and the writings of the extremely ascetic Jerome, and his works *Contra Jovinianum* and *Apologia ad Pammachum*. Estius appears to have considered humanists, Protestants, and even those holding laxer views within his own Church, such as the Jesuits, to be misguided adherents of a revived Jovinianism—adherence to the views of Jovinian, whom the Church had already condemned in the fourth century. In commenting on St Paul’s writing on marriage in 1 Cor 7:1–9, Estius, an important representative of Catholic rigorism, however, never speaks of sexuality in marriage as mortal sin.

Key to Abbreviations Used in Bibliography

- ASD *Amsterdam Erasmi Opera Omnia*. 40 vols. (Amsterdam: North Holland and Leiden: Brill, 1969-).
- CCCM *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*. 267 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1966-).
- CCSL *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*. 194 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953-).
- CSEL *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*. 99 vols. (Vienna: Temp-sky, 1866-).

- CWE *Collected Works of Erasmus*. Ed. James K. McConica. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969-).
- PL *Patrologia Latina*. Ed. Jacques-Paul Migne. 221 vols. plus 5 supplementary vols. (Paris: Migne, 1844–1864).
- PG *Patrologia Graeca*. Ed. Jacques-Paul Migne. 161 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1857–1866).

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The Ageing of Love: The Waning of Love's Power

Danijela Kambaskovic

Today's poets are encouraged to write about serious matters: terrorism, migration, tax, the conflict of cultures or politics; in fact, anything but love, a subject that is considered to be done to death. Under no circumstances should a poet seek to evoke pity, unless he or she is prepared to risk being ignored by critics and fellow-poets. Yet pity is the very emotion that Francesco Petrararch, father of modern lyric and the most imitated poet in history, states as his most important authorial goal—the very means whereby he may achieve poetic immortality:

...to stir, perhaps, some pity in the eyes
of someone born a thousand years from now. (Petrarch 1999
(original c1330–1370), *Il Canzoniere* 30)¹

Or imagine Thomas Thorpe, William Shakespeare's printer who was twenty-five in 1609, telling Shakespeare something like this: "Will, please stay away from love poems and that endless abjection of yours. We need something on more important subjects. Could you do something on the clash with the Irish troops in Munster, the rising prices of ale or the losses to the Commonwealth arising from Essex's uprising?"

Sadly, love has aged. I use the concept of ageing metaphorically, of course, to suggest that between Plato's time and ours, the positive epistemological import of the notion of love as *enthousiasmos*, divine breath or inspiration, a union of pain and growth, a cycle of death and renewal considered by Plato, classical poets and medieval and early Renaissance poets to bring the soul and body together in the process of creation—has been eroded over time. Plato's view of the suffering of desire as a necessary component of creativity and the search for the transcendent, later favoured by medieval and renaissance writers, seems to have given way to the view that, in our emotional as well as creative endeavours, we must avoid emotion that is difficult and unsettling.

The relationship between the notion of courage and the notion of love's suffering has also undergone a turn. To be courageous, a medieval thinker pursued and

¹ All references to Petrarch's *Il Canzoniere*, or *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* are taken from Petrarch (1999).

D. Kambaskovic (✉)
The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
e-mail: danijela.kambaskovic-sawers@uwa.edu.au

described unfulfilled desire, a process which we know today to result from bodily (hormonal) changes associated with perception, to elevate the soul to a higher plane of creativity and ethics, precisely because it is uncomfortable. Today, courage is defined by not feeling, or, at the very least, not mentioning desire or its suffering. The shift in the meaning of the word ‘pathetic’ is illustrative of this: *pathos*, emotional summit—along with *logos* and *ethos*, logic and moral import, a mainstay of rhetoric—has generated *pathetic*, an adjective which now denotes weakness, the very opposite of the classical notion of *pathos*. What has contributed to the change in the epistemological and ethical status of the altered state of body and mind, associated with love?

Put simply, Plato’s love *is* desire and madness:

When he that desires beauty is touched by madness, he is called a lover.
(*Phaedrus*, 249 d)²

An important reason of the high epistemological status of love madness is the unpleasant symptoms it causes in the body and mind, which must be endured if the lover is to achieve his full creative potential. Plato is keenly aware of this, and describes love madness as one where body and soul are in turmoil together, characterized by acute discomfort in which occur various psychosomatic manifestations and arousal of contradictory emotions. Plato is articulating beliefs circulated in his society at the time. Consider, for instance, this description of psychosomatic aspects of love-madness, present in the writing of Sappho, who wrote before Plato:

My bosom glowed; the subtle flame
Ran quick through all my vital frame;
O’er my dim eyes a darkness hung;
My ears with hollow murmurs rung.
(Sappho 1893, “Ode to a loved one”)

Plato organises knowledge which circulated in society by offering a more systematic and detailed description of the disturbing symptoms of this strange condition, referring explicitly to the way the soul, in her anguish, affects the body:

So between joy and anguish [the soul] is distraught... perplexed and frenzied; with madness upon [it], [it] can neither sleep by night nor keep still by day, but runs hither and thither, yearning for [the beloved] in whom beauty dwells. [...] All the rules of conduct, all the graces of life, of which aforesaid [it] was proud, the soul now disdains, welcoming a slave’s estate... for ... [it] has found in [the beloved] the only physician for [its] grievous suffering.

(Plato, *Phaedrus*, 251d, e)

...as the lover behaves to his beloved—urging his need with prayers and entreaties, and vowing vows, and sleeping upon doorsteps, subjecting himself, in short, to a slavery which no slave would ever endure...

(Plato, *Symposium* 183a)

Although Plato’s writings were not available before the thirteenth century and not widely available in Latin before Ficino’s translation from the fifteenth century, some ideas were circulated through the work of Roman writers as well as and the writing of third century Neoplatonists as well as Dante; and platonic descriptions of this heightened

² Unless otherwise specified, all references to Plato’s works have been taken from Plato (1961).

state, which include physiological symptoms—sweating, restlessness, increased heart-rate, insomnia—as well as contradictory emotions and sensations such as joy and anguish, pleasure and suffering, elation and mortification, burning and freezing—appear ubiquitously throughout the poetry of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Plato's descriptions of the symptom of love madness must also be understood in the context of the old mythographies of Eros and Anteros, which saw love, caused by the wayward arrows of the playful God, as leading to enslavement and involuntary loss of personal freedom. This particular idea is highly influential when it comes to the poetry of the middle ages and the early modern period. Petrarch's *Triumph of Love*, for instance—the work which elaborates the conceit of the loss of freedom through love—as well as Petrarch's *Rime*, both grow around the idea that love equals enslavement. Petrarch's *Rime* contain many prime examples of how the loss of freedom can be turned into beautiful verse. Sonnet 161 is also a reworking of Plato's parable of the "Horses of Desire", in which reason should hold the reins.

I'll sing of how I lived in liberty
While Love had not been welcomed in my home (23:5–6)

Oh blessed be the day, the month, the year
The season and the time, the hour, the instant,
The gracious countryside, the place where I
Was struck by those two lovely eyes that bound me. (61:1–4)

Oh lovely face where Love has put together
Both spurs and rein with which he pricks and turns me
As pleases him (and kicking back is useless) (161:9–11)

Descriptions of desire's torments abound in Rome and become the mainstay of the work of medieval and Renaissance love poets in Western Europe spanning several centuries. Here are some examples of famous poems describing symptoms of love-madness:

...nothing is
left of me, each time
I see her,

...tongue numbed; arms, legs
melting, on fire; drum
drumming in ears; head-
lights gone black.
(Catullus 1966, 51)

Love has penetrated my heart
with its flame. ...

Therefore, father, abduct [rape] me with your prayers, I beg you.
Then our love will never be estranged.
(Alcuin of York 1998, "Letter to Arno, Bishop of Salzburg)

my thoughts.. have in them such diversity
that one thought makes me welcome [love's] power,
another thinks love's power is insane,
another makes me hope and brings delight,
another moves me oftentimes to tears.
(Alighieri 1977, *La Vita Nuova*)

I find no peace, and have no arms for war,
 And fear and hope, and burn and yet I freeze,
 And fly to heaven, lying on earth's floor,
 And nothing hold, and all the world I seize.
 (Petrarch, *Il Canzoniere*, 134)

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
 The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;
 But then begins a journey in my head
 To work my mind, when body's work's expired
 [...]
 Lo! thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,
 For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.
 (Shakespeare, Sonnet 27)³

But in Platonic philosophy there is method to all this madness. A philosophical point to suffering and enslavement. Plato considers love madness the highest form of human madness and the source of the highest good, personal as well as political. Particularly important in this regard are Plato's views from *Phaedrus*, one of his latest work, which represents his mature philosophy of love:

And in the divine kind [of madness] we distinguished four types: [1] the inspiration of the prophet,...[2] that of the mystic,... [3] that of the poet,...and [4] a fourth type, which we declared to be the highest, the madness of a lover.
 (Plato, *Phaedrus* 265b)

Thus we find that the antiquity of Love is universally admitted, and in very truth he is the ancient source of all our highest good. [...] How shall I describe [Love], but that contempt for the vile, and emulation of the good, without which neither cities nor citizens are capable of any great or noble work.
 (Plato, *Symposium* 178d)

False is the tale that when a lover is at hand, favour ought rather to be accorded to one who does not love, on the ground that the former is mad. [...] but in reality, the greatest blessings come by way of madness, indeed of madness that is heaven-sent. (Plato, *Phaedrus* 244a)
 The Lover, by virtue of Love's inspiration, is always nearer than his beloved to the Gods.
 (Plato, *Symposium*, 180b)

Love's suffering is, therefore, to be voluntarily adopted with a view to ennobling the soul. Love is seen as the most exquisite fire we can experience; the rarefied desire for the unattainable, the emotional pain we endure leads to self-awareness, creativity, and, ultimately, transcendence.

What Plato means by inspiration is love madness, a trance—*enthousiasmos*—an altered state of mind under the influence of what we know today to be hormones. In Plato's time, the three trances, erotic, wine-induced and creative (inspiration) were all thought to cause the same feeling; which is why all three are, tellingly, governed by god Dionysius. Modern theories of love, on the other hand, strive to explain things rationally; for instance, *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* classifies love as a “robust concern”, “valuing”, and, only finally, as an emotion (Helm 2009, “On Love”). By contrast, in Platonic philosophy, love's suffering enhances our sensory

³ Unless otherwise specified, all references to Shakespeare's Sonnets are taken from Shakespeare (1997/2003).

perception and allows our soul to “grow wings”—necessarily a painful process—so that we can reach the highest level of our creative potential, inaccessible to us without this suffering (*Phaedrus* 251c). While Plato's views advanced in the *Republic* appear to contradict this—there, Plato devalues poetry since, by inspiring pity, it “weakens and encourages and strengthens the lower elements of mind to the detriment of reason” (*Republic* 606d) there is no doubt that *Phaedrus*, the later work, gives precedence to inspiration and arousal (*Phaedrus* 245e). This view is clearly reflected also in Ovid's *Fasti*, in relation to poetic madness, inspiration or *furor*, a trance, according to Plato, akin to love-madness:

There is a god within us. It is when he stirs us that our bosom warms; it is his impulse that sows the seeds of inspiration. I have a particular right to see the faces of the gods, whether because I am a bard, or because I sing of sacred things.
(Ovid 1989/2003, *Fasti* VI.5–8)

Modern neuroscience confirms the link between love and altered states of mind, both where sexual and sublime loves are concerned. Researchers are working on correlations between falling in love and phenyl ethylamine (PEA) and the density of peptide binding sites in the formation of emotional attachment (Cornwell 2009); and in his *Splendours and Miseries of the Brain*, Samir Zeki cites Dante and Bernard of Clairvaux to argue that love—as a desire to be wholly united with the love object—is as common in the realms of religious experience (Zeki 2008). One has only to look at Bernini's *Ecstasy of St Teresa* to be convinced of this.

Plato's influential “holistic” approach linking love with creativity, and divinity with the highest form of ethics and the most complete epistemology, was still alive and well in the poetry and philosophy of the medieval and early modern period, where it coexisted with processes which eventually contributed to its destruction. The semantic link between the erotic, the creative and the sublime is present in innumerable works of art, literature and memoirs of saints. An early medieval Christian philosophy—probably a remnant of residual Platonic philosophy based on Paganism—saw all love, including sexual love, as a manifestation of the all-pervading love of God, through which the Universe is governed (Siegel 1961). Plato's concept of creative madness or poetic *furor*, and its links to love, were amply theorized (and favoured over the notion of writerly skill and care, Platonic *pisteis*) by many great Renaissance thinkers, including Giordano Bruno, Marsilio Ficino (who linked it to melancholy), Pietro Bembo, Pico della Mirandola, Francesco Patrizzi da Cherso⁴ and others. Much later in Elizabethan England, Sir Philip Sidney echoes this view by positing in his *Defence of Poesy* that inspiration is a crucial element of persuasiveness, and therefore poetic quality:

So these men, bringing in such a kind of eloquence [contrived], well may obtain an opinion of a seeming fineness, but persuade few, which should be the end of their fineness.
(Sidney, *Defence of Poesy*)⁵

⁴ Bruno (2007), *Gli Eroici Furori* (1585); Marsilio Ficino (1579) cited by Greenfield (1981), pp. 234–236; Patrizzi da Cherso (2007a), *Della Poetica*...Lib I; Patrizzi da Cherso (2007b), *Delle poetiche proprietadi*.

⁵ Sidney (2004), ‘*The Defence of Poesy*’ and *Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*, p. 8; Sidney (1962), *Astrophil and Stella* sonnets 1 and 2, p. 167.

Ficino's Neoplatonists—and, before them, Dante, Petrarch and the poets of the *dolce still nuovo*—affirmed the absolute importance of love for the nobility of the thinking individual. Desire subjected the mind to control and discipline, cultivated the senses and impulses, and allowed the soul to turn something essentially base into a quest for transcendence. Desire is linked with personal courage, and conquest of love is metaphorically elided not only with conquest in the battlefield, but also the conquest of the reader's minds and souls. Writing gives shape to *pretz* and *valor*—terms of Provençal troubadour poetry, meaning 'honour' and 'courage', utilized to denote the sexual, heroic and intellectual governing of the self, crucial to the idealized notions of medieval virility.

And many more I saw, for whom the tongue
Was ever lance and sword, helmet and targe.
(Petrarch 1962, *Triumphs*, "Triumph of Love", p. 29)

Desire is defined as a divine lack, and the pull of the beloved as being akin to the mystical pull of the transcendent:

But when one who is fresh from the mystery ... beholds a godlike face or bodily form that truly expresses beauty, ... there comes upon him ... reverence [as] at the sight of a God [and]... he would offer sacrifice to his beloved, as to a holy image of Deity.
(*Symposium* 251b)

It was this idea that gave birth to the notion of the "divine beloved", and was powerfully influential in the poetry of the troubadours and minesingers, the culture of courtly love and Petrarchism. Creativity—writing to sacrifice to the beloved—serves to make this divine lack fruitful (*fruire* is Ficino's verb) (Nelson 1955). The ennobling effects of love madness on the pursuit of virtue and creativity are continually asserted. Although the focus of such thinking in the Medieval and Renaissance Period is Christian, it stems from Platonic philosophical holism, in which love and its pain are perceived as indivisible, creative forces. Suffering must therefore be *actively sought*, rather than avoided, if one's goal is to achieve personal (manly) virtue and produce exceptional poetic work:

Not from your yoke, Love, does my soul depart
But from my harms—and you know with what effort:
Virtue's no accident, it's a fine art.
(Petrarch, *Il Canzoniere*, 355)

Loue, the delight of all well-thinking minds,
Delight, the fruit of virtue dearely lov'd;
Vertue, the highest good, that reason finds,
Reason, the fire wherein mens thoughts bee prov'd;
Are from the world by Natures power bereft,
And in one creature, for her glory, left.
(Greville 1633, *Caelica*, "introductory sonnet", p. 161)

More radically still, Plato's writing suggests that the creative output of love's enthusiasm is more valuable than its procreative output:

[The lovers'] communion even more complete than that which comes of bringing children up, because they have created something lovelier and less mortal than human seed.
(Plato, *Symposium*, 209d)

It is impossible to overstate the importance of this idea for Roman, as well as Medieval and Renaissance European poets of the vernacular. Examples of this idea are ubiquitous as they are numerous.

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 18:13–14)

Nevertheless, these powerful philosophies eventually succumb to weakening influences arising from medical, theological and poetical discourses of the period, which focus on the physiological and negative, rather than creative and positive aspects of love madness. Plato's respect for *enthousiasmos* is conspicuously absent from sixteenth and seventeenth century medical and theological treatises on love-madness or lust. Through their influence, and by the end of the seventeenth century, a crucial paradigm shift will have occurred between two views of desire: the old, which views love madness as noble and desirable altered state of the soul, essential for the pursuit of creativity and, therefore, immortality; and the new, which pathologizes and demonizes love madness as a set of unpleasant psychosomatic symptoms to be cured, or else a sin and a threat to spiritual integrity, and therefore opposed to the pursuit of immortality.

The process begins long before the Renaissance. Galen pathologizes love madness in the second century AD, listing symptoms associated with this brooding illness. On the other hand, he sees regular sex as a cure: a health-conscious gentleman should have sex even when the act gives him no particular pleasure (Galen, *On the affected parts* 6.5, qtd. in Brown 1988, p. 20). Similar advice is given by Constantine the African in the eleventh century, in his *On Melancholia and Sexual Intercourse* (Constantine the African 1994, p. 167). Unsurprisingly, Christian churches do not favour the view that those suffering from love madness should have sex as a regular and healthful distraction. In the seventeenth century, Jacques Ferrand gets into trouble for giving similar medical advice, and medical discourse turns to other, ever more subtle and ornate cures for love sickness.

The idea of devising cures for love is not new either. Ovid's first-century *Ars Amatoria* suggests that the sufferer be exposed to the truth behind the bewitching female façade (Ovid 1957, *The Art of Love* III, pp. 209–220), and medieval and early modern medical thinkers such as Andreas Capellanus' *De amore et de amoris remedio* (Capellanus 1982, *On Love*; originally written in the twelfth century and printed in 1474), Bernard de Gordon (1550, *Lilium Medicinae*; English title: *Lily of Medicine*, originally written between 1285–1308), Timothie Bright (1586, *A Treatise on Melancholie*), Jacques Ferrand (1610, *Traicte de l'essence et guerisson de l'amour*; and 1623, *Traicte de la maladie d'amour ou melancholie erotique*; English title: *Treatise on Lovesickness*), Robert Burton (1621, *Anatomy of Melancholy*), Pierre Petit (1661, *De lacrymis libri tres*) and others (Vallerioli 1588; du Laurens 1597; Aubery 1599; de Veyries 1609; Pettie ca. 1585, etc.), all catalogue love's torments and devote much attention to cures (Altbauer-Rudnik 2006); Beaumont and Fletcher, Shakespeare's heirs, dramatize the quest in *Love's Cure* (1718). While these treatises differ vastly in their approaches to lovesickness and inferences from observable symptoms, they all recommend physical and psychological treatments

of varying degrees of invasiveness, ranging from those which discredit the source of affliction—such as slandering the beloved or forcing the patient to smell the beloved’s menstrual rags—to those which focus on getting the love madness out of the sufferer, such as applying the consolations of religion and philosophy, administering an array of plants externally and internally, or applying various opiates to purge the patient. If f all else fails, beating the patient until he begins to rot (Ferrand 1990, esp. pp. 325, 327, 342, 354, 363).

Such treatments—and the organization and tone of the works—show a high degree of similarity to treatments of venereal disease, such as William Clowes’ *A Brief and necessarie Treatise, touching the cure of the disease called Morbus Gallicus, or Lues Venerea* (1585). That both types of treatise promote pragmatic approaches to the idea of curing unpleasant symptoms brings lovesickness into the same semantic territory as the danger of physical infection through sexual intercourse⁶. An interesting by-product of this semantic elision is the poets’ use of venereal disease as a poetic metaphor for love’s suffering. Giovanni Battista Lalli’s *Franceide* (1629) is a work satirising love by representing it as venereal disease:

What will vanquish this horrible storm?
 What evil poison has been harvested?
 What crude serfdom destines us
 To venerate our Queen, despite certain ruin?
 (Lalli 1629, *Franceide*, II:5, p. 27)⁷

In his *Sonnets* (1609) William Shakespeare uses the link less ironically, but as a metaphor for virulent and unrelenting torment of unrequited love:

‘Tis policy in love, t’anticipate
 The ills that were not, grew to faults assured,
 And brought to medicine a healthful state
 Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cured;
 But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
 Drugs poison him, that fell so sick of you.
 (Shakespeare, Sonnet 118)

Although treatises on love-sickness focus on the symptoms and the cures, not the afflicted individuals, an unfavourable picture of the sufferer emerges from the works. The impression one gets from Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*, which devotes over a third of its pages to love sickness and its various manifestations, is that love melancholics are insufferable weaklings, lunatics with a questionable grip on reality, ridiculous jealous cuckolds or semen-hungry women such as green-sick virgins or nuns. This is a remnant of the Platonic, Aristotelian and Hippocratic view that *hystera*, the womb, is a roaming, hungry, demanding and unpredictable organ, which later gave rise to the notion of hysteria, which contributed to the institutionalization of women on a large scale in the nineteenth century (Potter et al. 2009). None of those character types could ever serve as role models for early modern males striving to achieve traits associated with ideal masculinity: stability,

⁶ For more on love as danger, see Kambaskovic-Sawers (2012).

⁷ Qual ne sommerge horribile tempesta?/Qual rio veleno havem dentro raccolto?/A qual crudo seruaggio ci destina/ Vener nostra Reina, anzi ruina? Translation mine.

sanguinity, virility, intelligence and effortless self-mastery. Medical treatises deal a serious blow to the philosophical import of love in society.

Other processes also contribute to this. To begin with, Plato's love loses its sexual focus. As is well known, Plato argues that there are two types of love: good love—*Urania*, the heavenly Aphrodite—and bad love, *Pandemia* or earthly Aphrodite (*Symposium*, 180e; 181 b, c; 183e, 184d, *Phaedrus* 497 b, c). Significantly, however, Plato's view of what makes love good or bad does not revolve around the presence or absence of sex, as it does in the Neoplatonic philosophy; instead, it revolves around the concept of virtue, defined by caring, constancy, social responsibility and creativity. Thus, Plato's "base" love is brief and meaningless, and leaves this earth without a trace; whereas the love that is "virtuous" is prolonged, caring and creative (*Symposium*, 183 d, 184c, 185b; 209 b). Significantly, both are sexual.

Under the influence of Christianity, however, Neoplatonists rewrite this equation to read *base = sexual* and *virtuous = asexual*. Although Ficino posited that love must be passionate in order to qualify as love (*eros*, not *caritas*), he also stipulated that it must be based on two senses only: sight and hearing. Sexual appetite is not love, but lust or frenzy identified with animality, a foolish perturbation of the spirit contrary to love, *rabbia Venerea*, venereal rabies or rabies of Venus; this appellation makes obvious the semantic elision governing the relationship between the physical and the emotional. Mario Equicola, one of Ficino's acolytes, went as far as to call it *la spurcittia del coito*, the filth of the coitus (Equicola 1536, p. 71). It should come as no surprise that it is this view that has passed down to us, as Plato's original writings were essentially lost to western civilization until their reintroduction in the twelfth century via Arab scholars who had maintained the original Greek texts. The only references to Plato available before the thirteenth century were the early Neoplatonist texts; and Ficino's translation and *Commentarium in Convivium Platonis de Amore* from 1469, printed in 1484 and translated by himself into the vernacular, achieved a great vogue in the sixteenth century and impacted on the vigour of the Petrarchan poetics of praise across most of Western Europe. The societal power of this idea was such that we still use the expression "Platonic love" today to suggest sexless love, not creative love which inspires immortal thoughts—as in Plato's text.

Similarly, many of Plato's famous parables illustrating the moral nature of good love (such as the famous "Horses of desire" (*Phaedrus*, 253 d) or the "Ladder of love" (*Symposium* 210a, 211b), an idea with important echoes such as St Augustine's fifth century discussions of *pondus amoris*, the fall of conspiscence (which in turn influenced Petrarch's thinking in *Secretum* (Petrarch 1989) and other medieval works such as Giovanni Climaco's *la Scala del Paradiso*, and contributed to the development of the philosophical notion of transcendent ascent, reflected in important Italian early Renaissance works such as Dante's *Vita Nuova* and *Divina Comedia*, Petrarch's *Ascent of Mt Ventoux* and *Il Canzoniere*, Boccaccio's *Amorosa Visione*, 1531, and Pietro Bembo's *Gli Asolani*, 1560) become reinterpreted by Christian Neoplatonists *not* in the light of Plato's argument that appetite must be reigned in to ensure that sexual love is creative, constant, generous and bountiful, and that its heightened state of mind strives towards the divine—but as a sign that physical aspects of love have become divorced from their transcendent aspect. This is the exact opposite of Plato's view that good love—a virtuous, enduring sexual

union resulting in creation, achieves a higher aim than a union resulting in procreation (*Symposium*, 209d).

Demonization contributed further to the divorce between the notion of love madness and its philosophical importance. In the early modern Christian treatises on spiritual madness such as Thomas Adams' *Diseases of the Soule* (1616) and *Mystical Bedlam, or the World of Mad Men* (1615), which are roughly coeval with Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and therefore most probably written independently, as well as in general theological treatises giving spiritual succour such as Phineas Fletcher's *Joy in Tribulation* (1632) or Richard Overton's *Man's Mortalitie* (1643), erotic love is treated as lust, a deadly sin and one of the spiritual madnesses: a thing of the Devil which must be avoided or extirpated from the soul by means of remorse and reason. In these works sex is viewed as unhealthy, inflammatory and horrible; and although religious works focus on spiritual cures, the philosophical message conveyed by medical treatises and theological works is one and the same: *love is an affliction of body and spirit which must be treated and eradicated*. To that end, theological works use the style and tone of medical treatises:

The Lustfull. is not to be missed in this Catalogue. [...] Indeed it is *insana libido*, a blinding, blinding fascination; a Witch that with her powerfull charmes intoxicates the braines. [...] a sawcy sinne, a costly disease? Yet were it cheape to the purse, is it not the price of blood? [...] Can all your prouocatiues, enliuenings, trepidations, and fomenting preseruatiues, prevent the wasting of your marrows? *Chamber-worke will drie the bones*. (Adams 1615, *Mysticall Bedlam*, folios 52 and 53)

Among many diseases incident to the reines, as the *Diabetes*, vlcers, the stone there and the emission of bloody urine, there is one called *inflammation of the reines*. To this not vnfitly, by comparing the causes, Symptomes and cure of either, I do liken *Lust*: the Scripture calls it by a general name, *Vncleanness*. *Couetousness* is commonly the disease of old age, *Ambition* of middle age, *Lust* of youth; if it extends further, it portends little helpe. [...] He can neuer call his hairs and his sinnes equal, for as his sinnes increase, his hairs fall. (Adams 1616, *Diseases of the Soule*, f. 44 and 45)

One unusual view deserves a mention here for its rarity in its time, and it comes from unlikely quarters: a work written in the form of a legal plea to be heard before the Parliament, Henry Brinklow's *The complaynt of Roderyck Mors* (1542). The work puts forward the highly unorthodox view that love is a way of *preventing* sin and adultery (for which the capital punishment is suggested) and implies that love should carry more weight when deciding on a marriage partner than money and social position:

Oh merciful god, what Innumerable inconuencys come by sellyng of wardys for maryage, for lucre of goodys and landys, although the parties neuer fauor the one the other, after thei come to discrecyon, to the great encreasing of the abhomyneable vyce of adultery, and of dyuelyssh dyuorcement! (Brinklow 1542, *The complaint of Roderyck Mors*, no folio)

The other topics of this treatise include “forfetting of the londes or goodes of traytors” and “the inclosing of partes, forestes and chases”—a strange place indeed, to find an apology for romantic love. And while this kind of thinking could be seen to be reminiscent of Protestant writings on companionate marriage (a notion of dubious positivity, as the writings seem to advocate an almost relentless incarceration of the married woman) (Cousins 2004), such views are few and far between before

the Reformation. More often than not, theological thought of the period associates love madness with lack of restraint, lack of restraint with lust, and lust with mortal danger to the immortal soul.

A subtler process is also at play in these works. By association with the story of Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis, love madness (now semantically transformed into lust) becomes viewed an affliction visited on all men by the irresistibility of women, an integral part of Eve's culpability for the Fall of Man. This view also works to reinforce the idea that love is something that a stable, sanguine, intelligent and spiritually sound early modern male should be able to avoid—although it is acknowledged that this is a very difficult, heroic task, as the danger women represent comes of the Devil.

This, of course, is in delightful contrast with the philosophical thought, exhibited in much of Medieval and early modern poetry, which accords women beatific or salutary powers. While it was Plato who introduced the idea of the divine nature of beloved (Plato, *Symposium* 251b), an idea that resonated very strongly with the poets of early modern Europe, the Platonic beloved is male, the beloveds in the work of the troubadours, minnesingers, Dante, Petrarch and Florentine Neoplatonists are female; it is impossible to overstate the historical importance of this shift. Plutarch, whose work was known to Petrarch and Elizabethan writers alike, offers in his *Moralia* (Plutarch 1603, *The Philosophy, Commonly Called the Morals*) a discussion of the Platonic link between the earthly and the divine achieved through love, accompanied by enthusiastic poetic descriptions of homosexual love—against which Jacobean readers were warned in an appended preface. Marsilio Ficino's Neoplatonism condemns love between men (celebrating their friendship instead), and attribute to women the power which compels the poet to seek higher forms of beauty. Nevertheless, both discourses can still be usefully compared. The aim of the sexual convention of *Pederasteia* was to “teach virtue” in the younger male, a process defined by engendering creativity in the older one; the definition strengthens the *connection between the erotic and the rhetorical*, definitive of both traditions, *Pederasteia* and Petrarchism alike. *Pederasteia* and courtly love can both be distinguished from the socially sanctioned heterosexual relationship, marriage, by the focus they place on emotion (as opposed to procreation) as the main motivator, and by the vital link they build between erotic passion and creative and rhetorical fertility (Enterline 1994). The later, heterosexual convention, must therefore tacitly accord the female the same state of emotional self-sufficiency, freedom and implicit interest that a young male held in the earlier tradition; and it is from this position that the beloveds of both traditions must be won by rhetorical means. Yet, at the same time, the female gender of the beloved also carried an expectation of submitting to the rules of patriarchal society and the commerce of marriage (Power 1975/2000; Duby 1994). As a result, poetics of courtly love and Petrarchism are never quite at peace with themselves, and teem with frustration, while purporting to praise. The contrast makes for powerful poetry—but eventually leads to the view that love does not belong to the realm of real life, but to the realm of literature; love is fictionalized, and its philosophical import weakened further. The same process that makes the poetry vital erodes the philosophical, ritual and societal power of the idea of love and its representations.

The beloved's female gender implies culpability for the fall of man, and daughters of Eve are a source of danger for sons of Adam. To be fair, the danger that women represent is not the result of Christian teachings alone; early modern Christian works draw on well-established misogynist traditions of the preceding and Classical and Judaeo-Christian Biblical tradition, abounding with dangerous and unruly creatures such as the Gorgon, Eurydice (moralized or not), Salmacis, Venus, Jezebel and many others. This example from Homer's *Odyssey* (9–8 century BC) is a case in point:

And I will tell you all the magic arts of Circe: she will prepare for you a potion and cast drugs into your food; but even so, she cannot charm you, because the potent herb which I shall give will not permit it. And let me tell you more: when Circe turns against you her long wand, then drawing the sharp sword from your thigh spring upon Circe as if you meant to slay her. In terror she will bid you to her bower. And do not refuse the goddess's bower, that so she may release your men and care for you.

(Homer 2003, *The Odyssey*, p. 124)

This short excerpt features danger, cures, potions, swords; even a bower, that place of irresistible but dangerous feminine attraction. It is no accident that these are constitutive elements of the medical and religious treatises of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as works of fiction concerned with male heroism and morality such as Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516), Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581) and Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590–1596). All of these works, unsurprisingly, feature irresistible women who employ wiles to deceive their male victims (descendants of Eve) and idealized men who resist and overcome the temptation (not descendants of Adam). Torquato Tasso's interest in the question is long-standing and pseudo-scientific: he also authored *Aminta*, a discursive treatise on love written in the Platonic dialogue tradition, as well as "Discourse on Jealousy" and the hybrid "Stanzas on jealousy", poems merging the lyrical with the discourse more appropriate to a medical treatise, in which he describes Jealousy as being "in a brown habit, of sex female, of colour livid, of build thin, with two dogs that always keep her awake; [...] she is to love what despair is to hope".⁸ Tasso genders his allegorical representation of jealousy feminine.

Medieval and early modern debates on the question whether Eve was guiltier than Adam when it comes to the question of the fall of Humanity were no less lively. In the fifth century, St Augustine resolved the question by suggesting that a woman is not made in God's image, and denied her any conceivable purpose for a man's life outside childbearing⁹; early feminists such as Boccaccio, Christine de Pisan, Aemilia Lanier, and Rachel Speight all argued, in essence, that women can achieve great things, but if a woman is to be considered a subsidiary, derivative being, her guilt must be lesser than Adam's¹⁰, while in his *Paradise Lost*, John Milton implied that Eve was more culpable (*Paradise Lost*, Book 9, ll. 1135–1189).¹¹ There were

⁸ Tasso (1575a), "Discorso della Gellosia"; Tasso (1575b), "Stanze della Gellosia", translation mine.

⁹ St Augustine (2002), *On the Trinity* 12.7.10; St Augustine 1982, *The literal meaning of Genesis* 9.5.9; Matter (2002).

¹⁰ Boccaccio (2003), *Famous Women*; de Pizan (1982), *The Book of the City of Ladies*; Lanier (2006), "Eve's Apology in Defense of Women"; Speight (2006), "A Muzzle for Melastomus".

¹¹ Milton (2006), *Paradise Lost* Tasso, 1581.

many other examples; but what all this left behind was a societal view that women and men's love of them—although they were meant by God as a good thing—are in fact very dangerous. Poet John Donne articulates this masculine anxiety succinctly in the seventeenth century:

...and [God] made woman, sent
 For man's relief, cause of languishment.
 They were to good ends, and they are so still,
 But accessory, and principle in ill.
 For that first marriage was our funeral
 One woman at one blow then killed us all,
 And singly, one by one, they kill us now.
 We do delightfully ourselves allow
 To that consumption; and profusely blind
 We kill ourselves to propagate our kind.
 (Donne 2006, "An Anatomy of the World: The First Anniversary", ll.101–110)

The argument is that women, who are made for "man's relief", use a man's love to gain the upper hand and make a man lose his reason. And this is serious because it is precisely a man's reason that enables him to occupy the uppermost place in the chain of being, *catena mundi*, Nature's hierarchy. Women embody the danger of this loss/fall, and the male anxiety related to this question is ubiquitously represented in the period. An incunable of Petrarch's *Epistolae Familiares* (1492) warns its (male) readers: *Lacrimas: mulierū esse arma: nec uiros decere* ("tears are a woman's weapon and do not befit a man") (Petrarca 1492, *Epistolae familiares*, p. 19, translation mine). Sandro Boticelli's painting *Mars and Venus* (1481) shows a Mars who is so overcome by stupor that he does not notice that his mighty spear is being stolen; Venus, however, is alert, serene and in her element. Shakespeare's Antony leaves his army in the lurch to attend to the whim of his woman (1997, *Antony and Cleopatra*).¹² Specific love spells that Tasso's Armida (1581, *Gierusalemme Liberata*) and Spenser's aptly named Acrasia (1590, *Fairie Queene*) put on their knights have diminishing effects. Dressed in feminine frippery with his hair curled, Tasso's knight waits patiently for his beloved to return home at the end of a working day, after attending to her business:

Done at last with her beautifying, she
 bids him goodbye, kisses him, and departs,
 for it's usual for her to spend the day
 tending her own affairs, her magic arts.
 He stays behind (he's not allowed to stray
 one moment or one step in other parts),
 wandering among the beasts and trees, alone,
 a hermit lover when his lover's gone.
 (Tasso 2000, *Jerusalem Delivered* 16:26)

This is the ultimate violation of the "natural order". The man has been taken down a rung on the chain of being to occupy place which rightfully belongs to inferior creatures who feel, but have no reason—women or animals.

¹² All references to Shakespeare's plays come from *The Norton Shakespeare* ed. Greenblatt et al. (1997).

The philosophical import of love is further weakened by this feminization, association with women and their wives. In men, seen as folly, love is, once again, defined as something that ideal men should be able to resist, or something that requires reformation. Robert Greene, the self-styled educated-man-about-town and arbiter of intellectual elegance addresses the issue on the title pages of his humorous romances *Never too late* and its sequel, *Francesco's folly* (both published in Greene 1590a, b):

Greenes Neuer too late. Or, A Powder of Experience: Sent to all youthfull Gentlemen; to roote out the infections follies, that ouer-reching conceits foster in the spring time of their youth./Decyphering in a true English historie, those particular vanities, that with their frostie vapours nip the blossoms of euerie ripe braine, from attaining to his intended perfection. As pleasant, as profitable, being a right pumice stone, apt to race out idlenesse with delight, and follie with admonition.

Francesco's Fortunes, or, The Second Part of Greene's Neuer too late, Wherein is discoursed the fall of Loue, the bitter fruites of Follies pleasure, and the repentant sorrowes of a reformed man.

By extension, writing about love also becomes seen as a self-indulgent, foolish pastime, although this view is contradicted by the sonnet sequence craze which swept across Europe at the same time: this important paradox exemplifies the contradictory attitudes to love in the homosocial renaissance intellectual networks. In his major work, *Defence of Poesy*, as well as in Sonnet 8 of his *Astrophil and Stella* (1581, published 1591) Sir Philip Sidney describes his sonnets as “ink-wasting toy-es”; Spenser’s Sonnet 33 (*Amoretti* 1595)¹³ suggests that sonnet writing is a break from real work (epic writing); and Shakespeare viciously satirizes the sonnet vogue in *As You Like it*, *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *Hamlet*. More tellingly still, the stigma of writing sonnets is such that many Renaissance poets choose to publish their sequences anonymously: they include William Percy (1594, *Sonnets to the Fairest Coelia*), Robert Tofte (1597, *Laura*) and the mysterious E. C. (1595, *Sonnets*). It was also important to protect the identity, and therefore the honour, of the beloved; the identities of Petrarch’s Laura or of Mr W.H. to whom Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* (1609) were dedicated are not known to this day, and poet E.C. states this clearly in his Letter to the Reader:

Both louing friends, [...] I tooke in hande my pen to finish an idle worke I had begun, at the command and seruice of a faire Dame, [...] and knowing you both to be of sufficient valour, with and honestie presumed to dedicate the same to you, not doubting but that you will vouchsafe for my sake, to maintaine the honor of so sweete a Saint.
(E.C. 1595, *Sonnets*, A3)

Even Anne Locke, author of the first known sonnet sequence in the English language (1560, *A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner*) chooses to publish it anonymously, although the sequence is religious, not amorous. Thus, on one hand, sonnet writing is seen as unworthy of a serious and virtuous writer. Yet, very soon afterwards, Petrarchan sonnet sequence reaches the frenzied summit of its popularity in England; and working within this venerable genre, three centuried old at that point, continues

¹³ All references to Spenser’s poems come from 1999, *The Shorter Poems*.

to be viewed as the only way for an aspiring poet to prove his mettle, assert his originality and make his name. Poets and readers cared passionately about their sonnet sequences: Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* was circulated in manuscript for 10 years before it was published; most poets made sure they published their sequences, and under their own names too; Michael Drayton relentlessly revised his sequence, *Idea* (1593), over five different editions (1594, 1599, 1602, 1603, 1619)¹⁴—presumably in order to ensure that it was perfect when the time came for him to leave it to the judgment of posterity; and despite all the fun-poking in his plays, *Shakespeares Sonnets* is one of three works Shakespeare cared about enough to publish in his lifetime.

The constant satirizing of the genre may have been related to the contempt that early modern writers felt for a poetics praising and addressing women, creatures whom they were supposed to adore, but also viewed as inferior. Sonneteers write dedicatory sonnets to women which can be interpreted as jibes. Michael Drayton's sonnet to Lady Anne Harrington, for instance, reads like the parody of a laudatory sonnet: it suggests that there is nothing about the lady to praise even as it employs the Petrarchan convention of *sobramar*, love that surpasses speech (Braden 2000, p. 27):

What should commend your modesty and wit,
 [...] standeth dumbe, in much admiring it,
 And where it should begin, it there is ended.
 (Drayton 1599, *Idea*, 58:9–12)

With an equal dose of dark humour, Samuel Daniel proposes that writing a sonnet sequence to his lady could be seen as a way of renouncing ambitions, and her praise a modest, unassuming aim:

None other fame myne vnambitious Muse
 Affected euer but t' eternize thee.
 (Daniel 1965, *Delia*, 1592, 48:1–2)

Romances show signs of similar tension. On one hand, the works are popular and will bring money; on the other, their audiences are mostly female, and therefore intrinsically unworthy. Like the romances, sonnet sequences are also works ostensibly addressed to ladies, yet written with the presence of the male reader and/or observer in mind; the tension is palpable in the works and makes for a lot of fun; it is ubiquitous enough to be considered a convention of all renaissance genres treating love and courtship. Samuel Daniel and Michael Drayton, in their sonnet sequences *Delia* (1592) and *Idea* (1593, and then five revised editions 1594–1619) invite the female reader to participate in her own mortification as a way of being entertained. The introductions to George Pettie's *A Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure* (1576), his translation of Stefano Guazzo's *Civile Conversation*, John Lyly's *Euphues* (1579 and 1581) and Barnaby Rich's *Rich His Farewell to Militarie Profession* (1581) are

¹⁴ Drayton (1593), *Idea*; Drayton (1594), *Ideas Mirroure*; Drayton (1599), *England's Heroical Epistles. Newly enlarged. With Idea*; Drayton (1602), *Englands Heroicall Epistles. Newly corrected. With Idea*; Drayton (1603), *The Barron's Wars*, Drayton (1619), *Poems: by Michael Drayton Esquire*.

all works that are addressed to women and profess a service to them, yet conceal a premise that the text must be suited to the inferior female intelligence, and assert male potency (Fleming 1993, esp. p. 160):

Euphues had rather lye shut in a Ladyes casket, than open in a Schollers studie.
(Lyly 1580, "To the Ladies and Gentlewomen of England")

Therefore now farewell *Minerva*, welcome *Venus*; farewell *Aristotle*, welcome *Ovid*; farewell *Muses*, welcome maydens, farewell learning, welcome Ladies
(Pettie 1585, *A Petite Palace Pettie His Pleasure*)

Pardon me I pray you, I mistooke you then, for as soone as you began to speake of the Conversation of women: I thought you had mnt one of those with whom men trie their manhood withal in amorous incouters.
(Guazzo 1586, *Civil Conversatione*)

Similar processes govern the production of early novels. Alexander Pope satirizes *Atalantis*, a novel by female novelist Delarivier Manley (1709, *Secret memoirs [...] from the new Atalantis, an island in the Mediteranean [sic]*), in his mock-heroic poem *The Rape of the Lock* (1714). Several major novels of the eighteenth century written by men, Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722, notably published anonymously), Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748), and Fielding's hilarious *Shamela* (1741, a satire of Richardson's *Pamela*), favour first-person narration about love written in a woman's voice. As these were published significantly later than Delarivier Manley's novel and use the same form, and as the male writers were acquainted enough with Manley's work to satirize it, there is enough room to speculate on the question of influence; but a detailed examination of this question would exceed the scope of this article. What we do learn is that men writers do not always practice what they preach; love has unbeatable storytelling potential, and ridiculing what one practices adds complexity to the meta-fictional aspects of self-representation in the early English novel. By late seventeenth century, the cavalier attitude to love is so prevalent that even John Bunyan elides sexual and allegorical discovery in his *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), a serious work aimed expressly at preventing sin and providing moral upbringing:

Nor let my figure, or similitude
Put thee into a laughter or a feud;
Leave this for Boys and Fools; but as for thee
Do thou the substance of my matter see.
Put by the Curtains, look within my Vail;
Turn up my Metaphors, and do not fail:
There, if thou seekest them, such things to find,
As will be helpful to another mind.
(Bunyan 1678, *The pilgrim's progress [...]*, ultimate folio)

In the twenty-first century, we are at a point in our cultural history when scientific knowledge is more advanced; yet societal attitudes to love and its heightened mental states are no less complex. It is at this time that a case could be made for the return to Platonic thought on the *enthousiasmos* of love and creation, a rehabilitation of the philosophical importance of heightened emotional states such as arousal desire or longing, for all the processes of creative endeavour.

After all, the very notion of philosophy is based on notions of love and desire: as Plato reminds, *philosophy* does not mean wisdom—because only the gods can be wise—but rather *love* of wisdom (*Phaedrus* 278d-f), a continuing human *desire* to establish an ever deeper relation with the nature of reality (Benso 2005). In *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, Emmanuel Levinas turns this on its head and redefines philosophy as the “wisdom of love”, suggesting that to perform its act of love, philosophy “is called upon to conceive ambivalence” (Levinas 1981, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, p. 162). These concepts are supposed to be opposed, but they are in fact two sides of the same coin of the passionate pursuit of understanding: any way we look at it, desire and ambivalence both have a place in any thought worth its salt. It is therefore possible to apply the Platonic concept of love madness to that most challenging of relationships: the relationship of thought and verbal expression. As we face the dialectic of attempt and insecurity, clarity and embarrassment, want and concealment, and live our writing lives within the cycles of physical, emotional, philosophical and intellectual emergence and suppression, it is then that we must draw on Plato's *enthousiasmos* yet again.

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Quaint Knowledge: A “Body-Mind” Pattern Across Shakespeare’s Career

Laurie Johnson

Despite the impression that one gets from reading Pauline Kiernan’s *Filthy Shakespeare* (2006), it is fair to say that Shakespeare’s plays are not often explicitly obscene. In her introductory essay, in fact, Kiernan is eager to argue this same point, in explaining how his many filthy puns work: “perhaps more than anything else, Shakespeare uses puns because, quite simply, they are more entertaining than using the real word.” (Kiernan 2006, p. 31). Nowhere in Shakespeare do we find any explicit use of such noxious terms as “cunt” or “fuck.” Yet he was clearly no prude, especially with his puns. One finds enough references to “constables,” “continents,” “countesses,” and “country matters” to leave us in no doubt about the widespread use of such puns on “cunt,” and of course the French lesson in *Henry V* relies on the French term “*coun*” directly for its humorous effect. Yet Kiernan may have been so earnest in searching for puns that when an otherwise unambiguous term reveals itself, she still sees it as a pun, and seeks to uncover what she calls “the underlying word.” (Kiernan 2006, p. 36). The word “quaint” may be one such term, which Kiernan perceives as having “elements that sound like” the word “cunt”, and so she concludes that the term must be a pun. (Kiernan 2006, p. 36). A glance at the *Oxford English Dictionary* tells us, however, that the noun “quaint,” for at least around three hundred years, was unambiguously a synonym for “the female external genitals,” although it became rarer in this form after the late sixteenth century, and is now all but obsolete.¹ Certainly, in 1598, John Florio, who was Shakespeare’s language instructor for a time, is unambiguous in his *Worlde of Words*, using an explicit reference to “A womans quaint or priuities,”² but by the middle of the twentieth century, the term seems to have become so obscured with time as to have been missed altogether by Eric Partridge in his otherwise replete catalogue of

¹ See “quaint, n.1” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

² Florio is cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. An excellent summary of further contemporary examples is provided in Williams (1994), p. 1125.

L. Johnson (✉)

Public Memory Research Centre, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Australia
e-mail: laurence.johnson@usq.edu.au

Shakespeare's sexualised terms in *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, compiled in 1947. (Partridge 1968). Frankie Rubinstein and Gordon Williams have in separate volumes more recently corrected Partridge's oversight, cataloguing plenty of examples of the sexualised puns based on "quaint" in Shakespeare and his contemporaries (Williams 1994; Rubinstein 1989).

Yet Kiernan is correct with respect to Shakespeare's pun on the word "quaint" in so far as Shakespeare invariably uses the word only in its adjectival form (or "quaintly" as an adverb). If the audience is cued to hear "quaint" in its sexual form in Shakespeare, then, it must be by association: the vulgar noun form is absent but the innocent adjectival form, meaning simply "clever" or "decorative," might cue the vulgar homonym in the listener's ear where there is a lexical environment in which the bawdy pun might be expected. Such concern for the vulgar or non-vulgar uses of "quaint" serves as a pre-text for a broader set of observations that will be offered here in relation to the verb "to acquaint." This essay will examine Shakespeare's use of the verb throughout his career, from which it will be shown that a discernible pattern emerges: the verb begins its semantic life in the plays as the somewhat more sophisticated version of a *double entendre* on the verb "to know"—*knowing*, that is, in the Biblical sense—which Shakespeare was known to employ when occasion demanded; but by the latter stages of his career, use of the verb "to acquaint" is deliberately stripped of any sexual connotations. Importantly, the pattern surrounding the use of the verb form in the first half of Shakespeare's career also reveals a gender bias: if the acquaintance is being made with a male or any neutral object, the surrounding language will give the audience or reader no grounds to presume that a sexual pun is in play; if, on the other hand, the acquaintance is male to female or male to a gendered object, the surrounding language is routinely sexualised, suggesting that a *double entendre* is being activated in the verb. I focus as much on the surrounding language in these calculations as on the "quaint" words because I contend that this is a viable method by which to determine potential nuances in the use of any word. Unlike Kiernan, whose work involves hunting down filthy puns in every use of dozens of words with potentially bawdy meanings, I acknowledge that Shakespeare's use of language was not routinely bawdy throughout, but the plays do give their audiences cues with which to listen for multiple meanings.

Etymologically, the noun form and the adjectival forms of "quaint" are unrelated. Derived from Anglo-Norman roots,³ the adjectival and adverbial forms predate the noun form, which is likely to have emerged in English as a corruption of or euphemism for the Middle English "cunte."⁴ Yet this noun formation also predates Shakespeare's career in the London theatres by at least three centuries, so it is to be assumed that by the 1590s the potential for punning on "quaint" will have been very familiar to Shakespeare's audiences. Into this semantic mix we can also throw the observation that from around the fifteenth century onwards, "quaint" also acquired a verb form, interchangeable with "acquaint," which is linked to the sense in which

³ See "quaint, adj., adv., and n.2" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

⁴ See "cunt, n." and "quaint, n.1" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

the adjectival form, meaning “clever,” had been derived from the Latin *cognitus*.⁵ To the early modern ear, then, “quaint” could signify equally as a vulgar noun form, an innocent adjectival or adverbial form meaning “clever” or “decorative,” and as an innocent verb form meaning the acquisition of knowledge about a subject. Notably, Shakespeare never uses the word “quaint” in either the noun or verb forms: for the latter, he uses “acquaint.” That he does not use the vulgar form explicitly does not mean that we should disregard the prospect that an early modern audience might have expected the adjectival “quaint,” when spoken in the context of an entertainment at The Globe or at The Theatre, for example, to invoke the vulgar sense of the word at least via some form of pun. Shakespeare’s avoidance of explicit vulgar forms thus generates tension for the audience, I suggest, in their expectation that the use of sexually charged puns might normally ensue. Certainly, Rubinstein acknowledges this tension in the examples offered for uses of both “quaint” and “acquaint” in *A Dictionary of Shakespeare’s Puns and Their Significance*, many of which will be cited in this essay. This essay will provide a more detailed examination of all uses of these terms in Shakespeare’s plays, to demonstrate the presence of a pattern, marked also by a significant shift around the middle of his career, at the turn of the seventeenth century.

That a pattern of this kind might be present in Shakespeare’s work across the span of his career is worth noting for more than its curiosity value. One of the implications of the pattern that we shall be identifying is in the extent to which we add a richer level of detail to studies of the way in which cultural formations organised gender differences and power structures in Elizabethan England. An invaluable predecessor to the present work is Mark Breitenberg’s *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (1996) in which the author explains that the title phrase is redundant since one of the things that made men anxious in early modern society was just that: being men. As I have argued elsewhere, in addition to this title phrase being redundant, it is also anachronistic to the extent that the word “anxiety” and its related forms did not in fact come into regular use until the second decade of the seventeenth century. (Johnson 2009, pp. 149–150). Shakespeare’s career, in particular, was all but over by the time the word came into regular use, and “anxiety” is not found in any of his writings as a result. Yet Shakespeare’s work is replete with demonstrations of the troubling sense that mind and body may be separable, and that the separation of the two nevertheless manifests itself in a distress of the mind that is felt physically: this is what “anxiety,” when it is eventually taken up in English, comes to name. (Johnson 2009, pp. 152–153). Any history of early modern anxiety must therefore account for this possibility that the word emerges in English as part of the broader shift from bodily knowledge to knowledge that is separate from but contained within the body; I call this shift the early modern “body-mind.” When Rene Descartes’ *Meditations on First Philosophy* was published in 1641, then, an idea that body and mind might be separate had already been gaining some momentum for several decades. Yet we should not read Shakespeare as an early Cartesian, as will be discussed later in this essay. The language of the mind was at the end of

⁵ See both “quaint, v.1” and “quaint, adj., adv., and n.2” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

the sixteenth century still very much an expression of a language of the body, and Shakespeare's work should be read accordingly in the first instance. Nevertheless, as this essay will argue, a change in the way the playwright uses the verb "to acquaint" and related terms signals a shift in his work from a gendered link between body and knowledge—an expression of what Breitenberg calls anxious masculinity in Elizabethan culture—to the refusal to assign knowledge to bodily sources.

We shall begin, then, by identifying patterns in the distribution of "quaint" and "acquaint" in Shakespeare's works. A search of the Open Source Shakespeare Concordance reveals that variations on the words "quaint" and "acquaint" appear quite frequently: 118 examples can be found throughout the plays and poems, though only seven of these are in the poems, two in *Rape of Lucrece* and five in the Sonnets.⁶ Only seventeen out of these 118 examples are of the words "quaint" and "quaintly," and in all cases that the word "quaint" is used, it is in the adjectival form rather than the explicitly vulgar noun form. Although the number is small, we might still look to all seventeen examples to see if a pattern can be discerned. The first thing I would note is that the vast majority of the "quaint" words in Shakespeare are found in plays from the first half of his career, that is, up to 1600: only the one example in *Hamlet* and two in *The Tempest* are identifiable in plays normally attributed to the second half of his career according to standard chronologies of the plays.⁷ Yet I will add here that growing support is developing for the contention that *Hamlet* was in production by 1599, as outlined for example in James Shapiro's *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599* (Shapiro 2005, pp. 284–320). I wholeheartedly agree with this position, which, if it is true, means that only two references to "quaint" words—both in *The Tempest*—might be confidently dated to after 1600, and then it is late in Shakespeare's career. One of these two references is provided in a stage direction: "Ariel, like a harpy, claps his wings upon the table and, with a quaint device, the banquet vanishes" (3.3.52sd).⁸ Only one of these post-1600 examples of "quaint" would thus have been spoken in performance: the reference is Prospero's, describing his bound spirit without any hint of innuendo, as his "quaint Ariel" (1.2.319).

Shakespeare's use of "quaint device" in *The Tempest* is perhaps most noteworthy because a significant number of precursors exist in which the same phrase is used in what is obviously a salacious sense. The phrase "quaint device" is in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (Book IV, 1596) and as Gordon Coggins has shown, it forms part of a systematic chain of sexual puns used by the poet to build to the sexually charged descriptions of the Bower of Bliss. (Coggins 1989, pp. 16–20). Robert Greene used "queint deuises" in *A Notable Discouery of Coosnage* (1591)—"coosnage" is cozenage, or cheating—to describe the many tricks employed by cony-catchers: "euery day they inuent new tricks, and such queint deuises as are secret, yet passing

⁶ Search conducted on Open Source Shakespeare. *Concordance of Shakespeare's Complete Works*. <http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/concordance>.

⁷ Except where noted otherwise, the chronology used here aligns with the date ranges provided in *The Oxford Shakespeare*, Second Edition. See Jowett et al. (2005).

⁸ References to all Shakespeare plays are to *The Oxford Shakespeare*, Second Edition.

dangerous.” (Greene 2007). Greene’s phrasing suggests he simply means cunning ruses, but the sexualised undertones may well be evident more from the nature of his subject matter, with “coosnage” regularly conflated by the early moderns with “cousinage,” a term that had been invested with carnal implications at least since the Geneva Bible (1557): “The spiritual cousinage is to be preferred to the carnal and natural” (Luke, viii.21).⁹ The 1594 translation of *Godfrey of Bulloigne* by Richard Carew refers to a “quaint device” as a hiding place for coins or small items (“penworths”) (Carew 2010, p. 77) but as Rubinstein points out, references to pouches or purses were quite frequently used to refer to the scrotum or testicles, (Rubinstein 1989, p. 193)¹⁰ and in George Chapman’s *All Fools* (1605), the Ghost describes how a “quaint device” or ruse was used to enable Gratiana to lodge with Rinaldo. (Chapman 1895, p. 92). Spenser had previously used the same phrase in *Prosopopoia, or Mother Hubberds Tale* (1591) when describing the attire worn by the Ape at Court—“Fashion’d with queint deuises neuer seene/In Court before”—in what is hardly worth describing as any kind of innuendo (Spenser 1996, lines 673–674), but by 1596, when he published Book IV of *The Faerie Queene*, he seems to have been prepared to follow Greene and Carew in giving to “quaint device” a sexual meaning, and indeed he systematises the potential for innuendo throughout his poem. By Chapman’s time, the phrase is explicitly invested with sexual overtones after the manner of Spenser. In contrast, the use of a “quaint device” within the stage direction in *The Tempest* could hardly be seen as sexualised, and the same is true of “quaint Ariel.”

If Shakespeare’s use of “quaint device” in a late play lacks the potential for innuendo that had been evident in Spenser and Chapman, among others, there is evidence to suggest that his much earlier uses of the adjectival “quaint” and adverbial “quaintly” were designed to bring a potentially salacious reading into play, although not in every case. If we look to these earlier uses of “quaint” forms, we nevertheless discern a pattern based on the presence or absence of a female figure as either interlocutor or subject: in *Taming of the Shrew*, the “amorous Licio” is also described as a “quaint musician” (3.3.20);¹¹ references to loosely fitting gowns in both *Shrew* (4.3.102) and *Merry Wives of Windsor* (4.6.40) use “quaint” in terms suggestive either of physical exposure or of consent; Portia, in *Merchant of Venice*, describes the “quaint lies” with which she is planning to conceal her womanhood (3.4.69); and I argue that Margaret’s description of the gown worn by the Duchess of Milan in *Much Ado About Nothing*, while seeming to use “quaint” to mean fashionable—“set with pearls, down sleeves, side sleeves, and skirts, round underborne with a bluish tinsel. But for a fine, quaint, graceful and excellent fashion” (3.4.19–21)—is quite suggestive. Imagine the same phrase without the comma after “fine” and the reader will understand what I mean. In these five cases, the subject or object of the statement is female. In nine of the remaining ten instances of the use

⁹ See “cousinage, n.1c” in The Oxford English Dictionary.

¹⁰ We shall later consider Shakespeare’s use of the word “purse” as a direct reference to the scrotum.

¹¹ See also the discussion of the sexual nature of Katherine’s lute lessons in Wallace (2013).

of the adjectival or adverbial form in the earlier plays, a male refers either to a non-human object or to another male, and no sexual undertones are discernible. Thus, for example, Henry's "homely swain" speech in *3Henry VI* refers to carving out the dials of time "quaintly, point by point" (2.5.24), meaning the list which follows is in minute detail; and Polonius advises Reynaldo to speak of Laertes' faults "so quaintly/That they may seem the taints of liberty" (*Hamlet*, 2.1.32–33), in which he means that these descriptions of his faults should have no hint of meanness in them. The pattern is therefore clear: where a female is involved, any use of the adjectival form of "quaint" in Shakespeare's plays seems to carry a sexual connotation; without the female, the sexual connotation disappears. The one exception seems to be Titania's reference to "quaint mazes" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2.1.99) among the list of things of "winter cheer" to which mortals are attached. The mazes are hardly sexualised, although an argument could be made that everything in Titania's description of the effects of Oberon's "brawls" on the world of mortals is sexualised by default: her references to "continents" (92, a play on "cunt"), "ox" (93, which Rubinstein informs us is a regular term for a castrated male, Rubinstein 1989, pp. 183 and 220), and the "fold" that "stands empty" (96, meaning the labia or the scrotum, Rubinstein, 1989, pp. 287, 230 and 300), for example, providing numerous precursory hints that her descriptions of the mortal world are also to Oberon's lack of sexual potency.

Presuming that Titania's speech can be included in the examples of sexualised uses of the adjectival or adverbial forms of "quaint," then the pattern is quite precise: six examples of a sexualised use of the term, all of which involve a female subject or object; nine early and two late examples of non-sexualised uses, where no female is involved. Yet the numbers are small and any pattern may therefore be coincidental. To get a better feel for any potential to trace a pattern in a much larger number set, but which remains relevant to the question of whether or not puns are being activated in relation to the vulgar form for "quaint," I propose that we look to the far more abundant uses of the verb "to acquaint" and the noun form "acquaintance" in Shakespeare's writings. Using conventional dating of the plays, 48 references to the verb and its variant forms occur in the plays prior to 1600, with a further seven in the poems, and 50 references appear in the plays that fill out the remainder of his career.¹² Unlike the adjectival "quaint," which seems to vanish after 1600 and only makes a late return in *The Tempest*, the verb "to acquaint" and related forms remain as abundant in Shakespeare's work after 1600 as they were beforehand. Yet the question that remains is whether we might discern any sexual connotation in the use of these lexical forms. Sexual meanings of the word "acquaint" were available if the playwright wanted to use them: as we have seen, for as long as "quaint" was synonymous with the female sexual organ, the verb form "to quaint" and participial adjectival form "quainted" were used interchangeably with "acquaint" and

¹² If we move *Hamlet* to 1599 or before, as outlined above, then the split between references to "acquaint" and its variant forms before 1600 and after becomes a neat 49 apiece. This is detailed in tabular form in Appendix 1.

“acquainted.”¹³ A reference to “acquaint” by any writer during this period thus also had the potential to convey the link to the synonymous “quaint” and the homonymic vulgar noun form.¹⁴ Shakespeare never used the form “to quaint,” but forms of “acquaint”—“acquaints,” “acquaintance,” “acquainted,” and “unacquainted”—proliferate across the span of his career. The question remains: in how many of these does it appear that a potential link to the vulgar “quaint” is being activated, whether as a pun or in even more explicit fashion?

Before examining Shakespeare’s use of the forms of “acquaint,” I want to explain what I see as a key distinction between the *subjective* form (knowing a thing) and the *intersubjective* form (knowing a person, who thus by extension also knows me). Both forms were available in English from around the fourteenth century, so it is a distinction with which Shakespeare’s audiences would have been familiar.¹⁵ Yet it is important to register the significant capacity for overlap between these two forms: to be an acquaintance implies not merely knowing *of* the other person but knowing *things about* that person. Both forms thus possess a subjective rationale, with the nature of acquaintance being determined by the extent to which a subject can say “I know” this about some other thing. Where the thing that “I know” is a person, the question must extend to the depth of the level of intimacy involved, and the intersubjectivity of the verb is activated by the potential for the other person to know something about me in return. Within the semantic universe of “acquaintance,” then, there is also already a potential for innuendo that operates on the same basis as the idea that “knowing” can be sexualised in the Biblical sense. In what follows, the distribution of subjective and intersubjective forms is mapped with a view to discerning when the sexual pun is activated. It will be shown that, as was the case with “quaint,” a clear pattern based on gender can be observed, but at the same time that “quaint” disappears from Shakespeare’s vocabulary, the gendered pattern evident in uses of “acquaint” also evaporates. A detailed summary, identifying all instances of the use of “acquaint,” “acquaintance,” and related variants and outlining the potential for activation of a sexual pun is presented in tabular form in Appendix 1.

A gendered pattern is evident from very early in Shakespeare’s career as a playwright: in *Richard III* and *The Comedy of Errors*, written soon after the success of the *Henry VI* plays, (Thomas 1988, p. 187) we find examples. In *Richard III*, the Lord Mayor advises Gloucester that he will “acquaint our duteous citizens/With all your just proceedings” (3.5.63–64), suggesting transmission of facts alone, so it can be classified as subjective. Yet when Elizabeth is involved in dialogues with Gloucester the subject of marriage and courtship leads to fury and innuendo: during their bitter exchange in Act 1, Scene 3, she rebuffs, “I will acquaint his majesty/Of those gross taunts that oft I have endured./I had rather be a country servant-maid/Than a great queen,” (105–108), with the more obvious “country servant-maid”

¹³ See “quaint, v.1” in The Oxford English Dictionary.

¹⁴ Indeed, the entry for “ACQUAINT(ANCE)” in *A Dictionary of Shakespeare’s Puns and Their Significance* simply reads “See QUAIN(T).” Rubinstein (1989), p. 5.

¹⁵ See “acquaintance” in The Oxford English Dictionary.

clarifying for listeners any subtler pun on “acquaint”. While Rubinstein does not cite this precise example, the use of “country” as a synonym for base or bestial practices is well documented, (Rubinstein 1989, p. 61) and its association with the term “servant-maid” here speaks to the level to which Elizabeth is willing to descend—albeit in an ironic mode—in order to be beyond Gloucester’s vile taunting. Later, Richard seeks her advice on wooing the Duchess because he may learn from her, “As one being best acquainted with her humour” (4.4.255), and if it is not clear that he means awareness of the daughter’s sexual proclivities, in the speech that follows, he uses “acquaint” once more, in reference to making her familiar with the “sweet silent hours of marriage joys” (273.43). Rubinstein cites this example directly as one in which “acquaint” signifies as carnal knowledge. (Rubenstein 1989, p. 85). In *Comedy of Errors*, Luciana chides Antipholus of Syracuse for his failings as a husband, and asks in relation to his so-called “wife,” “what need she be acquainted?” (3.2.15). This could be heard as, “what, need she be acquainted... with your disloyal heart,” but in the context of Luciana referring to him not being “truant with your bed” (17), it could also be understood in a more sexually aggressive sense, thus: “what she needs is to be acquainted (bedded)”.

In *Titus Andronicus*, which has been dated to 1592, situating it alongside *Richard III*, similar aggressiveness is invoked as Aaron persuades Chiron and Demetrius to pursue “rape and villainy” (2.1.117) by killing Bassianus and serving their “lust” with “Lavinia’s treasury” (132), a course of action with which he also intends to “acquaint” Tamora, “with all what we intend” (123)—given knowledge of Aaron’s sexual liaison with Tamora, I suggest that his words can be potentially read as a claim to bragging rights regarding the Empress rather than as simply a passing word about any plan to inform her of the men’s intentions.¹⁶ Even though the word in its most immediate context is apparently subjective, then, the surrounding text activates the sexually implicit play on the nature of Aaron’s existing level of “acquaintance” with Tamora. Rather than claim that the pun is obvious, though, on the basis perhaps that it represents a male-to-female intersubjective use of the verb “to acquaint,” it is important that we acknowledge the potential for the verb to be heard as it appears to be delivered—in the subjective form. The thing to remember here is that the surrounding text seems to invite the activation of a pun, as was also the case with both examples we considered in the preceding paragraph, but in order for the pun to be activated the verb must be allowed to slip from the subjective to the intersubjective form. The audience must decide for itself whether it allows this slippage to take place in the process of listening for puns or any other rhetorical devices. Another case of potential slippage of this kind is to be found in *Comedy of Errors*, when the Courtezan addresses the audience at the end of Act 4, Scene 3: describing the error in which Dromio of Syracuse prevented Antipholus of Ephesus from enter-

¹⁶ Stanley Wells discusses the slippage in this scene from romantic love to “sexual desire at its most brutal” and finds the scene echoed in Andrew Marvell’s “To his Coy Mistress.” Wells does not discuss Shakespeare’s use of “acquaint” here, but we may note Marvell’s use of the phrase “quaint honour” to refer to the subject’s virginity in a passage seemingly inspired by this scene. Wells (2010), p. 121.

ing his own property, the Courtezan recounts that the way was barred to Antipholus by “his wife, acquainted with his fits” (4.3.90). This could be seen as subjective, since the wife is described as acquainted with a phenomenon, but since the fits are also being described here as typical of the man, I suggest that the Courtezan is drawing a conclusion about Antipholus from his own story: his capacity for rage is likely to be as well-known behind closed doors as it is in public, so the fits with which his wife is “acquainted” may be of a particularly spousal nature, suggesting a slippage, that is, to the intersubjective.

While a potential for slippage remains ever present thereafter, Shakespeare seems to have been mindful of the need in other plays of the period to provide clearer contextual cues within the vicinity of “acquaint” and “acquainted” (and variant forms) to signal the presence of any potential for innuendo in the term. At the beginning of *Shrew*,¹⁷ for example, Tranio speaks of seeking “acquaintance” with the fine arts in his advice to Lucentio:

Tranio
 Balk logic with acquaintance that you have,
 And practise rhetoric in your common talk.
 Music and poesy use to quicken you;
 The mathematics and the metaphysics (1.1.34–37).

Within this lexical context, “acquaintance” provides for no slippage toward vulgarity in the intersubjective form. Later, the Pedant tells Tranio how Lucentio had “acquainted” him with his love for Bianca, which amounts to a status update rather than a catalogue of any sexual matters (4.4.25)—the subject not being Bianca, but Lucentio’s love, in a dialogue between two men. Yet Petruccio lacks any subtlety when he tells Kate of his cousin Ferdinand, “One, Kate, that you must kiss and be acquainted with” (4.1.138). The reader might certainly note that the surrounding text is Petruccio’s exaggerated series of attacks on his servants—“Take that, and mend the plucking of the other” (133); “You whoreson villain” (141); “whoreson, beetle-headed, flap-eared knave” (143); and so on—but the tirade ends with Petruccio fixing Kate’s sights on “thy bridal chamber” (164), suggesting to the audience that the whole of his tirade has been oriented toward this carnal purpose even though his tirade was fixated on the “overroasted flesh” (161) he claimed to have been served. In such cases, context is everything in guiding our understanding of how “acquaintance”—and, for that matter, “whoreson,” “plucking,” “mutton,” and more—are likely to have been heard by the audience.

In a similar vein, in *Romeo and Juliet*, when Romeo begs Friar Laurence for news of the Prince’s decision regarding his fate by asking “What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand” (3.3.5), he is clearly invoking no form of sexual innuendo, but when Capulet asks his wife to go to Juliet and “acquaint her here of my son

¹⁷ While the editors of *The Oxford Shakespeare*, Second Edition, list *Taming of the Shrew* as Shakespeare’s second play, dated to 1590–1591, I concur with Roslyn Lander Knutson’s reasoning that the early *Taming of a Shrew* is unlikely to be the same play that appeared in Quarto in 1594, in which the “shrew” is identified in the title by the definite article. For this reason, I also date *Shrew* to 1593–1594. See Knutson (1991), p. 71.

Paris' love" (3.4.16) there is a hint of a bodily acquaintance, least of all by virtue of the fact that this "acquaintance" will involve the order that she is to be married in three days' time. This is not the same type of acquaintance with love that the Pedant had conveyed to Tranio in *Shrew*, since it is conveyed within the context of a command for the daughter to marry, and the knowledge that marriage is focused heavily on the question of whether the daughter has had any prior sexual activity: indeed, Capulet is quick to clarify that the kind of acquaintance to which he refers includes an order for his wife to "Prepare" Juliet for the wedding (32)—early modern wedding preparations routinely called for a virginity test to be performed on the bride-to-be, a practice linked directly with Juliet's wedding preparations by Caroline Bicks and identified in numerous other plays of the early modern period by Lisa Hopkins (Bicks 2003, pp. 60–62; Hopkins 2002, pp. 18–24). Contrary to these plays activating a pun on the basis of the gender distinction, the contemporary *Love's Labour's Lost* provides a clear example of being acquainted without any sexual charge, implicit or explicit, and it is male-to-male: as Armado seeks advice from Holofernes on the entertainments to be performed at the King's command, with no sexual interplay whatsoever, he explains that this royal dictate is the reason "I have acquainted you withal" (5.1.109–110) of the matter. In the plays from around 1594 to 1595—*Comedy, Romeo and Juliet*, and *Love's Labour's Lost* in particular—the pattern is beginning to emerge with greater insistence in Shakespeare's work, even though it requires the slippage from the neutral subjective to a gendered intersubjective form in many cases for the pun to be activated.

If we wanted to get a clearer sense that this pattern signifies a trajectory in Shakespeare's work, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, from 1597 to 1598, provides arguably the best example of cues being used to signal a distinction between the gendered and neutral intersubjective forms, and it follows soon after the cluster of examples we considered from 1594 to 1595. Four examples from the play pertain directly to situations in which a man desires a sexual encounter: Slender's agreement to marry Anne is qualified by the fact that in spite of there being no love between them from the beginning, "better acquaintance, when we are married" (1.1.229–230) may change their affections; Evans asks Simple to convey a letter to Mistress Quickly on account of her "acquaintance with Mistress Anne Page. And the letter is to desire and require her to solicit your master's desires" (1.2.7–9); Mistress Page and Mistress Ford also reject Falstaff's letters, with Page declaring "I'll entertain myself like one that I am not acquainted withal" (2.1.82–83), clarifying this by adding "unless he know some strain in me that I know not myself, he would never have boarded me in this fury" (84–85), and Ford says in none too subtle fashion, "'Boarding' call you it? I'll be sure to keep him above deck" (86–87). Page concurs: "So will I. If he come under my hatches, I'll never to sea again" (88–89). In the next scene, Falstaff is perhaps a little more direct, confiding in Mistress Quickly that the "attraction of my good parts" necessitates her involvement in his seductions, and he asks if the two women have "acquainted each other how they love me" (2.2.107). In each of these examples, "acquaintance" may seem to mean only acquisition of knowledge about another person but the context in which the word appears surely marks it as a potential contribution to the sequence of sexualised words fleshing out the dialogue.

As a point of direct contrast, the same play contains five examples of men acquainting other men with information or being acquainted with each other, with no sense of any sexual byplay, as when Bardolph informs Falstaff that “one Master Brooke below would fain speak with you and be acquainted with you” (2.2.140–142) and Falstaff telling the same Brooke (really, it is Ford in disguise) that he desires “more acquaintance of you” (2.2.158–159), by which he means that more discourse will involve more drinks that Brooke will buy. Yet there is the potential for slippage when Ford, disguised as Brooke, tells Falstaff, “I am blessed in your acquaintance” (2.2.259)—it follows Falstaff’s bragging that he will be bedding Mistress Ford that night, for which the audience may take Ford’s words to mean the news of a sexual conquest, and his “blessing” in having been told of it directly by Falstaff. While this last example is a male to male acquaintance, the context situates it within a discourse about sexual conquest, thus creating the potential for the listener to activate the pun on “acquaintance.”¹⁸

What I think we are seeing in *Merry Wives of Windsor* is a more deliberate construction of a lexical context within which to cue the audience to activate the pun, contrasted with clearer statements of a context in which “acquaintance” can be associated solely with knowledge of a person or thing in the subjective sense. This sense of deliberateness is strengthened in *Much Ado About Nothing*, from 1598 to 1599. There is a sexualised use of “acquaintance” used by Leonato to describe Margaret’s dalliance with Borachio—described as “this lewd fellow”—toward the end of the play (5.1.322). Yet Leonato learns earlier in the play of Don Pedro’s affections for Hero and asks Antonio to “acquaint my daughter withal” of the news (1.2.19), and to make clear what he means by this, he bids Antonio further, “Go you and tell her of it” (21), as if to affirm that the manner of acquaintance involved will only be verbal. A similar point of clarification can be found later in the play, when Hero informs Ursula that she was entreated to inform Beatrice of Benedick’s affections by Don Pedro and Claudio: “They did entreat me to acquaint her of it” (3.1.40), but she had implored them “never to let Beatrice know of it” (43). Ursula’s immediate protestation that Benedick surely deserves “as full as fortunate a bed/As ever Beatrice shall couch upon” (45–46) may seem to provide the sexual context within which to activate the pun on the earlier use of “acquaint,” but I would counter this by arguing that the sexual context comes too late: Hero had already clarified the use of “acquaint” with the phrase “know of it,” which consigns her actions to the subjective form. It is worth noting at this point that here is an example of a female speaking about the affections of a man and yet providing no clear opportunity for the audience to activate the pun on the verb “to acquaint” even when the female speaker is invited by her interlocutor to resort to a discussion about a marriage bed (which, we have seen, is a strong cue for the activation of the sexual pun). Hero

¹⁸ For a detailed discussion of the sexual chase in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, see Wells (2010), pp. 109–114. Wells cites much of the same dialogue, including instances of “acquaintance,” but without identifying this term as one of the potentially sexualised terms. Nevertheless, his reading of Falstaff’s sense of conquest as he departs for his dalliance lends weight to the reading of this male-to-male dialogue as an example of bawdy.

refuses to be drawn into the tangent: “I know he doth deserve/As much as may be yielded to a man” (47–48) but Beatrice is made “Of prouder stuff” (50) and “cannot love,/Nor take no shape nor project of affection” (54–55). This example marks the start of a brief transitional phase in the playwright’s career, in which the earlier pattern is abandoned.

Further evidence of this shift can be found in *As You Like It*, from around 1600, in which clear contrast is created between four overtly sexualised examples and two obviously neutral examples of “acquaint.” Potentially sexual uses include: Jaques asks Orlando if he has “not been acquainted with goldsmiths’ wives, and conned them out of rings” (3.2.265–67), “rings” being one commonly recognisable euphemism for “vulva” (Rubinstein 1989, p. 220) and “conned” belonging to the rich group of words, like “cony-catching,” that refer in loosely veiled fashion to “cunt” (Rubinstein 1989, pp. 54–55); when Jacques says that he wishes to be “better acquainted” (4.1.1) with Rosalind, although she is still in disguise, the gender transgressions driving the play render the pun acute; and Orlando and Oliver refer to the “acquaintance” made by the latter in his “wooing” of Aliena (5.2.1–8). In addition to these examples, *As You Like It* offers two neutral examples: near the beginning of the play, Charles speaks with Oliver “to acquaint you with a matter” (1.1.116–117) involving Orlando’s wish to wrestle him, a point he repeats: “I came hither to acquaint you withal” (125). Similarly, Rosalind’s remonstrations at being expelled from Frederick’s court contain no obvious sexual meanings: “If with myself I have intelligence/Or have acquaintance with mine own desires,/... Never so much as in a thought unborn/Did I offend your highness” (1.3.47–51). What is most interesting about this second example, in the light of subsequent gender transgressions involving Rosalind, is that she seems to speak here in a manner that we might up until this point have expected to only be suitable for a male to speak of “acquaintance”: her “desires” are aligned with “intelligence” and “thought” rather than with any bodily analogue. Here, then, right at the end of the period with which we have been initially concerned, there is an example of a female speaking subject using “acquaintance” in a manner that offers its audience no opportunity to activate the pun, just as Hero had done in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Yet if the playwright denied the audience any satisfaction in the activation of a pun during Act 1 in *As You Like It*, the four sexual puns to be found later in the play, surrounded as they are by a proliferation of sexual puns throughout the latter parts of the play, will have presented a satisfying counterpoint.

To summarise this survey of uses of “acquaint” and its variant forms in the first half of Shakespeare’s career, an early pattern emerges as it had with the uses of the adjectival and adverbial forms of “quaint”: when a man is acquainted with a woman, sexuality is routinely invoked; when a man is acquainted with a man or anything else, there is no sense of sexual byplay; and a woman may be acquainted with a man in a neutral sense, but there is routinely also a capacity to read the acquaintance as sexual. Only toward the end of the first half of his career do we see this pattern begin to break down. In the next section of this essay, we shall look to some examples from the second half of Shakespeare’s career—a full list of examples is offered in

Appendix 1—to see what happens to uses of “acquaint” and its variant forms at the same time that the word “quaint” all but disappears from his vocabulary, that is, beyond 1600. It will be shown that after one further play in which the potential for slippage between neutral subjective and gendered intersubjective forms of “acquaint” is explored as part of the examination of gender transgression, Shakespeare then signals an end to the use of any puns on “acquaint” in *All’s Well that Ends Well*. After 1603, “acquaint” invariably means only the acquisition of knowledge, even in its intersubjective form.

Twelfth Night explores the issue of gender transgression directly, just as *As You Like It* had done, and in accordance with this theme the four examples of “acquaintance” used in the play offer a range of complications on the pattern we have been following. Early in the play, the term is used innocently when the Captain tells Viola that he saw Sebastian bind himself to a mast after the ship splintered, and “hold acquaintance with the waves/So long as I could see” (1.2.15–16), but a fairly obvious sexual example follows soon after: we first meet Sir Andrew telling Maria that he desires “better acquaintance” (1.3.49–50) with her, yet Sir Toby suggestively translates her name, “Accost,” as “front her, board her, woo her, assail her” (53–54) thereby also translating “acquaintance” for the audience as a gendered intersubjective use of the term. Later in the play, however, matters of “acquaintance” are complicated no end. First, Malvolio declares that he will try to “wash off gross acquaintance,” referring explicitly to Sir Toby, once he learns (albeit mistakenly) of Olivia’s love for him (2.5.157), and from his own earlier mistake in spelling out the slang for female genitalia—“her very c’s, her u’s, and her t’s” (85)—it is already clear that this “gross acquaintance” is gross by virtue of Sir Toby’s capacity to lead him to speak unwittingly in sexualised terms. Here, the context for dialogue is male to male, but the potential activation of the pun is already signalled by Sir Toby’s vulgar influence on the conversation. Any gendered inference is generated by the earlier discussion about Maria, but this “gross acquaintance” is signalled as what we might call a secondary pun: if Malvolio is given to speak in vulgar terms in spite of himself as the result of Sir Toby’s influence on him, then the pun in “gross acquaintance” is activated by the potential for punning alone, rather than by direct reference to a specific sexual liaison or the body of a woman.

In a second complicated example, Antonio tells Orsino that Viola (at the time, in disguise as Cesario but being mistaken by Antonio for Sebastian) had used “false cunning” (5.1.82) to “face me out of his acquaintance” (84). On face value, this phrase appears to be used to mean “to deny any knowledge of me,” but in the context of gender transgressions, the audience is evidently aware that Cesario, while mistaken for Sebastian, is Viola, who in turn is played by a boy actor, the potential for slippage into the gendered intersubjective form is highlighted. In this context, Antonio’s choice of words creates a discursive universe in which “acquaintance” cannot help but be sexualised: he calls the sea “rude” (74), claims to have given his love to the boy “without retention” (77), which was well understood to mean not withholding from ejaculating,¹⁹ describes the boy’s “false cunning” (82), which

¹⁹ See “retention, n.1b” in *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

belongs to the common lexicon of puns related to female genitalia,²⁰ and complains that the boy “denied me my own purse” (86), the last word being a common pun on male genitalia. (Kiernan 2006, p. 297).²¹ If there is a slippage toward the gendered intersubjective form here, it is not strictly speaking male to female, as the theme of gender transgression spills over into the capacity for the pun to lock in the female body as the sexualised object on which the pun focuses. In *Twelfth Night*, then, we see the earlier pattern of distinguishing between subjective forms of “acquaintance” and a gendered intersubjective form that was typically male to female at first rehearsed—two examples in Act 1, which are examples of both of these forms—and then complicated by two subsequent examples wherein the gender transgression motivating much of the confusion in the plot also renders activation of the pun a complex process of deciding whether the innuendo pertains to a heterosexual or homoerotic field of meanings.

We might expect *Troilus and Cressida* to contain similar examples if only because one of the features of the play is its reconfiguration of the ideal love of the classical Troilus story in much baser terms. Yet this play, dated to 1602, avoids any potential for “acquaintance” to be understood in sexualised terms by using only two examples of subjective acquaintance; that is, spoken by men to other men: Agamemnon tells Patroclus, “we are too well acquainted with these answers” (2.3.112) and Calchas later tells Agamemnon that his service has meant the loss of all that “time, acquaintance, custom, and condition” (3.3.9) had made familiar to him, and he now comes to do service anew as one without past, “new into the world, strange, unacquainted” (12). A year or so later, though, *Othello* escalates a capacity for complication by making “acquaintance” one of the phrases in Iago’s manipulations of Othello: asking the Moor if Michael Cassio knew of his love for Desdemona, Iago tests Othello’s potential for jealousy by observing, “I did not think he had been acquainted with her” (3.3.101), and then proceeds to lead Othello to suspect Cassio of indiscretion in his dealings as go-between with Desdemona. While Iago’s use of “acquainted” might seem purely innocent, it triggers Othello to think on the extent of Cassio’s acquaintance with his wife—“O yes, and went between us very oft” (102)—before quickly recounting that Cassio had been “my counsel/In my whole course of wooing” (115–116) and thereafter his descent into murderous jealousy follows this course. Indeed, we might suspect here that this is no longer Shakespeare cueing his audience to activate a pun on “acquaintance”; rather, here he shows us how Iago cues Othello to do the same, but in a manner from which the audience is able to stand back and observe its effects.

²⁰ Both Rubinstein (1989), p. 276, and Kiernan (2006), p. 296, examine this passage in detail as an example of “cunning” as a pun on “cunt,” and both provide explanations of the many other sexualised terms offered in this passage.

²¹ Rubinstein also cites “purse” on numerous occasions as a term meaning “scrotum.” See Rubinstein (1989), pp. 11, 34, 64, 68, 78, 91, 175, 193–194, 200–201, 217, 252, 279, 324–325, 341–343.

In *All’s Well that Ends Well*, which can be dated to between 1603 and 1604,²² this phase in which Shakespeare was experimenting with the punning potential of “acquaintance” seems to come to a close. Seven instances appear in this play but none seem to me to be pointing the listener to think of baser bodily matters. On the contrary, the play seems to deliberately signal a refusal to provide the audience with any such cues. Reynaldo declares early in the play that his duty is to “acquaint” the Countess with Helen’s love for her son, but the rhetoric of her “virgin” status accompanies this news in a manner suggestive only of a ploy by Shakespeare to invoke bodily matters solely in order to reject any bawdy interpretation (1.3.114–116). Yet the most telling sign of a conscious shift in Shakespeare’s uses of the term may appear later, when the old lord Lafeu attempts to distance himself from the crimes of Paroles, even as they discuss the wedding of the unwilling Bertram to Helen, by saying “I have a desire to hold my acquaintance with thee, or rather my knowledge, that I may say in the default, ‘He is a man I know’” (2.3.226–228). If the earlier “acquaint” is associated with Helen’s virginal status so as to render any filthy reading inoperable, Lafeu’s careful self-corrections might signal to us a moment in which the playwright wishes to draw the line in the sand on “acquaintance” as a potential source for innuendo. While these two men discuss a wedding, and the groom’s open declaration that he will not consummate the vow, the expectation might be that any reference to “acquaintance” could potentially activate the sexual pun, but their bitterness toward each other provides a buffer against such punning. Nevertheless, Lafeu seems compelled to qualify his use of the word, as if mindful of its potential to be sexualised when spoken in the vicinity of discussions about marriage. Importantly, the phrase with which he qualifies his meaning—“He is a man I know”—also relies on a word that might in some other context be used as the less subtle pun on “knowing” in the Biblical sense. When said alongside “acquaintance” here, “a man I know” is instead offered in the intersubjective form in such fashion as to explicitly deny the potentially gendered meaning being invoked.

All of the examples that follow in the play adhere to this semantic dictate: later in the same scene, Bertram declares that he will “acquaint my mother with my hate” for Helena (2.3.284), which must needs be non-sexual by virtue of having referred to his mother here, and later he also asks Paroles if he may “be bold to acquaint his grace” (3.6.78) with the news of Paroles attempting to recover the lost regimental drum, which is a straightforward subjective use of the term. Even a female speaker is allowed to voice a straightforward use of the term, when the Widow proclaims herself to be well born, “Nothing acquainted with these businesses” (3.7.5): “acquainted” here could mean complicity in the conduct of the illicit affairs, but her own protestations compel Helen to swear that all of her plotting is indeed strictly honourable. Two later examples are also uncomplicated: the Second Lord Dumaine asks the Interpreter if he is not “acquainted” with Paroles (4.1.8), fearing that the latter might know his voice, the example being neutral, male to male; and the King at last demands of Bertram and Lafeu to confess how they came to be in possession

²² The editors of *The Oxford Shakespeare*, Second Edition, date the play to 1606 or 1607, but see Farley-Hills (1990), p. 78.

of Helen's ring by asking that they "know/That you are well acquainted with yourself" (5.3.107). Where "ring" might once have signified as a vulgar cue, the object has been made such a focus of the plot in this play that it is stripped of any potentially vulgar meaning in any specific example. Throughout *All's Well*, then, the earlier pattern is deliberately abandoned and, on occasions where the potential for a bawdy cue arises, particularly those involving a female object or subject, purer motives are quickly clarified. Lafeu's self-corrections thus signal this shift in the meaning of "acquaint," which thereafter in the play means "knowledge" with no bodily association to female genitalia.

This play signals the end of the use of bawdy associations of "acquaint" in Shakespeare's work. Of the 25 remaining instances of the use of any form of "acquaint" in plays spanning the remainder of his career, none invite a bawdy reading unless the reader searches for one in spite of the lack of corroboration in the surrounding dialogue. The playwright certainly does not seek to make it easy on himself in the later plays by simply avoiding any use of the term in the orbit of female characters. Eleven of these remaining instances are either spoken by females or about females. Yet we find that in *King Lear*, for example, Lear is able to advise Kent to "acquaint my daughter no further with anything" (1.5.3) with no suggestion that he means Kent is to cease engaging in sexual activity with his daughter—which could in fact be a viable bawdy reading if the surrounding text contained any more obvious salacious terms—and in *All is True*, at the end of Shakespeare's career, Queen Katherine (1.2.48) and even the uncouth Old Lady (5.1.169) speak of making the acquaintance of men but with nothing in the surrounding text to support a bawdy reading. The other examples from the second half of the playwright's career are summarised in Appendix 1, and from which it will be clear that there is a definite shift in Shakespeare's use of "acquaint" and its variant forms. We noted that the second half of his career was also marked by a distinct shift in his use of the word "quaint" in any form, marked that is by the absence of the word from any of the plays save for a return to its use in what is in all likelihood the last play Shakespeare wrote by himself.²³ I am inclined to think that this is more than a coincidence. While "quaint" is abandoned after 1600, uses of "acquaint" continue to flourish, but the potential for the pun on this latter term to be activated seems to have been systematically removed by the playwright: any textual cues for activating the pun, which are abundant in the first half of his career, are absent after a brief period (from 1599 to 1602) in which a number of plays work through carefully distinguishing between the activation of a pun on "acquaint" (by excessively loading surrounding dialogue with language that was commonly known to be vulgar) and the refusal to activate the pun (by giving to the characters one or more statements that qualify the use of the term as either subjective or non-gendered).

That we can identify such a pattern here is entirely consistent with observations made by Stanley Wells in *Shakespeare, Sex, and Love* about the reduction in sexual

²³ Certainly, the three plays contained after *The Tempest* in The Oxford Shakespeare, Second Edition, are listed as collaborations with John Fletcher. See Jowett et al. (2005), pp. 1245, 1247, and 1279.

jesting in the later part of Shakespeare’s career: “In part, the diminution in sexual jesting, and the fact that it becomes less light-hearted, is the result of changes of subject matter and of dramatic genre. Perhaps it also reflects changes in Shakespeare’s approach to life, a deepening seriousness of purpose, a dwindling of youthful delight in exuberant wordplay, even in sex itself.” (Wells 2010, p. 99). While I am not as inclined to intuit the same decline in Shakespeare’s love of life and sex, I share the reluctance by Wells to see puns everywhere in Shakespeare. When we view a potential pun in its lexical and, importantly, its dramatic context, as Wells does, we find that Shakespeare did tend to use bawdy puns more often in the first half of his career than in the latter. This is true even in the case of words that are used throughout his career: they are more likely to be used in a punning way in the earlier plays than in the later ones. Although Wells does not look at “quaint” or “acquaintance” in his book—his work is not intended as a comprehensive survey of sexual puns in the same way as those by Partridge, Rubinstein, or Williams—his sense of the diminution of Shakespeare’s interest in sexual puns in the latter half of his career gives us no reason to question the conclusions we might draw from a pattern in the use of a particular group of potentially sexualised words across the reach of the playwright’s career.

Although we cannot (and should not) guess at the playwright’s motives or intentions, these patterns do indicate that around the end of the seventeenth century, Shakespeare’s use of the terms “quaint” and “acquaint” was marked by a will to change the way gender is related to a capacity for “knowing” that is not in the Biblical sense of the term. What do I mean by this? The noun form of “quaint” was never used by Shakespeare, enabling us to isolate a pattern of use in the adjectival or adverbial forms: innuendo where a female is involved; none where no female is involved. Yet this use disappears after 1600. For a brief period at around the same time, the gendered associations of “acquaint” were also being complicated, particularly in a context of depicting gender transgressions on stage. At the end of this transitional period, in *All’s Well that Ends Well*, the full range of potential uses of “acquaint” are rehearsed, but as if to sign off once and for all on the sexualised use of the term, Shakespeare offers a range of careful qualifying statements to ensure that none may be mistaken for innuendo: Helen must be viewed as innocent; all that Lafeu “desires” is knowledge in the subjective sense; and so on. This shift tells us something about Shakespeare’s sense of the relation of body to mind, in as much as it too seems to have undergone a shift at this time. In a lexical context in which the word “quaint” can mean at once a female sexual organ, decorative, clever, and the verb for the acquisition of knowledge about someone, the capacity to think of a mind as separate from the body is no straightforward assignment. Look at the spectrum of signification along which these four potential meanings of “quaint” sit: the sexual organ signifies that which is quintessentially corporeal; the two adjectival forms slide imperceptibly between a visual quality or surface feature of an object (decoration) and a quality of mind (cleverness); and the verb form signifies a core mental process. When these meanings inhere altogether in a single word, we might sense that the shift in any direction is literal rather than metaphorical, body and mind being discrete aspects of a single term. If a playwright or poet uses the word

in any one of its potential meanings, all others are instantly in play as well. If the same writer wishes to isolate and focus on any one of these meanings, work must be done in some other facet of the text to establish the semantic force of a single meaning, hence my approach here of using the surrounding lexical cues to test for the potential activation of the pun.

The signs of a shift are already in place in the first half of Shakespeare's career: the lack of either the noun form or verb form for "quaint" amounts to evidence that a decision was made to focus only on the term in its adjectival use, ensuring that the signifying spectrum becomes reduced at both ends—"quaint" will not be used to refer to a sexual organ explicitly, nor will it be used to refer directly to any mental process. Until 1600, then, Shakespeare's use of the adjectival or adverbial forms of "quaint" works solely on the question of the *qualities* of the surface and the interior. Any connection in either direction to the female sexual organ or to the acquisition of knowledge is left to the discretion of the listener, fuelled of course by the semantic environment in which the term "quaint" is used. The listener is compelled, that is, to activate a metaphorical connection in order to re-establish the universe of meanings that is in any other context already well established. In this way, Shakespeare's use of "quaint" up until 1600 begins to erode the bedrock of established fields of meaning around the term: by forcing a listener to activate a metaphorical link, the text asserts the potential that the link being made is anything but natural, essential, or denotative. During the same time, the verb "to acquaint" is deployed in such a way as to reinforce the manoeuvre being undertaken with "quaint," by directing the listener to become aware of the same potential metaphorical links: acquaintance as sexual intimacy (particularly in female to male forms of acquaintance) in one direction, or as a form of knowledge (in male to male acquaintance as well as in the acquaintance of a man with an object) in the other. In the first half of his career, even as Shakespeare paves the way for the relationship between mind (knowledge) and body (exemplified in the sexual organs) to be understood on metaphorical rather than literal terms, the shift is nevertheless gendered.

This may explain why the complications surrounding a shift in the uses of "acquaint" are most apparent in the transitional period from 1599 to 1602 when the situational context for the use of the term involves a concern with gender transgression. It may well be that it was necessary to remove the adjectival "quaint" from circulation in order to enable the playwright greater freedom to explore the potential for "acquaint" to be considered purely in reference to different modes of knowing in the cognitive sense. Yet the gendered pattern established until 1600 needed to be worked through: the questions raised by gender transgression extended to a concern with the degree to which a capacity for knowledge was bound up in anatomy, so a series of situations are created in plays from 1599 to 1602 in which gender transgression can be used as a context for working through the separation of the two poles of "acquaintance." From 1600 onwards, then, "quaint" and its potentially ribald associations disappear, and the line drawn in the sand in *All's Well* becomes the limit of the norm in Shakespeare's later uses of the verb "to acquaint": to say that one is acquainted with something means only that one can say "I know it," as Lafeu stated the case, and nothing more. The field of knowledge that this sense of the verb

“to acquaint” conveys is also divested of any gender distinctions along the way. The lesson learned in the mire of gender transgressions from 1599 to 1602 seems to have been an awareness that the way in which one “knows” something or somebody is not contingent on a difference in physiognomy.

As an extension of the same principle, knowledge can therefore become understood as not being contingent on the body at all. The reader may sense here that a case is being made to paint Shakespeare as a Cartesian at a time when René Descartes was himself still in school.²⁴ Like Paul A. Cefalu, though, I argue that Cartesian dualism is not sufficiently fully formed in Shakespeare—Cefalu focuses mainly on *Hamlet*, but considers aspects of functionalism and dualism across a range of Renaissance texts—for us to be able to assert that the playwright is already articulating in dramatic form what Descartes was to articulate more fully through the *Meditations* of 1641. (Cefalu 2000, pp. 399–431). Cefalu’s reading of passages of *Hamlet* equips him to argue that all of Shakespeare’s plays can be read comfortably within the paradigm of Renaissance functional thought, wherein minds should be understood not as separate or wholly interior “but simply in terms of their use and contingent relationship with various physical states.” (Cefalu 2000, p. 427). His goal is to show that we cannot correct a version of the history of philosophy that proceeds directly from Aristotelian hylomorphism to Cartesian dualism simply by positioning Shakespeare as a key transitional figure mediating between the two. Not only is Shakespeare not a Cartesian, then, Cefalu takes the argument one step further to conclude that *Hamlet* provides nothing that is “suggestive of a ‘transitional’ and hence fragmented subjectivity or of a ‘nothingness’ which Hamlet finds when he gazes inward.” (Cefalu 2000, p. 428). Cefalu’s argument is aided immensely by the fact that Shakespeare is a playwright and not a philosopher, and Hamlet is but a character in one of his plays. If we use this same set of limitations as the basis for our reading of Shakespeare’s role in the history of thought, however, I think we find evidence of a contribution to the ways of thinking about subjectivity that make thought of something like the *cogito*, set apart from the body, possible.

As a playwright for the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage, Shakespeare used the lines to be delivered by actors in performance as his stock in trade. The plays need not be construed as *Meditations* when their function was entertainment. Understood in this functional manner, the plays can be shown across the course of an entire career to chart at least in some small part a pathway out of Renaissance functionalism, but it is a path for which the endpoint yet remains unclear. By this I mean that when Shakespeare was writing, he could in no way have foretold or even anticipated the philosophical purchase that others would later gain from a separation of body from mind. Yet if Shakespeare’s stock in trade was “words, words, words” (2.2.189), as Hamlet attests, then he is nevertheless extremely well positioned to understand the crucial role played by words in shaping the ways subjects imagine the world and their relationship to it. The language that Shakespeare inherited is largely one in which phenomena that we now call “mental” was filtered through the language

²⁴ For recent examples of precisely this argument, see Cavell (2003); Demastes (2005); and McGinn (2007).

of the body and its parts.²⁵ By analysing the playwright's use of a specific set of terms, belonging to a class of words that include "quaint" and "acquaint" and their common variant forms, it has been possible to tease out one example of the way in which Shakespeare's career is marked by a shift from this inherited language in which body and mind are but two ends of a spectrum of embodied terms—since the capacity to activate a pun on "acquaint" requires that the word can mean either a bodily association or the acquisition of knowledge—to one in which it becomes possible to imagine knowledge as non-gendered and, as such, potentially disembodied. This is a shift from the use of "quaint" and "acquaint" as expressions of an early modern "body-mind" to the use of "acquaint" as a term for the distinction between the human body and the knowledge that a human being may acquire in the world.

Appendix 1

Examples of uses of "acquaint" and variant forms are matched to specific plays, ordered chronologically, with usage identified as subjective or intersubjective (or both, where there is slippage as described in this paper, marked here by a "Y" in both columns), and indications of whether a female is in the orbit of the utterance and whether the utterance activates the sexual pun (based on comparison with surrounding lexical forms, as discussed in the paper).

| No. | Location of Usage | Subj. | Inter. | Female | Sexual |
|-----|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Before 1600 | | | | |
| 1 | <i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> (4.4.22) | Y | | | |
| 2 | <i>Richard III</i> (1.3.105) | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 3 | <i>Richard III</i> (3.5.63) | Y | | | |
| 4 | <i>Richard III</i> (4.4.255) | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 5 | <i>Richard III</i> (4.4.273.42) | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 6 | <i>Titus Andronicus</i> (2.1.123) | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 7 | <i>Comedy of Errors</i> (3.2.15) | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 8 | <i>Comedy of Errors</i> (4.3.90) | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 9 | <i>Taming of the Shrew</i> (1.1.34) | Y | | | |
| 10 | <i>Comedy of Errors</i> (4.1.138) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 11 | <i>Comedy of Errors</i> (4.4.25) | Y | | Y | |
| 12 | <i>Love's Labour's Lost</i> (5.1.109) | Y | | | |
| 13 | <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (3.3.5) | Y | | | |
| 14 | <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (3.4.16) | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 15 | <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (3.1.174) | | Y | | |
| 16 | <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (3.1.181) | | Y | | |
| 17 | <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (3.1.187) | | Y | | |
| 18 | <i>King John</i> (3.4.166) | Y | | | |
| 19 | <i>King John</i> (5.2.32) | Y | | | |
| 20 | <i>King John</i> (5.2.89) | Y | | | |

²⁵ See, for example, the essays contained in Hillman and Mazzio (1997).

| No. | Location of Usage | Subj. | Inter. | Female | Sexual |
|-----------------|---|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| 21 | <i>King John</i> (5.6.16) | Y | | | |
| 22 | <i>King John</i> (5.6.26) | Y | | | |
| 23 | <i>Merchant of Venice</i> (1.2.98) | Y | | Y | |
| 24 | <i>Merchant of Venice</i> (2.2.166) | | Y | | |
| 25 | <i>Merchant of Venice</i> (4.1.153) | Y | | | |
| 26 | <i>Merchant of Venice</i> (4.1.168) | Y | | Y | |
| 27 | <i>1Henry IV</i> (1.1.16) | | Y | | |
| 28 | <i>1Henry IV</i> (5.4.101) | | Y | | |
| 29 | <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (1.1.229) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 30 | <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (1.2.7) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 31 | <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (2.1.83) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 32 | <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (2.2.107) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 33 | <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (2.2.141) | | Y | | |
| 34 | <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (2.2.158) | | Y | | |
| 35 | <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (2.2.177) | | Y | | |
| 36 | <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (2.2.259) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 37 | <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (3.1.63) | | Y | | |
| 38 | <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (4.6.8) | Y | | Y | |
| 39 | <i>2Henry IV</i> (2.1.111) | Y | | | |
| 40 | <i>2Henry IV</i> (3.2.33) | | Y | | |
| 41 | <i>2Henry IV</i> (3.2.291) | | Y | | |
| 42 | <i>2Henry IV</i> (3.2.318) | | Y | | |
| 43 | <i>2Henry IV</i> (5.2.138) | Y | | | |
| 44 | <i>2Henry IV</i> (4.1.7) | Y | | | |
| 45 | <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> (1.2.19) | Y | | Y | |
| 46 | <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> (3.1.40) | Y | | Y | |
| 47 | <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> (5.1.322) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 48 | <i>Julius Caesar</i> (2.1.255) | Y | | Y | |
| 49 | <i>Hamlet</i> (1.1.153) | Y | | | |
| 1600 and beyond | | | | | |
| 50 | <i>As You Like It</i> (1.1.116) | Y | | | |
| 51 | <i>As You Like It</i> (1.1.125) | Y | | | |
| 52 | <i>As You Like It</i> (1.3.48) | Y | | Y | |
| 53 | <i>As You Like It</i> (3.2.265) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 54 | <i>As You Like It</i> (4.1.1) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 55 | <i>As You Like It</i> (5.2.1) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 56 | <i>As You Like It</i> (5.2.6) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 57 | <i>Twelfth Night</i> (1.2.15) | Y | | | |
| 58 | <i>Twelfth Night</i> (1.3.50) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 59 | <i>Twelfth Night</i> (2.5.157) | | Y | | Y |
| 60 | <i>Twelfth Night</i> (5.1.82) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 61 | <i>Troilus and Cressida</i> (2.3.112) | Y | | | |
| 62 | <i>Troilus and Cressida</i> (3.3.9) | Y | | | |
| 63 | <i>Troilus and Cressida</i> (3.3.12) | Y | | | |
| 64 | <i>Measure for Measure</i> (1.2.167) | Y | | Y | |
| 65 | <i>Measure for Measure</i> (2.1.197) | | Y | | |
| 66 | <i>Measure for Measure</i> (4.1.50) | | Y | Y | |
| 67 | <i>Measure for Measure</i> (4.3.1) | Y | | | |

| No. | Location of Usage | Subj. | Inter. | Female | Sexual |
|-----|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| 68 | <i>Othello</i> (2.1.204) | Y | | | |
| 69 | <i>Othello</i> (3.3.101) | | Y | Y | Y |
| 70 | <i>Othello</i> (4.2.195) | Y | | Y | |
| 71 | <i>Timon of Athens</i> (3.3.37) | Y | | | |
| 72 | <i>Macbeth</i> (3.1.131) | Y | | | |
| 73 | <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> (3.7.58) | Y | | | |
| 74 | <i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> (1.3.114) | Y | | Y | |
| 75 | <i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> (2.3.226) | | Y | | |
| 76 | <i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> (2.3.284) | Y | | Y | |
| 77 | <i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> (3.6.78) | Y | | | |
| 78 | <i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> (3.7.5) | Y | | Y | |
| 79 | <i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> (4.1.8) | Y | | | |
| 80 | <i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> (5.3.107) | | Y | | |
| 81 | <i>Pericles</i> (19.218) | | Y | Y | |
| 82 | <i>Pericles</i> (19.221) | Y | | Y | |
| 83 | <i>Coriolanus</i> (5.1.10) | | Y | | |
| 84 | <i>Winter's Tale</i> (2.2.51) | Y | | Y | |
| 85 | <i>Winter's Tale</i> (4.4.412) | Y | | | |
| 86 | <i>Winter's Tale</i> (4.4.681) | Y | | | |
| 87 | <i>King Lear</i> (1.2.100) | Y | | | |
| 88 | <i>King Lear</i> (1.5.3) | Y | | Y | |
| 89 | <i>King Lear</i> (17.55) ^a | Y | | | |
| 90 | <i>Cymbeline</i> (1.4.23) | | Y | | |
| 91 | <i>Cymbeline</i> (1.4.120) | | Y | | |
| 92 | <i>Cymbeline</i> (1.6.150) | Y | | Y | |
| 93 | <i>All is True</i> (1.2.48) | | Y | Y | |
| 94 | <i>All is True</i> (2.2.108) | Y | | Y | |
| 95 | <i>All is True</i> (3.1.160) | | Y | Y | |
| 96 | <i>All is True</i> (5.1.169) | | Y | Y | |
| 97 | <i>The Tempest</i> (2.2.41) | | Y | | |
| 98 | <i>The Tempest</i> (5.1.189) | | Y | Y | |

^a The *Oxford Shakespeare*, Second Edition omits this scene, but it is reproduced in The Oxford Shakespeare edition of *King Lear*, edited by Stanley Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002, p. 225)

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Part IV
Material Souls

Tears in Ancient and Early Modern Physiology: Petrus Petitus and Niels Stensen

Manfred Horstmanshoff

Introduction

What could be more human than tears?

<Natura> hominem tantum nudum et in nuda humo natali die abicit ad uagitus statim et ploratum (Plinius Maior, *NH* 7.1.2)

Man alone Nature deposits naked on the naked ground at the time of his birth immediately to wail and cry.

With these words Pliny the Elder claims the capacity for shedding tears to be one of the things that make us human. Was he right? Some pets have been reported to cry, though only by their owners. Weeping is an activity that crosses boundaries of time, nationality and culture. Tears and weeping are suitable as a research theme for a historian of mentalities, because answers to the simple questions of: who cried, when, where, why, how and to what effect, may help trace change, as well as continuity, in cultural history.

Crying is certainly not yet completely understood and is still a topic of investigation for psychologists interested in the study of emotion. Vingerhoets gives a survey of the questions that are still open and presents a theoretical framework to guide future research.¹

¹ Vingerhoets et al. (2009), pp. 439–475; a book by the same author summarizing the existing knowledge has appeared recently: Vingerhoets (2013).

Piet Schrijvers in his valedictory lecture (2001) first drew my attention to Petrus Petitus. I am grateful for his interest and his suggestions. I thank Elizabeth Craik and Ad Vingerhoets for their comments and Ineke Loots for her advice and her permission to cite her translation of *De lacrymis*. Of course the responsibility for any errors remains my own. I gratefully acknowledge the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (Wassenaar), the Internationales Kolleg Morphomata (Cologne) and the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin for the time I could spend on this project.

M. Horstmanshoff (✉)

Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society, Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands
e-mail: h.f.j.horstmanshoff@hum.leidenuniv.nl



Fig. 1 Title page of Petrus Petitus, *De Lacrymis libri tres*, Claudius Cramoisy, Paris 1661. Courtesy Leiden University Library, Special Collections, shelf mark 2321 I 24

Two Turning Points

In 1661 a monograph was published on the subject of tears. Pierre Petit, Petrus Petitus, a French medical doctor, wrote *De Lacrymis libri tres*. (Fig. 1) His book can be used to demonstrate two major seventeenth-century turning points. The first concerns the discourse on emotions: from Neo-Stoicism to a more liberal attitude towards tears, resulting in the Romanticism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the seventeenth century, a greater tolerance of the expressions of emotions started to appear in literary works, in France as well as in England (See Bayne (1981) and Lange (1996)). The discussion about the acceptability or perhaps even desirability of emotions could also be observed in scientific works. Other examples of this kind are *Les Passions de l'âme* by Descartes (1996) and *Les Caractères des Passions* by Cureau de la Chambre. The discussion continued in the following century. In the view of Herder, an important eighteenth century proponent of 'Empfindsamkeit' (sensitivity), tears formed an indication of moral virtues (empathy) and were mediators between the divine soul and actual bodily physiology (Stahnisch 2012).

The second turning point occurred within the discourse on anatomy and physiology. There was a change from ancient analogical thinking to an emphasis on empirical investigation, using observation and experiment. In this respect Petitus' work forms an interesting contrast with that of Niels Stensen/Nicolaus Stenonianus/Steno (1638–1686).

Petrus Petitus and *De Lacrymis*

Pierre Petit, Petrus Petitus, 1617–1687, was a Parisian medical doctor, philosopher, poet and polymath (*Archives Biographiques Françaises* (1991–2000), 1862, p. 39, pp. 710–711). He read medicine in Montpellier and practised for some time in Paris. However, he developed a greater interest in the arts, poetry, history and philosophy and devoted all of his time to writing. In 1684 he became a member of the *Pléiade de Paris*, then the group of the seven most prominent Latin poets in Paris.² He died in 1687, 69 years old.

Petitus was a prolific author. To give an impression of his writings, a few will be discussed here. The first is a treatise published in 1660 *De motu animalium spontaneo*, in which he defended Aristotle against Descartes (Petitus 1660). Petitus was a lifelong follower of the *Philosophiae norma*, ‘the norm of Philosophy’, as he called the writings of Aristotle. In 1661 he published *De Lacrymis* in three books, the work we will be concerned with in this paper. Skipping many poetical works we mention in conclusion two treatises by this productive writer on the relation soul-body: *Dissertatio de furore poetico* (1683) ‘On poetic frenzy’, an attempt to explain poetic genius by natural medical and psychological causes, and one entitled *Homeri Nepenthes sive de Helenae medicamento luctum, animique omnem aegritudinem abolente*, ‘On Homer’s Nepenthes or on Helen’s medicament that did away with grief and all sickness of the mind’, published posthumously in 1689. It might be considered as complementary to *De Lacrymis*, because it answers the question: How can we do away with tears? (Schrijvers 2004, pp. 214–226; Petitus 1689; Cronk 2003, pp. 39–41)

It is clear that tears have a distinct place in the seventeenth-century debate on emotions. In this debate Petitus sided with Aristotle and against Descartes. He did so explicitly in his *De nova Renati Cartesii philosophia* (1670). This book shows that Descartes’ originality and claim to novelty did not arouse admiration in Petitus, but rather suspicion and incomprehension; why would Descartes wish to cast age-old authorities aside? (See Heyd (1990), pp. 51–52) In his book on tears, Petitus criticises Descartes. His criticism is twofold: Petitus discards Descartes’ notion that tears are generated during crying, and denies their distillation in the eye. He says:

Meletius upholds the same opinion in his book about the structure of man and, among the more recent authors, René Descartes in his tractate about the passions of the mind. There he stated that vapours, generated by sorrow in the eyes and in humid parts in larger quantity than elsewhere, are compressed by sadness to such an extent that they change into fluid, as can also be seen in other fluids and is known to happen from constant experience, namely that water is produced as a result of the condensation of spirits and vapours.³

² In contrast to the original sixteenth century Pléiade (a group of seven humanist poets including Pierre de Ronsard and Joachim du Bellay) who promoted the use of the French language, the poets of the Pléiade de Paris wrote in Latin.

³ Eandem opinionem tuetur Meletius libro de hominis structura et e recentioribus Renatus Cartesius eo tractatu quem de animi affectibus conscripsit, ubi statuit vapores, quos dolor maiore in oculis, humidis partibus, quam alibi copia excitat, constrictis tristia meatibus ita condensari, ut in

On page 24 he refers to the same problem:

For what is more absurd than to say that every single tear that is produced results from vapours existing in the eyes? Who would believe that the eyes can catch this amount of vapours, when they could hardly create the amount of fluids streaming out in crying even if the eyes were to disappear completely in vapours? If someone answered for him that vapours are not all produced and kept in the eye, but that they gather there from other places, then first of all I would refer him to the book by Descartes to check whether this was what he meant. I do not think so.⁴

The range of titles of Petitus' works is enormous; the books we mentioned form only a small selection from Petitus' publications. This makes us realise that in the seventeenth century, as in Antiquity, the discourses on the sciences, psychology, anthropology, ethics and medicine, were not separate, like today, but merged. However, this was about to change. Circles around Lamoignon, Ménage and especially Thévenot engaged in discussions on the sciences.⁵

Content and Structure of *De Lacrymis*

De Lacrymis consists of three books. (Figs. 2 and 3) *Liber Primus* is about the 'hardware' of weeping. Among others it deals with the questions of: (1) *Quibus nominibus lacrymae appelentur* 'How tears are called', (2) *Quid sint lacrymae?* 'What are tears?' (3) *De materia lacrymarum sitne in corpore ante fletum, an in ipso fletu gignatur* 'Whether the substance of tears is already in the body before weeping, or comes into existence by weeping itself'. The structure of the treatise is unmistakably Aristotelean. Aristotle's theory of the four causes is well known, dealing with the *causa materialis*, *causa formalis*, *causa efficiens*, *causa finalis*. The meaning of these terms can be explained using the example of a table: the *causa materialis* is wood, the legs and the top of the table are the *causa formalis*, the carpenter is the *causa efficiens*, and the function—here, 'dining table'—is the *causa finalis*. In a systematic way, Petitus deals with the *causa materialis* of tears in the first book. Of what stuff are made? Where in the body do they originate? Are they excretions, like urine and sweat? Is there a container that holds them, like urine is contained in the bladder?

liquorem vertantur; quemadmodum in aliis videre est et perpetua experientia fieri cognoscitur, ut spirituum vaporumque condensatione aqua generetur. Petitus refers in *De Lacrymis* (1661, p. 17) to *Les passions de l'âme*, § 128, AT X. Meletius was a Byzantine monk, probably living in the ninth century, author of the book *De natura structuraque hominis*. A Latin translation of this book was published in Venice in 1552.

⁴ Quis credat oculos tantum vapores capere posse, qui si toti in vapores abeant, vix tot humoribus, quot flentes profundunt, creandis sufficient. Si quis vero pro eo respondeat vapores omnes non gigni in oculis nec iis contineri, sed ad ipsos aliunde confluere, primum quidem ipsum remittam ad librum Cartesii, ut iudicet, num ita is senserit, quod mihi non videtur. Petitus refers to *Les passions de l'âme*, § 128–129, AT X.

⁵ See now 'Isaac Vossius and the scientific communities' in Jorink and van Miert (2012).

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Fig. 2 Table of contents Books 1, 2, 3 of Petrus Petitus, *De Lacrymis libri tres*, Claudius Cramoisy, Paris 1661. Courtesy Leiden University Library, Special Collections, shelf mark 2321 I 24

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Fig. 3 Table of contents, Book 3 of Petrus Petitus, *De Lacrymis libri tres*, Claudius Cramoisy, Paris 1661. Courtesy Leiden University Library, Special Collections, shelf mark 2321 I 24.

Liber Secundus discusses the *causae efficientes*: *tristitia* and *gaudium*: what causes tears to flow? And to what end does weeping exist? (the *causa finalis*): *De lacrymarum causis efficientibus et fine* ‘About the efficient causes of tears and their purpose’, 2. *De tristitia et quomodo contrahat corpus* ‘About sorrow and how it contracts the body’ etc. The *causa formalis* is absent from Petitus’ discussion.

Chap. II.2 of *De Lacrymis* may serve as an example of the way Petitus addresses the problem. This section is entitled: *About sadness and how it contracts the body*. Petitus argues that he prefers to speak about *tristitia* (sadness) rather than about *dolor* (pain, distress) because we speak about an emotion (affect) of the mind. It should be conceded that pain of the body (properly called *dolor*) can also lead to tears. Even so, the difference between pain and sadness is clear to everyone: it is common to talk about toothache (*dolor dentium*), not about tooth sadness (*tristitia dentium*).

Sadness can be defined as a ‘depression’ of the mind caused by the perception of something bad or as a contraction of the spirits by something not appropriate to their origin, by the perception of a troublesome (*molestus*) matter that is not in accordance with nature. The second definition is more to Petitus’ taste, as he prefers to regard sadness as a change in the body.

Tears can also be provoked by images of things affecting the mind. These images are not like pictures in a book, but they make a much larger impression, because they are accompanied by a judgment about right or wrong. Therefore, as Christ says, someone who believes without doubt that God will do as he asks, is able to move mountains.⁶ In a similar way, a conviction about right or wrong affects the mind in virtually the same way as the matter itself. Emotions cause the same changes in the body as the things themselves. Therefore emotions are called *alterationes* (changes) by Aristotle.⁷ There are, however, differences between these alterations, because some are larger and some smaller and some of them lead to contraction, others to expansion.⁸ The primary motions of the spirits are the contraction and expansion caused by the sight of something troublesome or pleasant. Galen is cited in support of this view.⁹ The spirit is the main instrument of the soul which supplies strength to the parts of the body. There is a conjunction between the spirit and the body parts. Between the body parts there is a natural *consensio*; if one of them moves, another one follows. The humours follow the movements of the spirits.¹⁰

⁶ He apparently refers to the Pauline Epistle 1 Cor. 13.2.

⁷ *De motu animalium*, 701b, 22–23. All references to Aristotle in this article are to the standard edition: Aristoteles (1831–1870).

⁸ *De motu animalium*, 701b, 23–24.

⁹ Book. 5 *De symptomatum causis*, citation in Latin: Ex primis itaque principalissimis motibus quidam censetur quod calor natus tum intro, tum foras defertur, idque in compluribus animi pathematis, ac una cum ipso et sanguis et spiritus, modo ad interna, nempe ad principium fertur retrahiturque, modo tendit ad externa atque diffunditur. 7.191.4–12 Kühn.

¹⁰ Cf. Galen’s treatise *Quod animi mores corporis temperamenta sequantur*, 4.767–822 Kühn.

One might ask why the spirits dilate in gladness and contract in sadness. Here Petitus refers to Scaliger to illustrate that it is not possible to give a reason for everything:

For we cannot give causes for everything as Scaliger says in his *Exercitia*: ‘It is part of human wisdom to accept with equanimity not to know something’.¹¹

Nevertheless, subsequently Petitus sets out to give an answer: the spirit (like the arms and hands of the soul) stretches towards the thing it desires, just like a hungry person reaches out for bread and a thrifty person reaches for money. The reason why this is the case cannot be given: these affections are primary and immediately obvious. *Quis a ianua aberret?* ‘Who can miss the door?’ asks Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*.¹²

Petitus notes that some philosophers of his own time¹³ do not give a clear statement about this matter either: they are so unresolved that they are compelled to say that the soul contracts in itself by the apprehension of a troublesome matter and that the spirits follow the motion of the soul: this statement is considered not at all helpful by Petitus: it achieves nothing more than to substitute *soul* for *body*.

The third and last book discusses twenty separate problemata. We already encountered the question of whether humans are the only living beings who weep. Then there are the interesting questions regarding why women and children weep more frequently than men—a playground for gender studies—and, not least important, Problema VII: *Cur viri boni ad flendum natura aptiores?* ‘Why are good men more inclined to weeping?’. The answer is: because the *molles*, the meek, have softer hearts.

A summary of the treatment of Problema IV on the subject *Why women are more prone to crying* may serve as an example of Petitus’ way of reasoning.

Petitus starts by citing Aristotle, who wrote that a woman has more compassion and weeps more.¹⁴ Petitus also cited Empedocles, cited by Simplicius¹⁵ and Cicero¹⁶ as supporting this opinion. The cause of this greater inclination to weep is the temperament of women, which is cooler and more moist. From this fact many things follow that promote the production of tears. First of all, women have a certain softness of the mind and uncertainty of judgment, causing difficulties in tolerating inconvenience and hardship. Women are immediately dejected or succumb to sadness, because of their faintheartedness. Hippocrates says that women have a dispirited and petty mind.¹⁷ Aristotle states in the passage already cited that women are

¹¹ J.C. Scaliger *Exotericarum exercitationum de subtilitate, ad Hieronymum Cardanum, Exercitio 274: Quae de hominis moribus ex temperamentis* ‘What in the habits of man is caused by the temperaments’, Scaliger (1612).

¹² *Metaphysics*, 993b5.

¹³ Petitus probably refers to *Les Caractères des Passions* by Cureau de la Chambre. A series of five books on this subject appeared in the years 1640–1662. Cureau de la Chambre discusses emotions as movements of the soul.

¹⁴ *Historia animalium*, 608b, 8–9.

¹⁵ *Fragmenta*, Fr. 62 Diels-Kranz (1964), lines 4–6.

¹⁶ *Tusculanae disputationes*, 2.21.50, 8–9 Tusculan disputationes. Cicero (1971), p. 141.

¹⁷ *De virginum morbis*, section 1, 9–10, Littré (1961–1982), vol. VIII, p. 466–471.

more despondent and show more despair.¹⁸ According to Hippocrates in the book cited above women suffer more often from absurd fear and say they see hostile daemons invading their bodies. They sometimes despair so much that they are driven to wounding themselves, hanging themselves or jumping into wells. This was the kind of insanity of the Virgins of Miletus of whom Gellius writes in *Noctes Atticae*, on the basis of Plutarch.¹⁹ In this way it can be understood that women are less able to resist sadness.

The softness of their heart is also the reason why, in antiquity, women used to make a greater show of mourning than men. At funerals they would loosen their hair and wound their breast and cheeks. Therefore, Alcestis, the wife of Protesilaus, is called ‘a wife with two torn cheeks’.²⁰ In Rome it was the custom for women to be in control of mourning. Therefore Plutarch says in *Consolatio ad Apollonium* that he thinks it is feminine to mourn.²¹ If women are so soft and weak it is not surprising that they cry more. But they also abound in serum because of their temperament. A final factor is the form of their head: women have fewer sutures in their skull, therefore the vapours are trapped in the head and changed into serum; this serum then is the material for tears.

Context of *De Lacrymis*

Every page of Petitus’ work is littered with references to the ancient sources. We meet Greek authors, not only the most famous and predictable ones, such as Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle and Theophrastus, Plutarch of course, but also lesser known names, like Achilles Tatius and Athenaeus, even those whose work can only be traced via ancient quotations, for instance the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles. We meet medical writers like Aëtius of Amida, Aretaeus of Cappadocia, and of course Hippocrates and Galen. We encounter Latin poets: Juvenal, Lucretius, Ovid (top of his citation index) and Virgil are frequent guests. Greek citations are always presented in the original Greek, with Latin translation. Not only the Church fathers, like St. Augustine, are part of the cultural heritage taken for granted here, but also medieval writers like St. Thomas Aquinas are quoted, for instance when he discusses the interesting question of whether or not the damned, after the resurrection, will be able to weep. Finally, Petitus also cites and interprets the Bible, both Old and New Testament, within this same context. The Bible of course is a fathomless well of weeping, food for tears: Joseph and his brothers, David, Mary Magdalen, Petrus, and Jesus himself, who shed tears over Jerusalem—Petitus mentions them all.

¹⁸ *Historia animalium*, 608b, 11–12.

¹⁹ Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 15.10. Aulus Gellius (1946), 195, 200, 212.

²⁰ Homer, *Iliad* 2. 701, Homer (1924–1925).

²¹ *Consolatio ad Apollonium*, 113 A, 3–4, Plutarch (1928), 222

Petitus uses all of these references as part of an unbroken living tradition, a tradition he shares with his intended readership. He does not attempt to interpret his sources in their historical context, as we would expect and require, as human beings living in the twenty-first century, in a post-classical, post-biblical civilisation, and of course as scholars. It would not be acceptable for a student to quote Empedocles, Hippocrates, Ovid and the Bible on the same page of a thesis, without ever attempting to interpret those citations in their cultural context. That is, however, exactly what Petitus did, because, apparently, he did not experience this context as different from his own. However, the process of ‘ungrounding’—aptly so called by Marjory Lange in her book *Telling Tears in the English Renaissance* (1996)—had started. As the theoretical ground under the metaphors, the theory of humours, was gradually undermined by new developments in science, literature ‘took off’, so to speak, and could use similar metaphors without a supposed theoretical underpinning.

Pre-Scientific Ideas and Analogical Thinking

Now we will try to do something Petitus did not do. We will put a few of the quotations from his works into their historical context. We start with the very first quotation on page 1 of the *Praefatio*, first book, taken from the pseudo-Hippocratic treatise *Peri kardiês*, *De Corde*, ‘On the heart’, Chap. 7.

Petitus does not problematise the authorship of this treatise. He considers it simply as written by *summus naturae Interpres Hippocrates*, ‘the highest interpreter of nature’. The treatise, however, is almost certainly a good deal later than most of the other works in the Corpus. (The most commonly view is that it dates from the middle of the third century BC, but it could be much later, and was certainly not written by the revered master Hippocrates himself). It describes the anatomy of the heart.

These<the orifices, or chambers, of the heart>are the springs of man’s existence: from them spread throughout his body those rivers which bring life to man as well, for if ever they dry up, then man dies. (Hp., *De Corde* 7)

Earlier in this same work (Chap. 2) the anonymous author describes as an experiment. What happens if you take a little water, colour it with blue copper carbonate or red ochre and offer it to an animal which is almost dying of thirst (a pig is best) and cut its throat? Subsequently the author reports a dissection of the heart. A possible interpretation of these difficult passages is that the Hippocratic author reports an imaginary experiment, with imaginary consequences.²² So the explanation offered is a metaphor, an analogy, the image of the springs of man’s existence. The use of analogies is typical for ancient medicine and characteristic for ancient science

²² Though Lloyd (1979), pp. 159–160, and von Staden (1989), p. 147, n.21 seem to accept the possibility of real vivisection.

as such (Cf. Taub (2012)). In his well-known work *Polarity and Analogy* (1966, pp. 175–176) Lloyd shows that in ancient science analogy stands as the type of all reasoning from experience. Things resemble each other in one or more respect, leading to the conclusion that, when a certain proposition is true of the one, it is also true of the other.

The ‘irrigation’ analogy is quite simple and goes back to much earlier strata of thinking, as Onians has shown in his *The Origins of European Thought*. Life is moisture and warmth. Growing old means cooling down and drying up. When for instance in Homer’s *Odyssey* Odysseus is weeping on the beach, held captive by Calypso, longing for his Penelope and his home, he not only sheds tears, but *aiôn*, he loses the liquid of life itself. It was believed that inside the flesh there was a liquid or a liquefiable element filling or forming it, which could leave the flesh and be lost.²³

This deeper level of interpretation was not reached by Petitus, who contented himself with analogies, without considering any historical dimension. You could lose the stuff of life as sweat or as tears, according to the Aristotelian *Problemata* (884 b 22 ff). In an Empedoclean fragment, men are even engendered as tears of the Creator (Empedocles Diels-Kranz (1964) fr. 6). Tears stand for the liquid of life itself. Elsewhere the poet-philosopher calls the sea the sweat of the earth, whereas Pseudo-Aristotle considers tears as a form of sweat. Both tears and sweat were thought to originate in the brain and the spinal cord, and were thought to be pure, life-giving fluids. Seminal fluid also belongs to those encephalo-myelogenic fluids and of course is considered the stuff of life and strength itself (See Craik (2008), pp. 64–73). Sexual love is repeatedly described as a process of liquefying, melting (*tékesthai*) and is characterised as *hygros*, liquid, wet. It flows at the eyes. The fact that eyes are described as ‘moist’ may not refer to their melting looks, but rather to a condition of health and vitality. To love—*erasthai*—is to pour out oneself, emit liquid. To hate—*stugein*—is to freeze, to stiffen.

As by many ancient philosophers and physicians the heart was considered to be not only the seat of life, but also the seat of intelligence and emotion, it is no surprise that ancient testimonies abound to declare that *miser cordia*, compassion, pity, urges the heart to tears: *Hinc illa misericordiae lacrima, hos cum exosculamur animum ipsum videmur attingere, hinc fletus et rigantis ora rivi*. ‘<From the eyes> flows the tear of compassion; when we kiss them we seem to reach the mind itself; they are the source of tears and of the stream that bedews the cheeks’ (Pliny, *NH* 11.54.146).

²³ Onians (1989), 201–205 gives an interesting overview of tears as the ‘stuff of life’ in Greek literature from the weeping Odysseus (*Od.* 8.522 ff.) to the chorus in Euripides’ *Hippolytus* (l. 525). Euripides (1995), 484

Explanations

In his book Petitus made use of three explanatory models. Sometimes he used elements of the various models in combination. These models are:

The Doctrine of the Four Humours (Galenism)

After a long introduction Petitus presents his conclusion that the material of tears has its origin in ‘serum’, formed during the concoction of food, viewed within the framework of Galenistic theory:

Humours are generated from the food that we eat every day, which, because it is largely solid, cannot solely be processed by the teeth in the mouth, but must also be moistened by drink. When it has been broken up in this way it descends to the stomach and is changed into a substance similar to a kind of broth. From here it moves to the intestine, from which location it is then transported to the liver via the mesenteric veins. Asellius discovered that these veins are dedicated exclusively to attracting *chyle*. He called them milky because of their colour. Finally the food is sent to all parts of the body via the veins. For this reason food should first be diluted by drink, as I said, because then it can more easily be digested in the stomach, and from this food liquid humours can be created as well. The foodstuffs would not be able to pass the most narrow veins or to get attached to the body, if they did not have a lot of aqueous fluid mixed in with them. This is the origin of the *serum*.²⁴

Contractio-dilatatio

On the subject of *contractio-dilatatio* Petitus states:

Among the first movements, though, is the dilatation and contraction of the spirits at the sight of something troublesome or pleasant, this is even one of the most important as Galen testifies in these words in Book 5 of *De symptomatum causis*,²⁵ where he writes: ‘Therefore by the first and (so to speak) most important movements the natural heat is moved inwards and outwards and this movement follows many affections of the mind. Simultaneously

²⁴ Petitus (1661), pp. 49–50. Generantur humores ex cibis quos cotidie sumimus, qui, cum magnam partem solidi sint, non solum in ore dentibus moli, sed et potu dilui debent. Iidem ita subacti in ventriculum descendunt, vertendi in substantiam cremori persimilem. Dehinc in intestina, a quibus rursum per venas mesentericas, quasve Asellius soli chylo sugendo dicatas invenit et a colore lacteas vocavit, transportantur, ad iecur; demum per venas in corpus universum mittuntur. Ob hanc causam potu ipsos, ut dixi, primum dilui oportet, tum ut facilius in ventriculo solvantur, tum ut ex iis humores liquidi creentur, qui nisi multum aquei humoris admistum haberent, neque venas angustissimas subire possent, neque corpori affigi. Haec origo seri est.

²⁵ Galen *De symptomatum causis* 2.5 (7.191 Kühn).

spirit and blood are also carried inwards towards the origin and compressed, or alternatively pressed outwards and excreted.²⁶

The Doctrine of the Three Pneumata ('Spirits')

The spirits follow the contraction of the heart, the other parts of the body follow:

For the spirits follow the contraction of the heart and they flee inwards to their place of origin. Next follow the other body parts, the diaphragm, all of the thorax, the face. The features of the face are so distorted that you would hardly recognize someone that you know as a happy person. The brow is contracted, the eyebrows come together, the eyes disappear in the depth of the face, the cheeks are drawn back, the mouth is split open to form a grin, like the picture of Prometheus that Achilles Tatius presents in Book 3.²⁷

The idea of distillation of spirits, popular in the seventeenth century, also seems to have found its way into *De Lacrymis*.²⁸ In a passage following the criticism on Descartes, Petitus argues that it is much more likely for fluids to be distilled in the brain than in the eyes:

For it is perfectly suited to upward rising exhalations, just like the top of a distilling flask is suited to the fumes of those things that are distilled. Also, it contains roomy hollows for vapours, whereas in the eyes no space can be shown in which they can be received.²⁹

Ancient Pathology and Anatomy

Hippocratic writers used *analogies* between the human body and the natural world to explain what they could not see. As physicians, they aimed to keep the individual in balance with external factors, including the environment, the seasons, the prevailing wind of the place where he or she lived. Although the observation of, for

²⁶ Petitus (1661), pp. 87–88. Ex primis autem motibus est spirituum dilatatio et contractio ad speciem molesti aut iucundi, imo unus ex principalissimis, quemadmodum his verbis testatur Galenus lib. 5. De Symptomatum Causis, ita scribens: 'Ex primis itaque' (ut ita dicam) 'principalissimis motibus quidam censetur, quo calor natus tum intro tum foras defertur, idque in compluribus animi pathematis ac una cum ipso et sanguis et spiritus, modo ad interna nempe ad principium fertur retrahiturque, modo tendit ad externa atque diffunditur.'

²⁷ Cordis enim contractionem sequuntur spiritus, introque ad suum principium confugiunt, inde aliae partes, septum transversum, thorax universus, facies, cuius linamenta ita confunduntur ut, quem laetum vidisti, plorantem vix agnoscas. Frons contrahitur, coeunt supercilia, oculi merguntur, genae retrahuntur, os in rictum dehiscit, qualem picturam Promethei proponit Achilles Tatius lib. 3 Petitus (1661), p. 93. Achilles Tatius (1969), 45.

²⁸ For an extensive discussion of this subject see Kodera (2012).

²⁹ Petitus (1661), p. 24. Nam et halitibus sursum tendentibus *kat'ixin* respondet, haud secus ac destillatorii vasis fastigium earum rerum fumis quae destillantur: tum sinus habet vaporum capaces, cum in oculis nullum spatium ostendi possit in quo ii recipiantur.

example, dry eye disease (*xerophthalmia*) may have been correct, the interpretation of this observation followed the microcosm/macrocosm analogy:

If the autumn is northerly and dry it is beneficial to those with moist constitutions and to women. To the others will come dry eye diseases [xerophthalmia], acute and protracted fevers, to some even melancholia. (Hp., *Aph.* 3.14)

However, there also is ancient evidence for study of the anatomy of the eye. Alcmaeon of Croton³⁰ may have been the first to dissect the eye. He referred to ‘ducts’ connecting the eyes with the brain, probably referring to the optic nerves. The Alexandrian physician Herophilus (3rd century BC) had a much more sophisticated, precise understanding of the anatomy of the eye than any Egyptian. Herophilus became the first to distinguish carefully between four coats of the eye and to introduce an influential nomenclature for them. The treatise *On eyes*, one of the earliest Greek treatises known to have been devoted exclusively to ophthalmology, can almost certainly be attributed to Herophilus. It remains unclear how much Egyptian influence on Herophilean ophthalmology there has been. Some recipes at least, such as the prescription of crocodile dung to treat day-blindness, are distinctively Egyptian.

Herophilus seems to have been particularly interested in vision and in the structure of the eye, as the existence of the separate treatise suggests. His discovery of the optic nerve is alluded to by Galen in three different treatises (von Staden 1989, T8z, pp. 84–85). Herophilus also seems to have been the first to distinguish four ‘coats’ or membranes of the eye, possibly the sclera-cornea, iris, retina, and the choroid coat. It is primarily, however, his contributions to nomenclature that are singled out for mention by the ancient sources, rather than his anatomical descriptions: *poros* or ‘duct’ for the optic nerve and tract, ‘cobweb-like tunic’ and ‘net-like coat’ for the retina, ‘like the skin of a grape’ for the choroid (von Staden 1989, T86).

The still rudimentary knowledge about the anatomy of the eyes was supplemented by physiological theories thought to explain the way they operate. These theories stated that a good condition of the eye depended on the proper functioning of ducts which conveyed pure moisture to the eye. On the other hand, sight would be impaired when ducts became flooded or blocked or when peccant matter was brought to the eye (See Craik (2006), pp. 19–22).

Tears as Symptoms

In Hippocratic medicine the physician is taught to observe attentively the symptoms of his patients. He should pay attention to diet, living conditions, housing, bodily exercise, sleep, sexuality and emotional activity.

³⁰ 24A5 Diels-Kranz (1964).

In the Hippocratic *Epidemics* a broad range of symptoms was observed and tears played an important role; they even had to be tasted by the physician. It would certainly be worthwhile to collect all examples in the Hippocratic Corpus where tears and weeping as symptoms are mentioned. A few examples should suffice here. *Epidemics* 6.1.13 (Littré V 272) is cited by Petitus (*De Lacrymis*, p. 11): ‘weeping in patients who are badly off in acute diseases: good if they are voluntary, but flowing involuntarily, bad.’³¹

In *Prognostic* 2 it is considered a bad sign if eyes shun the light or weep involuntarily. *Prorrhetic* 2.18 contains detailed information about the meaning of tears in eye disease.

A New Approach

Ancient physiological theories in general and about tears in particular were valid up to the middle of the seventeenth century.³² Petitus bears witness to this attitude. It is fascinating to see the ancient explanation by analogy and the new one, based on real experimentation, existing side by side at that time.

If Petrus Petitus is our first hero, then here is our second: Niels Stensen or Nicolaus Stenonius, or Steno, a Danish anatomist, geologist, mathematician, theologian, craftsman, contemporary of Petitus.

The Discovery of the Lachrymal Gland

Whereas Petitus published his book *De Lacrymis* in 1661, Steno enrolled at the University of Leiden in that very year and on the 9th of July 1661 defended his thesis on the glands of the human face: *Disputatio anatomica de glandulis oris*. One year later he published his findings in a more widely accessible book: *Observationes Anatomicae* (1662). Steno discovered the lachrymal gland, solving the problem that so many scholars had tried in vain to solve.

As early as 1660 this very gifted young man had come to Amsterdam, where he studied anatomy with Blasius. When Steno discovered the parotid gland Blasius, out of sheer envy, claimed the discovery for himself. Steno could prove that he was right and settled the conflict by enrolling in Leiden, then, in the Dutch Golden Age, a very innovative university, especially in the faculty of Medicine. We happen to know about the atmosphere there from a letter, by another Danish student, a certain Borrichius, sent to his teacher Bartholinus in Copenhagen. He mentioned that

³¹ Translation taken from Hippocrates (1994).

³² To quote a few examples: Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (see Lange 1996, pp. 23–24); Timothy Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie* (1586) (see Lange 1996, p. 27, also p. 29 on children and women!).

Professor Van der Linden, a renowned authority in Hippocratic medicine, saw with envy that his students left him and Hippocrates alone, and went to the classes given by Van Horne and De le Boë, Sylvius, who taught iatrochemics and had abandoned the theory of the four humours:

van der Linden with his forsaken Hippocrates brooding in the empty hall because Hippocrates was being neglected. (Letter from O. Borrichius to Bartholinus, Leiden, 1661)³³

What did Steno find? Dissecting a calf, he found the glands in the head and eyes and he wrote the following about the fluid they created.

The fluid flowing from these glands and their vessels, observable between the eyelids and the eyeball, flows down through punctum lacrimalis into the nose. (Steno, *Observ. Anat.* 8–9 (1662))³⁴

In his research, Steno had followed up on the findings of the English anatomist Thomas Wharton who had written an *Adenographia* ('Description of the glands') of the whole body (1656). Steno cites Wharton in the following passage:

The famous Wharton says in *Adenogr.* C.26 'It cannot be denied that [the glands] produce some fluids though not in the quantity in which the tears flow', even if shortly before he had said: 'But in what manner the said glands excrete fluids, or through what vessels they receive them, has not hitherto been demonstrated' (Steno, *Observ. Anat.* 10–11)³⁵

Where Wharton said 'It cannot be denied', Steno goes a step further, saying:

I therefore consider that tears are nothing else than fluid intended for keeping the eye moist'³⁶

Here, he is Ironically using the word *irrigando*, in line with the old, now 'dead' metaphor.

Steno is especially interested in establishing the distinction between research-based conclusions and those solely dependent on imaginative guesses (reasoning by analogy). He argues unequivocally that tears have the function to humidify the eye. When thinking about the purpose of tears Petitus comes up with a similar solution. However, in Petitus' view, the primary purpose is formed by cleansing the brain and the rest of the body, in accordance with the doctrine of humours.

Steno's most important contributions stem from his effort to separate empirical evidence from interpretation. The book by Steno shows clearly that he attached primary importance to observational evidence. This evidence was crucial for his conclusions. Steno was very careful in specifying which of his findings was the result of actual observation and what was due to inductive reasoning.

³³ Lindano cum suo Hippocrate deserto, et vacua in aula neglegi Hippocratem ringente.

³⁴ Ex hisce glandulis, earumque vasis, qui palpebras inter oculique globum observatur, humor procedens, per lacrymalia puncta in nares defluit.

³⁵ Clarissimus enim Wharton. *Adenogr.* C.26. ait: non negandum easdem humiditates aliquas, quanquam non ea copia, qua lachrymae stillant, suppeditare, licet idem breviant dixerit: Verum quo modo glandulae illae humiditates has expuant, vel per quae vasa easdem excipiant, nemo adhuc demonstravit.

³⁶ Steno (1662), p. 92–93. Existimo itaque lacrymas nihil esse, nisi humorem, qui oculo irrigando destinatus est.

Although, I have then seen the forementioned vessels only in animals, I have no doubt that they have also been given to man. Because in him similar glands are present, situated in the same place and because the fluid which is found under the eye lids is no different, it is fitting to assume the existence of similar vessels there as well.³⁷

Steno addresses the theory about the origin of tears in the brain in the following way:

It is possible that slightly salty fluid from the brain also streams to the eyes through separate vessels. But because it is not my way to sell suspicion for fact, let me propose what is clear, leaving these matters aside: because from these things every phenomenon having to do with tears can easily be explained.³⁸

The Consequences

The consequences of this can hardly be overstated. Steno's findings prove that the explanatory model of the four humours had outlived itself, the act of mercy for the traditional macrocosmic microcosmic view of human life.

In the Low Countries, the physician and philosopher Steven Blankaart (1650–1704), an enthusiastic follower of Descartes, incorporated the new view on tears in a book about anatomy. Blankaart's work included a compilation of earlier work, but also contained original observations. He wrote that the fluid of tears was produced in the glands. Like Petitus, he mentioned a similarity between urine and tears, but in his case it referred to a similar composition of the fluid (Blankaart 1686).

The catalogue of the University Library in Leiden contains another *De Lacrimis*, a dissertation defended by one Mauritius Herminghuysen in 1769. He explained in eloquent Latin how the lachrymal glands worked. This book deals solely with a description of physical facts; no more references to Pliny, Virgil or Homer.

To conclude with a few remarks on the physiology of tears according to 'modern' insights. In the production of tears we have to discern between a secreting part, the glandula lacrymalis, and the discharging ducts, ductus naso-lacrymalis. The production of tears in crying is a process involving a number of muscles. It is probable that phylogenetically old brain areas are involved in the triggering of crying and that this process is under control from other brain areas: lesions in structures connected with the pyramidal tracts in the brain have been found to result in uncontrollable crying. Frontal cortex areas of the brain (an area generally believed important for 'control' and 'planning') are probably involved as well (See Kappas (2009), pp. 424–425).

³⁷ Steno (1662), p. 90. Licet autem praedicata vasa non nisi in brutis viderim, quin tamen etiam homini sint concessa nullus dubito. Cum enim et glandulae illi adsint similes, simili in loco sitae, cum humor, qui sub palpebris reperitur, non sit diversus, oportet etiam eiusdem generis vasa ibi admittantur.

³⁸ Steno (1662), p. 90 Sic quoque ex cerebro fortassis humorem subsalsum per singularia vasa in oculos derivari posse: sed quia suspicione pro veris venditare, meum non est, in medio haec reliquens quae manifesta sunt, proponam: cum ex iis omnia, quae circa lacrymas observantur, phaenomena commode possint explicari.

Although the origin of tears had been discovered, treatment of medical problems concerning the lacrymal glands had to wait until the mid-nineteenth century. This is eloquently demonstrated in the story of the persistent disabling problems of the German scholar Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) (Stahnisch 2012). Operation on lachrymal glands became only possible after the invention of Bowman's probe and Weber's knife in around 1860, so it would not be incorrect to say that modern dacryology started only then.

Conclusions

Petitus' role in the discussion about emotions is a complicated one. He seems to regard crying as a natural phenomenon and as such shows tolerance towards expressing grief. However, he does not spend much thought on the underlying feelings and cognitions, but focuses on the bodily substrates and processes underlying the shedding of tears. His opponent Descartes is attacked for his conception of the underlying physiology; Descartes had different ideas about the origin of the fluid of tears and about the events leading to the expression of tears. In contrast to Petitus, Descartes did try to accommodate new findings in his theory: he had accepted Harvey's discovery about the circulation of the blood and he tried to findings about the anatomy of the brain (the pineal gland) in his theory of emotion. However, as regards tolerance for the expression of emotions, the two opponents Descartes and Petitus, show up as equals: their main emphasis is scientific. They regard the expression of emotion as a natural, mostly beneficial process. In their treatment of tears they pay little attention to value judgments.

When we look for evidence for a turning-point in science, we can find it in the completely different approach Petitus and Steno show in gathering knowledge. Petitus' first interest is in defending the position of the authorities from antiquity, especially Aristotle. Steno had embarked on a program to find indisputable knowledge by means of observation and experiment. This project led to important discoveries by Steno. However, as a result of obstruction from the part of learned colleagues and because of the difficulties inherent in his method of research, Steno experienced a crisis in his beliefs about the feasibility of finding indisputable knowledge along these lines, which led him to abandon science in favour of a career in the Roman Catholic church.

Steno's quest may be summarized in his own words: *Skjønt er det vi ser, skjønnere er det vi erkjenner, men skjønnest er det vi ikke fatter*, 'Beautiful is that which we see, more beautiful is what we perceive, but most beautiful of all is that which we cannot comprehend (Steno 1673, n.p.).'

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Alchemy and the Body/Mind Question in the Work of John Donne

Michael Ovens

Critical discussion on the use of alchemy in John Donne's poetry has tended to focus on his representations of alembics, elixirs, and balms, neglecting those poems which reflect the processes and philosophy of alchemy despite the absence of its tools; yet even in these neglected poems alchemy serves to form the 'subtle body' of Donne's conception of body and soul, mediating between Neoplatonism and Christianity in a way similar to the way the spirit was thought to mediate between the body and soul. In the two poems considered here, for instance—the well-known "A Valediction: forbidding mourning" and the lesser-known verse letter "To the Lady Bedford"—there exists an alchemical reading of the body and soul that is obscured by the more conventional Neoplatonic and Christian readings. Alchemical processes appear to mediate between these more conventional readings within Donne's cosmological vision, performing a function analogous to that of the spirit in medieval and Renaissance medicine. The inclusion of alchemical imagery in Donne's poetry provides him with a set of metaphors that allow him to wrestle with fundamental questions about the constitution of man and to transform the physical discontinuities of departure and death into metaphysical continuity.

Alchemy was a medieval and early modern discipline believed to grant its practitioners the ability to manipulate a network of sympathetic relationships in order to isolate, transform, and transmit the properties of material things. The observed chemical inertness of gold, for example, was interpreted as deriving from the more fundamental property of immortality; so long as a man consumed a scruple of purified gold a day, he would be sustained as though he, too, was immortal.

The discipline of alchemy was believed to have originated in the writings of the ancient sage Hermes Trismegistus. Although later revealed to be the work of a number of authors writing in the second and third centuries A.D., up until the seventeenth century these writings were believed to have been composed by a single author who was as old, if not older, than Moses himself. For the Renaissance classicists, this made the writings of the Thrice-Blessed incredibly significant—so much

M. Ovens (✉)
The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
e-mail: michael.ovens@research.uwa.edu.au

so that Marsilio Ficino was ordered to put aside his translation of the assembled works of Plato in order to complete a translation of a manuscript copy of fourteen of the fifteen books of the *Corpus Hermeticum* (Yates 1964, pp. 12–14).

Although the existence of multiple independent contributors to the *Corpus Hermeticum* has led to a somewhat fragmented philosophy, the varied books are united in some fundamental assertions about the world, showing the influence of Neoplatonic and Christian thought. Chief among these was the belief that the cosmos was a living being comprised of soul, spirit and body which formed a macrocosm to man's own microcosmic triumvirate. The two souls—the World-Soul and man's soul—were linked by a sympathetic relationship which was mediated through the spiritual faculties of sense and imagination. Through observing and understanding the movements of astral bodies, man could understand and manipulate himself into alignment with the movement of the heavens, thus drawing closer to the perfection of their creator.

This philosophy of astral sympathy formed the foundation of alchemy. The relationship between these two traditions can be likened to that of mathematics to architecture. Hermeticism, like mathematics, is fundamentally a description of the universe, whereas alchemy, like architecture, is one application of this description to practical ends. Alchemy seeks to isolate and strengthen those parts which facilitate the sympathetic connection between heaven and earth in order to transfer the properties of one thing to another and complete the work nature has begun.¹

Donne frequently employs the symbols and processes of alchemy in his writing as a metaphor for change, instability, and fluidity. Donne appeared exceptionally aware of his own mutability, an awareness which emerged as a concern in both his poetry and his sermons. “In the Elements themselves,” Donne urged in one sermon, “of which all sub-elementary things are composed, there is no acquiescence, but a vicissitudinary transmutation into one another; Ayre condensed becomes water, a more solid body, and Ayre rarified becomes fire, a body more disputable, and in-apparent.” The world, according to Donne, “changes and melts in all the parts thereof... [Man] melts so away, as if he were a statue, not of earth but of snow.” (Carey 1981, p. 174)

The extent to which Donne believed in the literal truth of the alchemical account of reality is debateable. The Renaissance alchemist Paracelsus appears in Hell within Donne's work *Ignatius, His Conclave*, where he tells Lucifer that:

... I broght all *Methodicall Phisitians*, and the art it selfe into so much contempt, that that kind of phisick is almost lost; This also was ever my principal purpose, that no certaine new Art, nor fixed rules might be established, but that al remedies might be dangerously drawne from my uncertaine, ragged, and unperfect experiments, in trial whereof, how many men have been made carkases? (Donne 1969, pp. 19–25)

¹ Moran (2005), pp. 70–71. We should be wary of drawing too strict a divide between hermeticism and alchemy, however; as Frances Yates has pointed out, these two branches cannot be kept entirely separate from one another, nor would they have been seen as significantly different from one another prior to the seventeenth century. Yates (1964), pp. 44–45.

Despite these remarks, Joseph A. Mazzeo has pointed out that there is a certain level of playfulness in this depiction of Paracelsus (Mazzeo 1957, pp. 103–104); when prompted to give his full name (“*Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombast of Hoheneim*”), Lucifer trembles “as if it were a new *Exorcisme*”, or the “first verse of Saint *John*” (Donne 1969, p. 19). On the other hand, the company which the alchemist keeps in Hell—including the astronomers Galileo and Copernicus—are ‘distinguished’ for all the wrong reasons in Donne’s mind. These astronomers’ heliocentric models of the heavens formed the spearhead of the “new Philosophy” which Donne laments in “An Anatomie of the World”:

... new Philosophy cald all in doubt,
The Element of fire is quite put out;
The Sunne is lost, and th’earth, and no mans wit
Can well direct him, where to look for it. (205–208; Donne 1933b, pp. 206–224)

Astronomical discoveries have shifted the ground beneath Donne’s feet; Copernicus raised “both [Lucifer], and [Lucifer’s] prison, the Earth, up into the Heavens” while he “appointed [the Sun] to go into the lowest part of the world” (Donne 1969, p. 15). Paracelsus is responsible for a similar sacrilege, having “put out” the Aristotelian element of fire by supplanting the classic elemental quartet (earth, air, fire, and water) with his new theory of the “three principles”, or *tria prima*, of Sulphur, Salt and Mercury (Moran 2005, p. 72). New ideas imbue the world with a sense of relativism. As Donne wrote in “Of the Progresse of the Soule”:

... Have not all soules thought
For many ages, that our body’is wrought
Of Ayre, and Fire, and other Elements?
And now they thinke of new ingredients.
And one soule thinks one, and another way
Another things, and ty’s an even lay. (263–268; Donne 1933e, pp. 225–242)

The picture Donne creates in his Anniversaries is of a new alchemical philosophy that has unsettled the very foundation of the world; “’Tis all in pieces, all cohærance gone” (“Anatomie”, 213), he cries. Yet despite his hostility, alchemical and hermetic thought evidently play an important role in Donne’s work and his beliefs about the constitution of man. Straddling the divide between Platonism and Christianity, alchemy provided an important stock of images and metaphors through which Donne could control the interminable transformation, fluidity and divisions within the world (Carey 1981, p. 184) and Man.

“A Valediction: forbidding mourning” requires little in the way of introduction (Donne 1933a, pp. 44–45). From a Neoplatonic perspective, the fourth and fifth stanzas reflect Renaissance beliefs about the ‘heavenly’ and ‘earthly’ loves of Plato’s *Symposium*:

Dull sublunary lovers love
(Whose soule is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.
But we by a love, so much refin’d,
That our selves know not what it is,

Inter-assured of the mind,
Care lesse, eyes, lips, and hands to misse. (13–20)

The “[d]ull sublunary lovers” (13) are mired in the world of physical bodies and sexual gratification which constitute the realm of the inferior earthly love. The “soule” of their love, which ought to be divine, is instead merely “sense” (14)—the inner sense, a faculty controlled by the subtle spirits which inhabit the body. These spirits are a mixture of the soul and the body, more divine than the latter but more earthly than the former. The very soul of this love, therefore, is tainted by its involvement with the physical bodies which “elemented” it (16). By way of contrast, the “refin’d” (17) love of the following stanza reflects the superior, heavenly kind of love which desires the intangibles of the beloved—their virtues, inner beauty, and the qualities of their “mind” (19). The Neoplatonic emphasis on the chastity of heavenly love is revealed to have a fringe benefit beyond the engendering of virtue: if the lovers “[c]are lesse” about “eyes, lips, and hands” (20), then a physical absence becomes hardly an absence at all. These two stanzas are a fairly typical, if well-phrased, contrast between Renaissance attitudes towards Plato’s earthly and heavenly loves, and critics have largely been content to gloss them as such and move on to the image of “gold to avery thinnesse beate” (24) and the conceit of the “stiff twin compasses” (26). Through the lens of an alchemical reading, however, Donne’s use of the word “refin’d” (17) to describe his love takes on a greater significance as referring to a thing from which impurities have been removed. Donne’s mysterious love—that which he “know[s] not what it is” (18)—has been refined by separating this mystery from the impurities of the “eyes, lips, and hands” (20). Without the physical shackles of the body, the lovers become free to experience an expansion in their love.

It is crucial here that the separation of the “mysteries of Nature” from their physical bonds was the chief purview of the spiritual half of alchemy. The Renaissance alchemist Paracelsus said that “of all things useful to man and most excellent”, the greatest was “to learn the mysteries of Nature, by which we can discover what God is and what man is, and what avails a knowledge of heavenly eternity and earthly weakness.” (Paracelsus 1894, Vol. 2, p. 4) These mysteries of Nature are similar to what we would today understand as physical and biological phenomena like gravity and photosynthesis, but which were poorly understood in the sixteenth century and considered by Paracelsus to be “too wonderful to be ever thoroughly investigated”. (Paracelsus 1894, Vol. 2, p. 3)

The physical bonds which restrained these mysteries were likened to “a prison with chains and fetters”. (Paracelsus 1894, Vol. 2, p. 4) For those mysteries that resided within man, the prison was that of the corporeal body. To liberate the mystery of love, therefore, the lover had to divorce himself from the desires of the physical body; thus Donne tells us that he and Anne “[c]are lesse, eyes, lips, and hands to misse.” (20) The remark that the lovers are “[i]nter-assured of the mind” (19)

further the emphasis upon the alchemical separation of their love since Paracelsus tells us that, unlike the mysteries of Nature, the mind is automatically free from the prison of the body, and thus one step closer to purity.² From an alchemical perspective, therefore, the two stanzas beginning “Dull sublunary lovers love” and “But we by a love, so much refin’d” (13–20) create a contrast between the love of those who are imprisoned by the body and the love of those who are liberated from it.

Donne’s famous image of love expanding “like gold to avery thinnesse beate” (24) suggests that he was not considering an abstract alchemical process in the contrast of the two loves, but was instead working from an extended metaphor of love as gold. Gold was renowned for its malleability and ductility in Donne’s era, properties which enabled the expansion of gold ingots to gold leaf through repeated strikes with a hammer. Prior to the emergence of chemistry as a scientific discipline, this incredible malleability was considered to be a property of the quintessence of gold. According to Paracelsus:

The quintessence... is a certain matter extracted from all things which Nature has produced, and from everything which has life corporeally in itself, a matter most subtly purged of all impurities and mortality, and separated from all the elements. From this it is evident that the quintessence is, so to say, a nature, a force, a virtue, and a medicine, once, indeed, shut up within things, but now free from any domicile and from all outward incorporation. The same is also the colour, the life, the properties of things (Paracelsus 1894, Vol. 2, p. 22).

Ficino described the quintessence as being the spirit of the World-Soul, through which its force is brought to bear on all things (Ficino 1989, Bk. 3, Ch. 1, p. 247). It is essentially the mediating component of the sympathetic relationship between the heavens and earth, with each quintessence containing some fragment of the totality of virtue that is present in the heavens. The quintessences of different things, each one containing different fragments of this totality, were each subtly unique: some were “styptic, others narcotic, others attractive... and so on.” (Paracelsus 1894, Vol. 2, pp. 23–24) The quintessence of gold possessed the virtues malleability and chemical inertia, which were interpreted as a kind of immortality; so long as a man consumed a scruple a day, he would be sustained as though he, too, was immortal. On the properties of gold, Donne wrote in “To the Lady Bedford” that:

... no fire, nor rust can spend or waste
One dramme of gold, but what was first shall last,
Though it bee forc’d in water, earth, salt, aire,
Expans’d in infinite, none will impaire... (35–38)

Although Hamlet considered man to be the mere “quintessence of dust”, (Shakespeare 2008, 2.2. 284–288) Donne’s description of his love as “refin’d” (17) indicates that his love is the very quintessence of love, purged from the impurities and mortality of the “elemented” (16) love of the “dull sublunary lovers” (13). It is the quintessence of love/gold that possesses the virtue of malleability and allows Donne’s love to “endure not yet/A breach, but an expansion” (22–23), while the

² “The strength of this mystery of Nature is hindered by the bodily structure, just as if one were bound in a prison with chains and fetters. From this the mind is free.” Paracelsus (1894), Vol. 2, p. 4.

mortal lovers are caught in their love of brittle things and “cannot admit/Absence” (14–15).

The significance of an alchemical reading of this poem lies in the process behind the creation of these two kinds of love. It is quite revolutionary that, unlike Neoplatonism, Donne’s alchemical metaphor does not divide love into two irreconcilable camps with one as good or heavenly and the other as evil or earthly. Although the extraction of the quintessence of gold leaves the physical body without sweetness or virtue, this does not amount to a degradation of the body. In nature, the quintessence of gold is found mixed throughout the physical body. This ordinary form of gold possesses all the qualities of the quintessence of gold, but in a more diluted form. Alchemists considered this natural form to be incomplete rather than inherently corrupted, which opened up some leeway for the praise of physical love: although physical love would never be as pure as wholly spiritual love, it was not considered to be inherently flawed. One of the authors of the *Corpus Hermeticum* went so far as to identify man’s unique place in the cosmos as the result of his fusion of heavenly and earthly substance (Scott 1982, Vol. 1, Asclepius III, 22b, p. 337). This hermetic belief transcends the traditional Neoplatonic antagonism of body and soul, setting the stage for our bodies to become “not drosse to us, but allay” (“The Extasie, 56). (Donne 1933f, pp. 46–48)

Alchemy and Christianity have an intriguing relationship in “To the Lady Bedford” (Donne 1933h, pp. 204–205). Donne opens the poem with the premise that Lady Bedford and her deceased friend, Lady Marckham, had each “become one of two” (4) through their friendship. The two women are portrayed as two halves of a complete whole; though their differences make them “divers starres”, they nevertheless “one Constellation make” (8). Donne also compares the women to “*Cusco*” (Cuzco) and “*Musco*” (Moscow) (7), great cities divided by continents and hemispheres that yet encircle the world, and describes them as “Pair’d like two eyes” (9). Through these comparisons, Donne is building a dualistic understanding of body and soul similar to that which controlled “A Valediction: forbidding mourning”, where Lady Bedford is compared to the body and Lady Marckham to the soul of the same individual:

Had you dy’d first, a carcasse shee had beene;
And wee your rich Tombe in her face had seene;
She like the Soule is gone, and you here stay,
Not a live friend; but th’other halfe of clay. (11–14)

Having established a separation between the body and soul, the Lady Bedford and Lady Marckham, Donne proceeds to reverse his conclusion and argue that no separation has occurred at all:

And since you act that part, As men say, here
Lies such a Prince, when but one part is there,
And do all honour and devotion due
Unto the whole, so wee all reverence you... (15–18)

The image of the prince as a metaphor for the relationship of the body and soul occurs in several of Donne’s poems, but the specifics of the metaphor are hard to

pin down. One of the clearest examples of the metaphor of the prince is in “The Progresse of the Soule: First Song”:

Now in a roomefull house this Soule doth float,
And like a Prince she sends her faculties
To all her limbes, distant as Provinces. (333–335; Donne 1933g, XXXIV, p. 281)

It was most likely this poem that Helen Gardner was thinking of when she wrote that the “concordance to Donne’s poems shows how fond he is of the metaphor of the soul as prince and the body, with its limbs, as his province.” (Gardner 1959, p. 303) There is further support for this interpretation in “Elegie on Mrs Boulstred”, where “Her Soule and body was a king and court.” (39; Donne 1933c, pp. 256–259) The situation in “To the Lady Bedford”, however, is modified: the prince is associated with Lady Bedford, who in turn is associated with the body. Donne makes no great deal about his inversion of the ‘typical’ order of his metaphor—indeed, his use of the metaphor here suggests that he is not concerned with the specifics of whether the prince or his provinces constitute the body or the soul. Instead, the prince in this context represents for Donne a kind of paradox: why do men revere the body of the prince as though it were still filled with the soul—as though it were still “whole” (18)? This is the problem which Donne concerns himself with for the remainder of the poem: what is the ‘subtle knot’ that ties together body and soul, deceased and living?

In both “To the Lady Bedford” and “A Valediction: forbidding mourning”, Donne attempts to transmute a separation between two emotionally close individuals from an event which calls for mourning to something which hardly admits of absence. Donne’s anticipated return to the side of his beloved in “A Valediction: forbidding mourning” allows him to claim that their separation is in fact beneficial, their absence in fact expansion; but in “To the Lady Bedford”, the permanence of the women’s separation requires a more subdued approach:

For, such a friendship who would not adore
In you, who are all what both were before,
Not all, as if some perished by this,
But so, as all in you contracted is.
As of this all, though many parts decay,
The pure which elemented them shall stay;
And though diffus’d, and spread in infinite,
Shall recollect, and in one All unite... (19–26)

Although Donne here argues the polar opposite of what he did in the previous poem—that their relationship is “contracted” (22) rather than expanded—the poems are linked by the shared premise that two people are in fact one. In “A Valediction: forbidding mourning”, Donne claims that “[their] two soules... are one” (21); in “To the Lady Bedford”, the two women are part of a “double shee” (1). Thematically, both of these poems are concerned with tackling the fundamental question of the constitution of humankind. This is a theme which resonates throughout Donne’s poetry. His “impatience with a fragmented sense of being”, as John Carey put it,

lead to an obsession with discovering the fundamental building blocks of man and the seat of his identity.³

In “To the Lady Bedford”, Donne argues that although Lady Marckham’s physical body decays, some generative, diffusible part of her is able to survive the dissolution of death—the “pure which... shall stay” (24). The structure of the poem invites us to make a comparison between the pure and Lady Marckham’s “vertues”:

So madame, as her Soule to heaven is fled,
Her flesh rests in the earth, as in the bed;
Her vertues do, as to their proper sphaere,
Return to dwell with you, of whom they were... (27–30)

In alchemy, the virtues are not merely the properties of man; they are the “powers and means of action” which are contained within a substance.⁴ They are the properties of quintessences, which are themselves dispersed throughout ordinary substances like vinegar mixed through water. Vinegar possesses the ‘virtue’ of a sour taste, but in mixing vinegar with water we are not mixing in ‘sourness’: we are mixing in something which possesses the virtue of being sour. The virtue of vitriol, therefore—that of curing “jaundice, gravel, calculus, fevers, worms, the falling sickness, and many other diseases which are very difficult to treat” (Paracelsus 1894, Vol. 1, pp. 89–113, esp. pp. 99–102)—is the property of the quintessence of vitriol dispersed throughout its material body, a body composed of the four elements. If we were to extract the vinegar from the water, we would end up with a small body of very sour liquid, whereas before we had a larger body of somewhat sour liquid—vinegar diluted with water. Likewise, if we extract the quintessence from vitriol, we end up with a smaller body of potent virtue, whereas before we had a larger body of more dispersed virtue. Paracelsus wrote:

Nothing of true value is located in the body of a substance, but in the virtue. And this is the principle of the Quintessence, which reduces, say, 20 lbs. into a single source, and that ounce far exceeds the entire 20 lbs. in potency. Hence the less there is of body, the more in proportion is the virtue. (Paracelsus 1894, Vol. 1, p. 5)

If we interpret Lady Marckham’s virtues alchemically, then it follows that the pure is to be identified with her quintessence. This identification is reinforced through the structure of the poem which links the “pure” which “shall stay” (24) to the “gold” that “shall last” (36):

As of this all, though many parts decay,
The pure which elemented them shall stay;
...
And as no fire, nor rust can spend or waste,
One dramme of gold, but what was first shall last,
Though it bee forc’d in water, earth, salt, aire,
Expans’d in infinite, none will impaire;
So, to your selfe you may additions take,
But nothing can you lesse, or changed make. (23–24, 35–40)

³ Carey (1981), pp. 167–170. For Donne’s interest in anatomy, see Hirsch (1991), pp. 69–95.

⁴ Paracelsus (1894), Vol. 1, p. 5. It would appear that virtues are in fact the “mysteries of nature” Paracelsus describes as being part of the goal of alchemy.

I have extended the quotation beyond that required to illustrate the previous point because the quintessence of gold has a double identification within the poem. The structure of “shall stay”/“shall last” (24, 26) links the quintessence to the pure of Lady Marckham, but if we follow the lines down, the “So” of line 39 links the image of gold to the “selfe” of Lady Bedford. This has two important consequences for an alchemical reading of the poem. First, it reinforces the nature of the “double shée” (1) that is Lady Bedford and Lady Marckham by hewing them to the same “dramme of gold” (36). Second, it suggests that Donne considers that the quintessence contains some essential part of a human being; that it is, perhaps, the final atom that lies, indivisible, at the core of a fragmented sense of self.

By placing the quintessence at the core of Lady Marckham’s being, Donne emphasises that part which unites her with the cosmos. The quintessence is the mediator between the heavens and earth, uniting the two in the same way that the spirit unites man’s body and soul. Donne saw the essential unity and order that characterised the medieval view of the universe as fragmented by the new epistemologies of his age and turned to the metaphor of the quintessence in an attempt to restore harmony.⁵ This metaphor of sympathy and unity leant itself perfectly to a letter of consolation insisting on the fundamental unity of two friends beyond the divide of death.

Although this alchemical reading was likely Donne’s point of creative departure, Lady Bedford may have interpreted the poem differently. We are fortunate to have an elegy written by Lady Bedford herself which sheds some light on how she may have interpreted Donne’s elegies. Her poem—“Elegie (Death be not proud, thy hand gave not this blow)” (Russell 1933, pp. 386–387)—was written as a reply to Donne’s “Elegie on M^{rs} Boulstred”, where he recanted the relatively small role given to death in “Elegie on the Lady Marckham” (Donne 1933d, pp. 254–256) and instead gave him the power to draw millions “[i]nto his bloody, or plaguy, or sterv’d jawes” (8)—a conceit which disturbed Lady Bedford enough to move her to poetic action. Chastised, Donne composed a second, more conventional elegy for Cecilia Bulstrode—“Elegie: Death (Language thou art too narrow, and too weake)” —which doubled as an apology to Lady Bedford.⁶

Lady Bedford’s eulogy follows on from Donne’s previous works and progresses along a typical elegiac conceit of denying the power of death; “*The grave no conquest gets, Death hath no sting.*” (42) Where she differs significantly from Donne is in her conception of death and the body’s relationship to the soul. According to Lady Bedford, when “the clearer soule [is] call’d to endlesse rest” the “fairest frame” of the body is made death’s “prey./Because to mortall eyes it [decays]” (7–16). Lady Bedford takes a more conventional Christian approach by conceiving of death as the destruction of the body until only a “space endures” (18), a space which is to be filled and reconstituted “[w]hen her best soule inhabits it again” (17–20) at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead. As a Calvinist, Lady Bedford was held to the belief that the resurrected would inhabit not their earthly bodies, which would decay

⁵ For an excellent discussion of Donne’s use of magnetism as another means to restore harmony to the universe, see Fletcher (2005), pp. 1–22.

⁶ For a broader discussion of the context of these poems, see Summers (1992), pp. 211–231.

to a mere “space” (18), but a spiritual body that would be free from corruption. As Paul wrote in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption... It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” (Carroll and Prickett 1997, 1 Corinthians 15, pp. 42–44) Lady Bedford appropriates the wording of Donne’s metaphor of the “dramme of gold” (“To the Lady Bedford”, 36) but applies it to the spiritual body of the Resurrection, which “[n]o dramme thereof shall want or losse sustaine” (“Elegie”, 19).

This kind of complete destruction and recreation would have been abhorrent to Donne, who attached a vital importance to the continuity of the body as a seat of identity. Consider Donne’s verse letter to Lady Bedford, where Lady Marckham’s “flesh rests in the earth, as in the bed;” (28) or his “Elegie on the Lady Marckham”, where her “flesh [is] refin’d by deaths cold hand” (20). Although he invokes the Resurrection in the latter public elegy, he shies away from the idea of complete destruction and re-creation. Instead, he turns to alchemical metaphor again to suggest a process of continuity through transmutation:

As men of China, ’after an ages stay,
Do take up Porcelane, where they buried Clay;
So at this grave, her limbecke, which refines
The Diamonds, Rubies, Saphires, Pearles, and Mines,
Of which this flesh was, her soule shall inspire
Flesh of such stuffe, as God, when his last fire
Annuls this world, to recompence it, shall,
Make and name then, th’Elixar of this All. (21–28)

As Carey has argued, Donne was attracted to alchemy because “all matter is permeated with spirit, and [is] interminably transmutable” (Carey 1981, p. 184). The disconnect between Donne’s transformative and Lady Bedford’s destructive/creative reading suggests that there are, at least two readings available to this sequence of grief and consolation.

A conventional Christian reading of “To the Lady Bedford” takes a different approach to Lady Marckham’s “vertues” (29) and the “pure” (24) compared to the previous alchemical reading. According to Plato and Aristotle, virtues were essentially an insight into what is truly good. This definition was adopted and modified by Christian theologians, including one interpretation by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century which remained influential through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Lacoste 2004, Vol. 3, pp. 706–710). According to Aquinas, the “word *virtue*... names a certain fullness of ability, measured by a perfect fitness to act”, and Aquinas gives knowledge as one example (Aquinas 1989, p. 231). Knowledge, such as that of carpentry, allows us to make superior cabinets compared to someone who is not similarly endowed. These virtues can be either “acquired” through the workings of man or “instilled” through the workings of God, but in both cases the exercise of virtue is a sympathetic act which attracts man to God. With regards to instilled virtue, “*God works in us without our help* (though not without our consent); but our own work God works in us with our help, since he is at work within every will and every nature.” (Aquinas 1989, p. 232. See also Russell 1993, pp. 292–293)

According to this reading, those qualities which attract Lady Marckham to God are transferred to Lady Bedford because of the women's nature as a "double shee" (1).

As with "A Valediction: forbidding mourning", however, the relationship between alchemy and Christianity means that the two readings overlap on certain key points. If we recall that the hermetic philosophy underpinning alchemy was a creation of the early Christian era, we can see how the two concepts agree on the idea that virtue is some kind of enabling power of action: it is a property possessed by things which allow them to perform actions. Where they differ is their beliefs about the origin of virtues. For Christians, the virtues are derived from the work of God, whereas for alchemists they have their origins in the stars and heavens of which man is a microcosm. These different origins create the significant divisions between Christian and alchemical 'uses' of the virtues (as something to attract sympathy between man and God, compared to something to be purified from physical matter), but when attempting to define "vertue" (29) as Donne uses it in "To the Lady Bedford" the similarities between these two readings tend to unite different epistemologies of the term.

Both "A Valediction: forbidding mourning" and "To the Lady Bedford" suggest that one of the most important parts of Donne's conception of the relationship between the body and soul was the force which governed the fundamental union between them and the way in which they were united to the greater cosmos. Alchemical metaphors are used alongside Neoplatonic and Christian ones, diminishing the contrast between a corrupt body and a heavenly soul in order to shift emphasis to the sympathetic relationships which unite them, and a method for interpreting death as a transformation from one state to another, rather than the destruction and resurrection of Christian theology. Alchemy's role as a mediator between Neoplatonism and Christianity in Donne's poetry is analogous to the role played by the spirit mediating between body and soul in medieval and Renaissance literature. Ficino described the spirit, those vapours of the blood which combined the properties of body and soul in order to mediate between the two, as "that instrument with which [scholars] are able in a way to measure and grasp the whole world." (Ficino 1989, Bk. 1, Ch. 2, p. 111) In the same way, Donne uses alchemical thought as a metaphorical alembic in which he can tinker and experiment with methods for halting the growing chaos that had been spawned by the birth of modern science and epistemological change that constituted "new Philosophy".

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‘Among the Rest of the Senses...Proved Most Sure’: Ethics of the Senses in Pre-modern Europe

Danijela Kambaskovic

Are our five senses a reliable basis for perceiving the world truthfully, and acting within it morally? Opinions on this differ in Medieval and Renaissance thought. Thomas Aquinas believed that “all true knowledge begins with sense perception” (Leff 1956, pp. 30–31); but Jean Calvin distrusted perception by way of the senses, which he considered unfit for perceiving spiritual truth¹. Writing on sin, *The Hammer of the witches* describes the senses as avenues of devilish influence, in a way that also acknowledges the senses as the mainstay of human cognition (“channels of understanding”) and morality (“the will”):

For S. Augustine says in Book 83: This evil, which is of the devil, creeps in by all the sensual approaches; he places himself in figures, he adapts himself to colours, he attaches himself to sounds...he abides in smells, he impregnates with flavours and fills with certain exhalations all the channels of the understanding. Therefore it is seen that it is in the devil’s power to influence the will, which is directly the cause of sin.²

Discussions which link epistemological and ethical functions of sensual perception have early precedents in Byzantine Neoplatonism. Gregory of Nyssa feels that while perfect human beings in the afterlife are without bodily passion, the reasoning faculty of the soul in real humans cannot exist without sensation (Champion, 2014), and Michael Psellos thought that a person concerned with the things that truly matter, the Intellect and Soul, hates matter and turns away from the senses (Miles, 2014). These views have long shadows. In this chapter, I will propose that ethical interpretations of the work of the five senses found in Medieval and Renaissance writing are often complex and contradictory, as well as that. Individual senses are associated with particular types of cognition and memory, and almost always with morality. And finally—and

¹ “unfytte...to seeke and fynde trueth”, *Institutes*, Book 2, fols 11r–13v, Book 3, fols 131v, 169v, 239v; Calvin (1584), p. 449, cited by Milner (2011), p. 203.

² Institoris, Heinrich (1971), Part 1, Question 5.

D. Kambaskovic (✉)
The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
e-mail: danijela.kambaskovic-sawers@uwa.edu.au

this is an aspect which has not, to my knowledge, been addressed by scholarly analysis before, and merits particular attention—the tendency to describe the moral and cognitive aspects of the work of a particular sense by employing metaphors which engage strictly with its sensual function.

Eyesight

Eyesight begins in Western cultural history as the most reliable of the senses. “Of the organs, ... [gods] first contrived the eyes to give light”, says Plato in *Timaeus*.³ This complex view of eyes as the *giver* of light recognises the biological function of the eyes, that of giving physical light to their owner; but it also signals also a few important metaphorical functions of the eyes, in the service of ethics. Eyes facilitate social communication by giving light also those who are around them, and they give metaphorical light by imparting truth and knowledge. And as Plato believed that, as “the gods’ gentle light” flows “through the eyes in a stream smooth and dense”, the central part of the stream is compressed to keep out “everything of a coarser nature” and allow “only this pure element” to pass (*Timaeus*, 45b), it is the eyes’ most important function to act as an ethical purifier of that which is perceived.

Much later, St Augustine in the fifth century AD, uses the notion of “internal light” to signal God’s moral compass to be found inside our intellects. Inspired by Augustine, in the fourteenth century, Francesco Petrarch describes Laura’s eyes as opening into “internal light” after her death (Sonnet 279)⁴: the notion now becomes both a moral compass and a posthumous reward, making quite a revolutionary suggestion that the only Paradise we can imagine can be sought within our intellects. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton poignantly laments loss of physical sight as loss of a way for knowledge to enter a human mind; this combines powerfully with an invocation of God’s interior light, or inspiration, which, if granted, will provide a superior source of moral insight and imagination:

Seasons return, but not to me returns
 Day, or the sweet approach of ev’n or morn,
 Or sight or vernal bloom, or summer’s rose,
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
 But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
 Cut off, and from the book of knowledge fair
 Presented with a universal blank
 Of nature’s works to me expunged and razed,
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
 So much the rather thou celestial Light
 Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
 Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence

³ Plato (1989), *Timaeus*, 45b. Unless otherwise cited, I have used this edition for all citations from Plato.

⁴ Petrarch (1999). Unless otherwise cited, I have used this edition for all citations from Petrarch.

Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
 Of things invisible to mortal sight.
 (*Paradise Lost*, III, pp. 39–55; Milton 2006, p. 1873)

In the iconography of the High Middle Ages, a connection can be made between the learning (“light”) of the intellect, on one hand, and the learning (“light”) of the eyes, and the learning (“light”) of touch, the enlightening nature of the sexual experience, on the other. Speaking of Jean Le Fèvre’s fourteenth-century *La Vielle* (LeFèvre 1861), Karen Pratt gives the “enlightenment” of the senses a lower-level role than the “enlightenment” of the intellect (Pratt 2014); but what is interesting here is the connection between frescoes depicting *la lumière de doctrine*, represented by the arts of the *quadrivium* and other subjects of learning, and the walls of the principal character’s bedchamber on which they are displayed. The origins of this seemingly discordant connection between eyes, touch and sex and acquisition of knowledge, could be based in the fact that and acquisition of knowledge, Plato also accords eyesight—specifically, its role in perceiving beauty and sending out its reflection, or “the flood of passion”—a central place in his philosophy of love:

But when one [...] beholds a godlike face or bodily form that truly expresses beauty, [...] that flowing stream, which Zeus, as the lover of Ganymede, called the ‘flood of passion’, pours in upon the lover. And [...] when he can contain no more, the rest[...] turns back and re-enters the eyes of the fair beloved.
 (Plato, *Phaedrus* 251 a, 255 c)

This visual flood of passion also has a crucial role in Plato’s transcendental philosophy. When lovers exchange gazes, this engenders love and its divine “madness”; and this, in turn, fosters the often painful, but necessary growth of the “wings” of the human soul, necessary if the soul is to scale divine heights. This gives eyesight, by way of its importance in the birth of love and opening up of the soul to emotion, a crucial place in the human search for the good and the sublime:

For by reason of the stream of beauty entering in through his eyes there comes a warmth, whereby the wings [of the soul] are melted, which for long had been so hardened and closed up.
 (Plato, *Phaedrus* 251a)

Plato’s complex view of eyesight, then, addresses biological, epistemological and ethical aspects of perception alike. Eyes assume the task of purveying ‘truthful’ perception. This allocates the eyes ethical capacity of the highest order.

Ethical interpretation of eyesight is to prove very influential in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In this example from *The Garden of Eloquence*, a handbook on rhetoric originally published in 1577⁵, which saw the best rhetorical phrases as those “translated” from “the senses and the man himself”, eyesight is seen to be the most trustworthy sense, and therefore directly comparable to virtue:

As the sight among the rest of the sendses...pierceth furthest, so is it proued most sure, and least deceived, and therefore is very nigh to the mind in the affinitie of nature, so farre forth as an externall sense of the bodie may be compared to an internal virtue of the mind.
 (Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence*, p. 4)

⁵ All references to *The Garden of Eloquence* are taken from Peacham (1593).

Some medieval views held the link between eyesight and love so important that it was impossible for a blind man to fall in love. Capellanus argued that a blind man can remember what his eyesight perceived while it was still functional, but cannot fall in love anew while blind:

Blindness impedes love, for a blind man cannot see that on which his mind can reflect immoderately. Therefore love cannot arise in him [...] I do not deny that love can endure in a man who acquired love before he went blind.
(Andreas Capellanus, *On Love*, 1:5)⁶

Not only can he not fall in love but he cannot conceive of love he had not already experienced. Blindness is therefore semantically associated also with ignorance, a certain narrowing of the mind and stunting of the soul, and even corruption. The example from the rhetorical handbook *The Garden of Eloquence* makes the connection very clear in its explications of passages from the Bible. For instance, the expression *Gifts blind the wise* (Deut. 16.) is explained to suggest that “gifts obscureth the vnderstanding, and seduceth the will of wise men”⁷, making a clear link between blindness on one hand, and stupidity or corruption on the other. A slightly different proposal explains the loss of sight and loss of understanding as parallel events accompanying the ageing process, drawing on Aristotle’s view that the skin inside the eye slowly wrinkles with age like the skin outside it (Burrow 2000), which accounts for the inability to see clearly and therefore truthfully. The ageing process and the associated loss of intellectual and moral faculties and loss of sight are reflected also in Shakespeare’s Sonnet 3:

Thou art thy mother’s glass, and she in thee
Recalls the lovely April of her prime;
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 3:9–12)⁸

The link is evident also in the iconography (of Cupid), represented in the poetry and painting of the Renaissance as a blind child and an idiot. But in Cupid’s case, a certain respect is shown to his blindness and absence of wisdom in a young child, or child-like figure, the absence of sight and wisdom are sometimes interpreted as indicative of honesty, impartiality and absence of deviousness, and therefore signs of wisdom truer than that imparted by worldly experience. The same motif is employed in Erasmus’ *In Praise of Folly*, Shakespeare’s *King Lear* and numerous sonnets of the period, where truth comes from the mouth of fools.

In a Neoplatonist revision, Baldesare Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier* (1528) reinforces the importance of sight by teaching that the exchange of eyes, sight for sight, is the most ethical stage of love. The lover must gaze and make “eyes to be his faithful messages to bear the embassies of his heart, since [...] they not only disclose thoughts, but often kindle love in the beloved’s heart”⁹. In sight, ideal

⁶ Capellanus (1982), *On Love* (Book 1, Chapter 5), p. 33.

⁷ Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence*, p. 5.

⁸ Shakespeare (1997). I have used this edition for all citations of Shakespeare’s work.

⁹ Castiglione (1900), *The Book of the Courtier*, Book 3, p. 225.

goodness is reflected, rather than reflexive; as in Plato, the key to higher ethical status of the gaze here appears to be not the gaze itself, but the *exchange* of gazes. In seventeenth-century England, Poet Michael Drayton, in his *Idea*¹⁰, describes such an exchange of gazes as inspiring love and restoring the state of ethical grace, equated to restoration of sight to blind eyes:

Blind were my eyes, till they were seen of thine.
(Drayton 1600, *Idea*, Sonnet 39 “To Miracle”: 9)

Shakespeare maintains the idea of the exchange of gazes as morally purifying, but describes this epiphany not as a result of pleasure, but as a result of the pain associated with wasting one’s gaze on the unworthy. The waste is made finally manifest by making contact with the eyes of the true love. Finally able to rest on the beloved’s eyes, and returned in forgiveness, the lover’s gaze is restored to its role of the purveyor of moral truth:

Alas! ’tis true, I have gone here and there,
And made my self a motley to the view,
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
Made old offences of affections new;
Most true it is, that I have looked on truth
Askance and strangely; but, by all above,
These blenches gave my heart another youth,
And worse essays proved thee my best of love.
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 110:1–8)

But elsewhere, the rift between truth and seeming seems more crucial for his plays. When, at the beginning of *Hamlet*, Horatio—who had questioned the sanity of guards when they told him that they had seen the ghost of Hamlet’s father roaming at night—finally sees the ghost with his own eyes, he immediately cancels his disbelief, as eyesight is not something that can be doubted:

HORATIO

Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.
(Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1.1:54–6)

But *Hamlet* is a work which could be argued to have been designed to question the limits of the “truthfulness” of visual perception. For instance, everyone can see Hamlet’s father’s ghost in the opening scene; but later, in the bedroom scene with his mother, Hamlet is the only one who can see the ghost (*Hamlet*, 3.4:107). In this

¹⁰ I quote from *Idea’s Mirrour* (1594) and *Idea* (1594, 1602, 1605 and 1619) using the reference to the sonnet, lines and year of publication in brackets, e.g. (1:1–4, 1619). Citing *Idea* has represented a challenge, as standard editions provide incomplete selections. For the purposes of this chapter, I have cited *Idea* and other works by Michael Drayton using *Minor Poems by Michael Drayton* edited by Cyril Brett (1907), which, despite its age, I have found to be the most complete, and *The Works of Michael Drayton* ed. by J. William Hebel (1961). I have also consulted *Poems of Michael Drayton* edited by John Buxton (1967). I do not, however, generally use this edition to cite *Idea*, as it represents a selection of 33 sonnets from five sequences authorised by Drayton in his lifetime, all provided without reference to the year of their publication. As an exception, I have used Buxton to cite two sonnets which do not appear in Brett and Hebel’s editions.

scene, for Hamlet, the ghost's appearance is "reality"; but from Gertrude's perspective, Hamlet addressing empty space looks very much like Hamlet's madness.

The breathtakingly original question that Shakespeare is asking here, is whether something can be ever be considered "real" or "true" if only one person can see it. He questions the trustworthiness of individual vision and suggests that visual phenomena require *social confirmation* before they can be accepted as truthful. In other words, he asks: does reality exist objectively, in the real world, irrespective of the perceiving subject? If it exists only in the subjective consciousness, is one consciousness enough for reality to exist? Must reality exist in more than one mind, in order to be considered real? And these are philosophical, rather than dramatic questions.

There is also religious morality to consider. Could the ghost's ability to appear only to one person be an indication of devilry, and spiritual danger for Hamlet? The ghost of Hamlet's father ghost says that it comes from purgatory, a concept that is associated with Catholicism; and this, in Shakespeare's Protestant England, would be an immediate threat. As is well known, the Devil was credited with an ability to approach each individual in the way that would be irresistibly attractive to them; what better way to tempt the grieving Hamlet to murder, than to impersonate his father and bray for revenge? Hamlet's notorious indecisiveness may have had a lot to do with the need to ponder the complex ethical implications of the "truth" of what he has seen, and the enduring appeal of this scene owes a lot to its engagement with these fundamental philosophical and moral questions.

Shakespeare returns to the idea that the sense of sight an imperfect tool for ascertaining truth in *Othello* as well. When Iago suggests to Othello that Desdemona was unfaithful to him, Othello asks him for "ocular proof" ("the kind of proof that cannot be refuted").

OTHELLO [taking Iago by the throat]
 Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,
 Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof;
 Or by the worth of man's eternal soul,
 Thou hadst better have been born a dog
 Than answer my waked wrath!
 (Shakespeare, *Othello*, 3.3:364–368)

But the "ocular proof" that Iago famously produces is Desdemona's handkerchief, stolen and planted. Othello is made to see Cassio fingering the handkerchief, and so the "proof" is duly "ocular"; but not true. Once again, Shakespeare questions the limits of believability of visual phenomena in and of themselves, and without their proper context. He also suggests that it is ethical motivation which will determine any "truth" that can be garnered by means of eyesight. And this makes ethics more important than perception.

Ethical interpretations of sight are also interesting when the moral ambiguity of visual perception in Shakespeare's works is studied in the context of scientific history. K. H. Tachau places the beginning of controversies surrounding epistemology of visual perception in scholastics efforts to tie a complex of optical explanations together into an account of concept formation. Sight is linked to the birth of

scientific methods in the acquisition of certitude. William of Ockham’s scientific studies of vision, particularly his lectures on Lombard’s Sentences in 1317–1319, articulated a view which influenced other thinkers and caused controversies in the relationship between sight and knowledge (Tachau 1988; Ockham 1974–1988). The end of fifteenth century saw the discovery of perspective in painting and architecture, which had a profound influence on the way sight was perceived in the writing and philosophy of the subsequent centuries. In his seminal treatise *On Painting*, which promoted the idea of perspective in European painting in mid-fifteenth century, Leon Battista Alberti describes perspective as an exercise in representing an objective, but also a deeply subjective reality. “The painter”, writes Alberti, “strives solely to fashion that which *is seen*; anything which exists on a surface (“under the light”) so that it *is visible*”¹¹. Clearly, representing only what “is visible...under the light” (as opposed to what is imagined) must enhance the credibility of the painting. On the other hand, however, perspective depends on what *is seen by the artist*—his point of view and his arbitrary placement of the vanishing point—around which the “objective” mathematical reality is then constructed within the painting. In other words, perspective provides a degree of logic (*concinntas*) to the painting (Hulse 1990, pp. 53, and 57–68)—yet it does so not by representing the truth, but by providing a good impression of the truth. And this is dangerous moral ground, for this is exactly what the Devil does when he tempts us. The danger of a good impression of the truth being given in order to deceive more efficiently is at the very heart of sin in Christian morality.

This dangerous ethical instability of eyesight is questioned in many works of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The ability of eyesight to convey “the truth” is affected by the social status or perceived credibility of the viewer; by his or her gender, desire, intention, education, altered mental states, or whatever affects his or her mental state. For instance, Michael Drayton’s Sonnet 11 (*Idea*, 1599) shows the lady in the guise of goddess Diana, and praises her “powerful influence”. This may be a matter of love; but it also may be a matter of astrology. The influence of the Moon, the planet that affects the eyes, could suggest that the speaker’s gaze is swayed by the lady, or that his gaze is inconstant, as it is under the influence of the moon; however, it could also suggest a person born with an ascendant in Cancer, a sign influenced by the Moon, indicating a loyal and steadfast nature; this would give the poem an entirely different meaning. In Sonnet 23 (*Idea*, 1599), Drayton links Jupiter (or the sign of Sagittarius, ruled by Jupiter, characterized by ambition, striving and yearning) with the Moon, which rules the eyes. This could simply indicate a yearning gaze; but it could also well be the crux of Drayton’s concealed meaning—a union of Jupiter and Moon brings forth the Antichrist (Burkhardt 1975, p. 490).

Gender is also crucial, as is social standing, or state of mind. The number of eyewitnesses required to condemn a suspected witch to death was two male eyewitnesses or four female ones, as women were considered half as credible. In Petrarch’s Sonnet 16, in one of Petrarch’s highly idolatrous images, the speaker sees

¹¹ “Nam ea solum imitari studet pictor quae sub luce videantur”. Alberti (1540), *De pictura*, (*On Painting*), cited by Hulse (1990), p. 43. Emphasis mine.

Laura's face when seeking Christ. It can be assumed that the poet escaped death at the stake not only by virtue of his high social standing, but also because some concession would have been made for the effects of love melancholy or love madness on his rational mind. The uncomfortable symptoms of this evil disease are described, although not named, a 100 years before Plato, and then recorded and defined in Plato's *Symposium*¹². They re-emerge, repeated almost verbatim despite the circuitous and intermittent paths of Plato's cultural influence, much later in, Medieval and Renaissance love poetry, but also in medical treatises on love madness. The latter describe love as a serious, life-threatening illness, and blame the eye as the entry point of the contagion. Through the eyes, it is said, love infects the core of the brain and inflames it from within. The infection then moves through the three ventricles of the brain, beginning with the front ventricle, in the front of which the common sense was believed to be located. Common sense was thought to be in charge of telling the difference between modalities of perception, or telling whiteness from sweetness, to use the Aristotelian example (Aristotle, 350 B.C./1931a, b; R. Bacon, 1266/1962)¹³. Common sense also compared "species", or types of information received, with different sources of this information; and this, Avicenna thought, is how an animal associates the sweet taste it craves with food of a particular appearance, or how a man, infected with love madness, associates his love with the face of his beloved (Avicenna 1968). At the back of the front ventricle was located the imagination, where images were stored. It was often supposed that the consistency of the front ventricle was more liquid and slippery than the back, so that sensation was rapidly received by the common sense, but also quickly lost if the stimulus were removed; the imagination at the back of the front ventricle could retain images more easily because it was drier. A frequently employed metaphor that explained the difference between the common sense and the imagination compared the different impressions made by a signet ring in water and wax (Kemp and Fletcher 1993, esp. 561). The infection of love enters the blood and other vital organs, and is, in due course, carried by animal spirits back to the brain, inflaming "the imagination", associated with another ventricle. The infection should be halted before this point—usually by judicious application of dietary, surgical or pharmaceutical cures, such as excessive bleeding, sitting in a concoction of herbs and flowers or being submitted to a savage beating (Ferrand 1990, esp. pp. 325, 327, 342, 354, 363)—or it will become incurable.

On one hand, then, sight is the sense which allows us to be close to God, to love and to propagate; and on the other, it is also the entry point of filthy contagion of love madness. Abraham Fraunce thought the love-function of the eye debased

¹² "So between joy and anguish [the soul] is distraught... perplexed and frenzied; with madness upon [it], [it] can neither sleep by night nor keep still by day, but runs hither and thither, yearning for [the beloved] in whom beauty dwells. [...] All the rules of conduct, all the graces of life, of which aforesaid [it] was proud, the soul now disdains, welcoming a slave's estate... for ... [it] has found in [the beloved] the only physician for [its] grievous suffering". (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 251d, e).

¹³ Aristotle, *De Anima* 429a, *De Partibus Animalium*, 656a. Unless otherwise cited, all references to Aristotle's works are taken from Aristotle (1931).

our higher natures; he describes it as a means whereby “nature doth induce and perswade the soule, by the gift of sensible bewty, to come downe into this world of generation. Petrarch’s fourteenth-century work *Triumph of Love* shows many illustrious people chained and yoked to pull Love’s triumphal chariot (Petrarch 1962, p. 29).

The moral ambiguity inherent in sight perception it is not limited to medical treatises, or to painting: ambiguities of perception must affect all creation. Horace’s famous segment on what it means to write well, in his epistle *Ad Pizonem*, a classical work on composition, suggests that poetry should be like a picture (“*ut pictura poesis*”). A poet must therefore be like a painter, and the truth like a body, represented truthfully, decorously and without excess (Horace 1989, pp. 58–75). The injunction seems to imply that representing the truth without excess is a difficult task, full of pitfalls that the author must watch out for. Shakespeare does something interesting with this danger; he uses it in a way which seems to foreshadow individualism and relativism. The ambiguity of truth in “what is seen”, to use the phrase from Alberti’s treatise on perspective, becomes redefined in Shakespeare’s sonnets as a good thing: an individual contribution to perception of reality, and a matter of interest, rather than only matter of deviousness or danger. In Sonnet 24, he argues, perception must be careful, and mindful of the “painter’s skill” and the unique twist it will give. Painting, here, is metaphor for writing; the reader/beloved should be aware of what the poet/lover is doing, and not read uncritically. “Enjoy the subtext”, Shakespeare seems to be saying. Being aware of the poet’s skill will enhance the exquisite experience of reading: you will see through, and beyond, the writer. This in turn will bring the reader and the writer—the beloved and the lover—closer to a state where their exchange of gazes is meaningful for both. The process will impart knowledge, as well as self-knowledge:

Mine eye hath played the painter and hath steeled
 Thy beauty’s form in table of my heart;
 My body is the frame wherein ’tis held,
 And perspective that is best painter’s art.
 For through the painter must you see his skill
 ...Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done:
 Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me
 Are windows to my breast.
 (Shakespeare, Sonnet 24:1–11)

The gaze is the mainstay of the poetic technique of *blazon*, in which each part of the female body receives focused attention and is described in turn. Blazon describes and praises the beauty of the lady in great detail, and is meant to conquer the mistress and impress the fellow men; and it defines the troubadour poetry of the Provence in the twelfth century, the courtly love poetry of the High Middle Ages and, later, Petrarchan poetry. However seductive, describing and praising each female body part to a posse of male readers is, as has often been suggested, a homo-social activity, in that it serves to promote envy in other men, assert the dominance of the male poet-speaker over them and, consequently, increase his standing amongst them. It is also subliminally linked to voyeuristic observation, sexual

frustration, anger, sadistic possession and dismemberment (Vickers 1981–1982; Kambaskovic 2010), and recognised as a source of spiritual danger for men as it incites lust. Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece* and *Cymbeline* both have plots which hinge on the dangers that blazon represents not only for the virtue and life of the woman who is its object, but also for the immortal soul of the man who engages with it—whether actively (as a poet-viewer), or passively (as a reader-imaginer). Extreme sexual desire inflamed by blazon can lead to loss of self-control, causing a man’s will to rule his reason and lead him to sin. That, in turn, can cost him his rightful place at the summit of the Great Chain of Being, his immortal soul and any claim to an ideal Renaissance masculinity. This, and many other expectations imposed on men, often conflicted, creating a culture of anxiety; Breitenberg sees this anxiety as definitive of masculinity in the early modern period (Breitenberg 1996). That said, “reverse” blazons, also called “vituperative Petrarchism”, were also practiced. In this technique, the ugliness of the lady’s parts is described in turn, often in a humorous vein (this could be interpreted as refuting, as well as confirming, Breitenberg’s thesis). The technique, practiced by Etienne Jodelle in France and echoed by Shakespeare in Sonnet 130, is one in which the poet pretends to woo the mistress, often one whom he has already noticeably wooed, by harping on her ugliness, coarseness, availability, or by employing reverse psychology. The technique is no less spiritually dangerous than ‘straight’, praising blazon, in that it provided an opportunity for male writers and readers to laugh at a woman’s expense in an unabashedly sexualised context, reinforcing the homo-social bond between the viewer-poet and his male imaginer-readers, but this is perhaps clearer to us today than it was to the contemporary readers.

In the early modern context, female gaze also holds great danger when directed at a man. And if this sounds contradictory to my previous discussion of the salutary nature of the exchange of gazes between a man and his beloved, this is because it is. Social mores governing female conduct are a rich tapestry of seemingly irreconcilable contradictions. Two mythical archetypes of the unacceptable feminine gaze are particularly significant in this regard. Both are in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*: Medusa, the repulsive, cold female figure whose gaze turns men to stone, and Salmacis, whose sexual interest unmans by its overtness¹⁴. These archetypes probably provided the basis for the two unusually sexualised versions of the iconography of Venus, *Venus Mechanitis* (the meddling, whorish Venus), and *Venus Prospiciens* (the gazing, prospecting Venus)¹⁵, as well as countless other man-gazing and man-eating women characters appearing in the narratives, love poetry, philosophy and social treatises of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The moment when a

¹⁴ Ovid (1986). Medusa, *Salmacis* and all references to *Metamorphoses* in the further text come from this edition.

¹⁵ The negative iconographies of Venus relate to Pandemia, or the earthly Aphrodite of Plato’s Symposium. Bestial aspects of Venus Vulgaris and Venus Machinitis are described by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. (Pico, 1962). The best analysis of the complex medieval and early modern iconographies of Venus is Cousins (1994).

male poet-speaker opens himself up to the gaze of the female beloved is a moment fraught with great danger:

[Y]ou [Laura] see me torn a thousand times to death
and not a tear as yet have I seen fall
from your fair eyes, only disdain and anger.
(Petrarch, *Il Canzoniere*, 44:12–14)

If there is one thing that 366 poems of Petrarch’s *Il Canzoniere* teach us, it is that a lady’s gaze is best either concealed, or full of pity. Two hundred years later, in England, Shakespeare twists this trope in an interesting way: there is danger in the lady’s gaze, but it comes from the possibility of it *not* being directed at the man: the lady is most “cruel” when she is *not* looking at the poet. She must always pretend to have eyes only for him while in his company:

Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go wide.
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 140:14)

This powerful verse combines the command (masculine) with a plea (feminine) and is quite clever; but it changes nothing philosophically. The lady must still do as she is told; and we see Shakespeare arguing—again—in favour of a “constructed” truth distinctive from “real” truth by proposing that the moral rightness of the situation will be determined by an arbitrary decision. In this sonnet, Shakespeare uses a circuitous and highly original route to reach a conventional destination. After some twists and turns, sight is restored to its rightful Neo-Platonic role as the ultimate indicator of what is right.

Sight and Hearing Semantically Elided

A semantic elision between sight and hearing is sometimes encountered in medieval and early modern texts, is particularly noteworthy. This possibly occurs because both the visual and aural perception allow for verbal understanding. An early example of this can be seen in the Book of Genesis: the Fall occurs when Eve “saw” the words of the Serpent.¹⁶ The semantic link allowed the verb “to see” to also mean “to hear, understand, approve and believe”; the word still has this meaning today when used in the conversational tagline “I see”. Writing (perceived by sight) is often elided with speaking (perceived by hearing) in love poetry addressed to the beloved. Hearing and sight become elided as they are both simply ways by which rhetorical influence can be exerted on the beloved by the poet lover.

The use my spoken voice had been denied me
And so I shouted out with pen and paper.
(Petrarch, Poem 23:98–99)

O learn to read what silent love hath writ;
To hear with eyes belongs to love’s fine wit.
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 23: 13–14)

¹⁶ Book of Genesis 3:6, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (1989).

Sight and hearing were, of course, the only senses allowed to be engaged in a virtuous, Neoplatonist love. Annibale Romei's treatise *Of Humane Love*, translated into English and published in 1598, goes further to argue that sight and hearing cannot be separated and must function *together* in a virtuous exchange of loves.

The second kind [of love], without contaminating chaste thoughts, reioyceth onely in beholding, discoursing, and conuersing with his beloued, as also by her to be mutually affected. (Romei 1598, p. 40)

Hearing

While eyesight is connected with the truth and rational understanding, hearing is viewed as a cognitive pathway better suited to emotional persuasion. *The Garden of Eloquence* says that “from the hearing are diuerse translations taken, not so much seruing to signifie the powers of the mind, as to expresse the affections of the heart”. Long before the Renaissance, Quintilian argued that there was a close connection between active hearing and a passionate emotive response, which makes oratory so powerful; and the view influenced early modern approaches to rhetoric, notably that of Francis Bacon in *Institutio Oratoria* (Derrin Forthcoming 2014; Bacon 2001, 8.3.61–71). This unity of skill and passion, which acts best upon the ear, overcomes Plato's preference of *enthusiasmos* over *techne*, inspiration over skill, arguing that both are necessary to achieve influence using the pathway of hearing.

Hearing, as the pathway of passionate understanding, becomes particularly valuable in the Protestant revolution. Writing about Luther, Margaret Miles sees his theology as existential, rather than metaphysical, because of Luther's view is that the “justice” of religion, its fundamental ethical appeal, does not reside in the rational mind, but in the heart¹⁷. The heart is the only seat of true faith, and it can only ever be reached through hearing:

... a right faith goes right on with its eyes closed; it clings to
God's Word; it follows that Word; it believes the Word even when
all creatures are against it.
(Luther 1974, 1:1, emphasis mine)

Hearing and passion were also seen to have an important role in imparting pleasure, seen as an important source of mental and physical health. The origins of this view can probably be found in Boethius' theory of music, which sees *musica humana*, the inner music of the human soul and a reflection of *musica universalis*, as expressible only by *musica instrumentalis*, music performed instrumentally or vocally (Boethius 1989, pp. 9–10), perceived through hearing alone. Order, degree and harmony in music are epistemologically linked to order, degree and harmony in the Universe, the state and the individual, bound in a cycle. Timothy Bright's *Treatise on Melancholie* (1585), the most important treatise on mental health written during Shakespeare's lifetime, describes harmony as the source of all “peace of the

¹⁷ Miles (1984), p. 243. Luther accuses Erasmus of not taking the debate on free will seriously enough owing to lack of “personal interest”. Luther (1969), p. 179.

soul” (Bright 1586, p. 248). Shakespeare illustrates the dangers of disorder in the state and the Universe by using the metaphor of an instrument falling out of tune:

The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre
 Observe degree, priority and place,
 ...and therefore is the glorious planet Sol
 In noble eminence enthroned and sphered.
 ...How could communities,
 Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
 ...but by degrees stand in that authentic place?
 Take but degree away, untune that string,
 And hark, what discord follows.
 (Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 1.3:85–110)

Music was thought to have active healing, as well as magical powers. Ovid’s Orpheus tames both wild animals and dead souls in Hades with his powerful lyre. King David soothes Saul with the music of his harp¹⁸. In *Sir Orfeo*, a medieval retelling of the myth of Orpheus, it is the king’s harp that restores social and political order at the end of the tale (Anon. *Sir Orfeo* 1954). Medieval musical treatises note the story, attributed to Pythagoras, of a young man whose mind was turned to “lustly madness”, then calmed, by the change in the mode of the music he listened to (Boethius 1989, pp. 9–10). In 1253, Henry III sent Richard the Harper to soothe his son Edmund in his sickness (Southworth 1989, p. 89). In 1621, Robert Burton allocates a lengthy section in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* to the topic of “Music as Remedy”.¹⁹ Hearing makes it possible for the memory of the divine harmony of the Universe, out of which all humans were thought to have been created, to be evoked; it is this memory that allows music to heal the ailing body and mind. And since mental peace and health indicate a harmonious existence within the universal order, then enjoyment of music indicates personal goodness, morality and a sin-free existence, or, as Cassiodorus has it: “if we habitually live in agreement with the good, we always show that we are allied with music. But when we engage in evil, we do not have music [within us]”.²⁰ The view re-emerges in medieval romances and morality plays, where the wicked character cannot be influenced the music: so the lust-ridden Eufeme in Heldris de Cornuälle’s thirteenth-century *Silence* (Cornuälle 2007) cannot be soothed by music²¹, and Shakespeare’s Lorenzo exclaims in *The Merchant of Venice*:

The man that hath no music in himself,
 Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
 Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils,
 The motions of his spirit are as dull as night
 And his affections dark as Erebus.
 Let no such man be trusted.
 (Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, 5.1:82–87)

¹⁸ 1 Samuel 16.14–23. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (1989).

¹⁹ Burton (1621), Sect II, Memb. VI.3, 1621.

²⁰ Cassiodorus (1980), pp. 3–4. “Quod si nos bona conuersatione tractemus, tali disciplinae probamur semper esse sociati. Quando uero iniquitates gerimus, musicam non habemus”.

²¹ “Sa harpe a cil bien atenpree” Cornuälle (2007), l. 3743. In the section on music and medieval romances, I am variously indebted to engaging with the Honours research of Alana Bennett (2012).

This seems patently opposed to Protestant impatience with music as a source of sin; yet both views are similar in that they credit music with an extraordinary amount of power.

When it comes to speech and silence, the situation is also complex. Christian ethos associates silence with moral superiority (goodness and wisdom), while ease of speech stands for intellectual prowess and worldliness, but rarely for goodness. Talkativeness and argumentativeness is the characteristic of the Devil in mystery and morality plays, and this is contrasted with the silence of Christ, which, as V. A. Kolve reminds us, represents a form of power over the Devil.²² When it comes to the silence of the Petrarchan ladies, the comment is often made that their silence is passive and interpretable, and so ideally virtuous in the context of their gender. But the silence of Petrarch's Laura and other Petrarchan ladies could perhaps also then be seen as a form of power: their silence is an effective way to defuse the verbosity of the. The ladies' silence becomes associated with a state of true virtue; a state of mental peace and freedom of desire or sin, which gives women power over men who desire them. All love poetry is an attempt to use the power of words to reach the beloved's heart, engage her passions and take her away from her state of equilibrium.

If we agree with Luther that hearing can touch the deepest part of the heart, then we can see why it is a sense associated with great moral danger. By listening, the lady may open herself to sin and endanger her immortal soul. Giovanni Boccaccio conceived his *Fiametta* as a warning to all women who believe their lovers' sweet promises (Boccaccio 1562), and Samuel Daniel's Rosamond rises from the grave to lament the day she listened to a wicked old woman who advised her to become the king's mistress (Daniel 1965). The Ape in *Mother Hubberds Tale* is an Italianate courtier who writes "fine louing verses...sugrie sweete" with which young gallants lead "Chast ladies eares to fantasies impure" (Spenser 1612, p. 11). In *Paradise Lost*, Milton's Satan, in the guise of the serpent, attacks Eve by employing an irresistible double whammy of praising her beauty in the Petrarchan fashion, and of inciting her dissatisfaction with syllogistic reasoning:

Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore
With ravishment beheld, there best beheld
Where universally admired; but here
In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
Half what in thee is fair ... who shouldst be seen
A goddess amongst gods, adored and served
By angels numberless, thy daily train.
... Queen of this universe, do not believe
Those rigid threats of death; ye shall not die;
How should ye? By the fruit? ... Look on me,
Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live,

²² Kolve (1966), pp. 182–96; also Luckyj (1993) and Bae (2004). Michael V. Fox also reminds that Egyptian discussions of rhetoric stress the efficacy of silence. Fox (1983), pp. 12–14.

And life more perfect have attained than fate
 Meant me, by vent'ring higher than my lot.
 ...Why then was this forbid? Why but to awe,
 Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
 His worshippers.
 (Milton 1989, *Paradise Lost*, pp. 538–558; 684–690; 704–706)

Eve enters the argument with the Serpent, and, of course, loses. Milton does not fail to remind the reader that she would have avoided perdition if she had just remained silent, not entered the argument and kept her mind on what God asked of her.

But there is also something uncomfortable about such imperviousness to argument and unwillingness to engage; such clear awareness that one is right. People are so much more pleasant when they talk; when they are open to persuasion, influence, debate and banter; when they have something interesting to say; when they work on their poems so as to win their beloved. Shakespeare is aware of this. Why should silence be considered so vastly superior to speech, he seems to be asking. Why are talkative and open people so often condemned or dismissed? Why do silent people get all the respect, even when they are self-important and vacuous? He probes these tricky questions almost to the point of obsession in his works, inhabited, as they are, by likable and highly intelligent characters who cannot control their speech and behaviour, and unlikeable and vacuous characters who can. Ethical measures of speech and silence are taken in *Romeo and Juliet* (Romeo, the Nurse and, particularly, Mercutio); *Measure for Measure* (Isabella and Angelo); *King Lear* (Cordelia and The Fool); *Othello* (Iago); *Hamlet* (Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes); the Sonnets (194; 138). Silence looks good, Shakespeare seems to be arguing, but God knows what it could be concealing; and not always depth. It is only by way of speech—the sign of cleverness, but also the mark of the Devil—that the question can be resolved, a listener’s intellect swayed and heart moved. We are brought into this world with a difficult ethical task of how to harness our speech not only to live a moral and godly life, but also in order to create a persona to represent us within the broader society.

The Double Tongue

Uniquely amongst organs of sense, the tongue has a second, non-sensual function. It tastes, but it also speaks. In the medieval and early modern imaginations, the two functions of the tongue are both linked with food and feeding. What the tongue tastes, can nourish or poison the body; and what it says, can nourish or poison the mind. By holding both body and mind in its sway, the tongue has enormous ethical power.

Medieval and Renaissance treatises on the tongue talk of it primarily as the instrument of speech, which, in turn, is the instrument of the brain: thought made manifest. The speech that the tongue produces enables the speaker to enter the ears, and the mind of the interlocutor. The semantic link is so powerful, that the word “tongue” is often used synecdochally, to mean “speech”, just as “hand” can be used

to suggest describe writing. This undue favouring of the tongue as the instrument of speech over the tongue as an instrument of tasting was probably due to the location of the tongue in the head, close to the brain, and the overwhelming importance of speech for human interaction.

But although treatises on the tongue rarely address the tasting function of the tongue, something very interesting happens: the ethical function of the tongue, speaking, becomes semantically elided with the sensual function of the tongue, tasting, and imagery of food, its, proximity, wholesomeness and taste—whether pleasant or unpleasant—become employed to describe the tongue functioning as the organ of speech.

As is well known, speech is, in and of itself, associated with multiple ethical dualities associated with significant anxieties. People can tell the truth, and they can tell lies; its influence can be used for good, and for bad ends; etc. Whitney's emblem, "Bilingues cavendi", warns the reader "to shonne a double-tonged mate/ And let them neither suppe, nor dine, nor come within thy gate".²³ Some of the notable treatises on the tongue, Erasmus' *Lingua, siva de linguae usu atque abusu* (*On the Use and Abuses of the Tongue*), Thomas Adams' *The Taming of the Tongue* (Adams 1616, pp. 21–45), Jean de Marconville's *Traicté de la bonne et mauvaise Langue* (1573), George Webbe's *The Arraignment of the Unruly Tongue* and William Perkins's *A Direction for the Government Of the Tongue According to Gods worde*—the latter two edited and translated numerous times from 1593–1634 (Marconville 1573; Webbe 1619; Perkins 1593)—all refer to this anxiety. Dichotomous metaphors involving noise and silence, life and death, succour and injury, are all used to show the power the tongue has to do good, as well as harm (Fig. 1).

A Gendered Tongue

The tongue has also been studied copiously in terms of the gendered use of the term. Grossly simplified, the looseness of the tongue is gendered female, and restraint male. It is clear even at first glance that the scenario is a reversal of that found in love poetry, where male poets pursue, and women are silent. The result is that occupations which employed words were devalued, and males engaging in them feminised (Parker 1989, esp. 446). Erasmus, for instance, exhibits considerable anxiety about the gender status of men who are involved in professions involving verbal facility and ornamentation—writers such as himself—and calls them "monsters", probably by reference to hermaphrodites, considered in Antiquity to be monstrous, but prodigious (repulsive, but valuable) (Erasmus of Rotterdam 1989). Holy silence and control of one's tongue are desirable for both men and women, although

²³ Whitney (1586), p. 160. Although the "double tongue" refers to personal ethics, it is interesting to note that the term is sourced from the negative ethical "colouring" attached to the idea of bilingualism, the source meaning of "double tongue".



A Satyre, and his hoste, in mid of winters rage,
 At night, did hie them to the fire, the could for to asswage.
 The man with could that quak'd, vpon his handes did blowe:
 Which thinge the Satyre marked well; and crau'd the cause to knowe.
 Who answere made, herewith my fingers I doe heate:
 At lengthe when supper time was come, and bothe sat downe to eate;
 He likewise blew his brothe, he tooke out of the pottle:
 Being likewise asked why: (quoth hee) bicause it is to whotte.
 To which the Satyre spake, and blow'st thou whotte, and coulde?
 Hereafter, with such double mouthes, I will no frendship houlde.
 Which warneth all, to shonne a double tonged mate:
 And let them neither suppe, nor dine, nor come within thy gate.

Ars de-



Fig. 1 *Bilingues Cavendi*, from Geoffrey Whitney, *A choice of emblems*, Leyden, in the house of Christopher Plantyn, by Francis Raphelengius 1586. (Courtesy Early English Books Online, Copy from: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery)

for different reasons (obedience for women, prudence and dignity for men). The gendering of the notion eloquence in *The Taming of the Shrew* has also been discussed abundantly.

Erasmus links speech to sexual display, making the connection between adornments of the body and rhetorical adornments, both considered attractive, even necessary, but harkening back to Ovid's dictum "the art is to hide the art"²⁴, ethically dubious. Dana E. Aspinall suggests that the sexualised notion of the "unruly member" is at the heart of the early modern vision of the tongue.²⁵ The senses are most commonly represented as openings, wickets, gateways or doorways of the mind, all of which, interestingly, suggest protective, but also weakening functions.²⁶ Like a lustful finger or penis, the tongue can probe hearing, and sin can ensue. But in Thomas Tomkis' play *Lingua: or the combat of the tongue and the five senses for superiority* (1607), the main character, the speaking tongue, is gendered female, and represented as the sixth sense, completely separate from the other five senses, including taste, all of whom are gendered male, and awarded especially to the use of women. (*Lingua*, 4.7)

Taste and Ethics

Ethical functions of the tongue as the organ of speech are often described in metaphors which draw on the effects of food or on the sense of taste; they are also often elided. Erasmus describes the cognitive and moral effects of speech in terms of wholesomeness of digestion: speech is "deadly poison if it acts with ill will, but a universal antidote if good intentions control it".²⁷ William Perkins describes the heart as the "fountaine of speech; and if the fountaine be defiled [...] the streams that issue thence can not be cleane" [Mat. 15.19].²⁸ Elsewhere, George Webbe uses taste words to describe the Bible (presumably read out loud), as "a fountain from which waters flow, both sweet and bitter".²⁹ Marconville's 1573 *Traicte de la Bonne*

²⁴ *Ars est celare artem*, the story of Pygmalion, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

²⁵ Aspinall (2002), p. 10. See also Boose (1991).

²⁶ Bartolomeo Del Bene (1609), pp. 28–29, represents the soul as a city with five gates; Edmund Spenser's five bulwarks of the Castle of Alma in *The Faerie Queene* (Spenser 1981, 2.11.7–13); the "Cinque Ports" or "five imaginary forts" of Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House", Marvell (2007), l. 349. For a detailed discussion of these works and a detailed discussion of touch, see Harvey (2011) p. 392.

²⁷ Erasmus of Rotterdam (1989), p. 360 (LB IV 722-D/ASD IV-I 330).

²⁸ Perkins (1595), p. 1. Webbe also uses the same expression (1619), p. 144. Also cited in Vienne-Guerrin (2012), p. xxxvi.

²⁹ Webbe (1619), p. 2. Also cited in Vienne-Guerrin (2012), p. xviii. *The Unruly Tongue in Early Modern England* (Vienne-Guerrin 2012) is a scholarly edition of three early modern treatises on the unruly tongue: Jean de Marconville, *A Treatise of the Good and Evell Tounge* (ca.1592), William Perkins, *A Direction for the Government of the Tongue according to Gods worde* (1595), and George Webbe, *The Araignment of an unruly Tongue* (1619). "The tongue can no man tame" says

et Mauvaise Langue writes on ethics of intention, thought and speech, but his last work deals with taste, specifically the dignity and usefulness of salt (*De la dignité et utilité du sel et de la grande charité et Presque famine d'iceluy en l'an present* (Paris, 1574). Shakespeare's *King Lear* appears to involve certain elements of an ancient folk tale in which the youngest daughter suffers punishment for comparing her love for her father with her love of salt (and is later vindicated when there is a shortage of salt, and people must endure horribly bland foods and a range of diseases). Calvin called the gospel 'bread', nothing it also had 'taste'.³⁰ Most of these metaphors rely on imagining the taste of something eaten or drunk to portray the ethics of speech, portrayed as delivered by the very organ which "reads" taste. This positions the tongue in a unique position of being both the source and the outcome—the code as well as the decoder—of ethical messages.

"Grace and Beauty belong to sight and hearing alone," wrote Robert Burton in *Anatomy of Melancholy*, while 'pleasure belongeth to the rest of the senses.' (Burton 2001, p. 500) The sense of taste is particularly ethically fraught. On one hand, wholesome and tasty food is necessary for survival and health; but on the other, pleasant food is to be treated with caution, as it can lead to gluttony, one of seven deadly sins linked to lust (See also Vitullo 2010, p. 106). Temptation by delectable food is often used in Renaissance poetry as a metaphor for sexual temptation; religious and medical treatises of the period warn against the particularly corrupting influences of gluttony. Enhancing the natural taste of foods, much like using make-up and fashion to make the face and body more sexually attractive, was a particularly fraught concept.³¹ On one hand, enhancement is good; judicious use of spices makes food pleasant to eat, and this can stave off malnutrition. On the other, food made too pleasant by means of skilful cookery encourages overeating and endangers the eater with dependence on worldly pleasures. St Bernard de Clairvaux writes on the corrupting nature of condiments, which should be used "to make food edible, but not alluring or pleasurable".³² Elsewhere, Bernard compares devotion to honey, the condiment of spirit without which "the written letters bring death".³³ He also uses other condiments to describe the ethical rightness of Christian faith:

the Bible (James 3:8), and yet these texts try to tame the tongues of men and tell them how they should rule this little but essential organ and avoid swearing, blaspheming, cursing, lying, flattering, railing, slandering, quarrelling, babbling, jesting, or mocking. This volume excavates the biblical and classical sources in which these early modern texts are embedded and gives a panorama of the sins of the tongue that the Elizabethan society both cultivates and strives to contain. Vienne-Guerrin provides the reader with early modern images of what Erasmus described as a "slippery" and "ambivalent" organ that is both sweet and sour, a source of life and death.

³⁰ Jean Calvin, *A little booke of Iohn Caluines*, fols 9v, 20 r, 68r; Whitgift, *The Defense of the Aunswere*, p. 34, cited in Milner (2011), p. 279, footnote 233.

³¹ It is semantically akin to the processes of enhancing female beauty by means of makeup; the ethical ambiguity of the latter has been discussed by many writers—most memorable examples come from Ovid in *The Art of love* to Pietro Aretino in *The School of Whoredom* and Shakespeare in *The Winter's Tale* and *Hamlet*, and many others.

³² St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1679), V, p. 93 cited in Camporesi (1994), p. 69 and 89 (footnote 6).

³³ St. Bernard of Clairvaux (2010), "Sermon 7.4.5".

The name of Jesus is not only light but food also, yea, oil, without which all the food of the soul is dry; salt, without which as a condiment whatever is set before us is insipid; in fine, honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, joy in the heart, and, at the same time medicine: every discourse, where this name is not heard is absurd.³⁴

Not all condiments were ethically equal. Honey, which occurs naturally, was revered from antiquity. Plato defines “sweetness” and the “general name of honey” as the moment when the mouth is relaxed to its natural state after having been tightened by contact with sourness or bitterness (*Timaeus* 60b), making a clear link between honey and creativity:

For the poets tell us . . . that the melodies they bring us are gathered from rills that run with honey.
(Plato, *Ion*, 534a-b)

Medical treatises credited honey with the ability to heal and to preserve: honey “not only cleanseth, altereth, and nourisheth, but also it long time preserveth that uncorrupted, which is put into it.” (Elyot 1595, H4r–H4v) When used as a metaphor in love poetry, honey suggests purity, natural sweetness and artistic merit in the beloved. By contrast, the sweetness of sugar, a man-made sweetener, was associated with deception. *Confictio*, Latin for ‘fabricate, cheat, deceive, manipulate,’ is the root of the English words *confectionary* and *fiction*. It is also at the root of the Italian word *confetti*, the art of sugar-coating with the aim of improving the shape and taste of food (Palma 2004, p. 42). Petrarch draws on the image of *confetti* when he suggests that Laura’s cruelty is concealed by her sweet . . . form (265:2).³⁵ The pleasure of taste and the danger of gluttony are often used in Renaissance love poetry. Spenser calls his lady’s glance “ambrosial meat”, an effective poetic image which blends the spiritual and the corporeal.³⁶ He also calls the lady his food in the very first sonnet of the *Amoretti*. This is a very striking image: Spenser gives projected pleasures of the palate pride of place, foreshadowing the pleasures of the marriage bed. In the process, he adds taste to the array of the senses used for image-building in Elizabethan Petrarchism. Francesco Patrizzi da Cherso, a fifteenth-century Florentine Neoplatonist, worked on the ethical apology for the kiss, and, by extension, the taste of the beloved’s lips. His view was that the kiss was good, not evil, because the mouth and the breath are the seat of life. Although it engages the senses of smell and taste, considered by Neoplatonists to be the non-spiritual, “bad” senses, Patrizzi argued that the kiss brings divine desire closer to the soul by means of the exchange of the breath of life. If the desire is enjoyed by way of a kiss and not taken further, it remains holy and close to the spirit of Platonic heavenly love (Patrizzi 2005). Spenser’s “kiss sonnet” uses taste and smell in a powerful combination: describing a cascade of sweet garden fragrances that envelop his speaker’s sense of smell as he approaches his beloved (Elizabeth Boyle), Edmund Spenser may have begun his

³⁴ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica Canticatorum* “Serm. 15:6”, quoted by Calvin (1574), II:16:1, fol 149–150. See also St. Bernard of Clairvaux (2010), “Sermo: 15:6”.

³⁵ My writing in this section is variously indebted to supervising the work of Claudia Lewin, (2012), pp. 48–50.

³⁶ Compare Petrarch’s somewhat tamer description of Laura as “food so noble” as to eclipse “Jove’s sweet ambrosia”. Petrarch (1999).

Sonnet 64, often called the “kiss” sonnet, in a similar spirit. Nevertheless, each of the fresh floral fragrances described in the poem is associated with an individual body part of the lady, so the poem takes the form of a modified *blazon*, leading, inevitably, to sexual titillation. The poem culminates in an explosion of synesthetic imagery in which smell and colour are transmogrified into taste of strawberries, associated with the lady’s nipples. The food imagery used in the context of wooing creates a multi-layered semantic link between the gastronomic and the sexual.

Food imagery can also be used to signal the interplay of desire and power. It is possible that the idea of using the food in the discourse of courtship came to Spenser via the work of Pulci, Erasmus, Aretino or Ariosto, all of whom used it to describe the interplay of sexual desire and power (Palma 2004). George Chapman’s *Ovids Banquet of Sence*, published in 1595 (the same year as *Amoretti*) and presumably written around the same time, explores the complex links of enjoyment and imagining enjoyment: feasting, observing feasting, sexual congress and observing sexual congress. There is no evidence to suggest the direction in which the idea of food imagery flowed, if indeed it flowed at all. Spenser uses love of food to signal a range of processes related to love, courtship and desire. He defines his erotic feelings in terms of hunger and surfeit (with a hint of Ovid’s Narcissus), in Sonnets 35 and 83³⁷; he describes the solitary pleasure the speaker takes in prolonged contemplation of the lady’s body in terms of taking a meal (77); he compares the lady’s breasts to a number of apples from the old stories, from Atalanta’s apples to the Biblical fruit of knowledge, all of which caused the characters’ downfall.³⁸ Shakespeare also uses gluttony and imagery of food repeatedly in his Sonnets, usually to show how closely connected eating and sexual desire are, and how ethically dangerous.

Or gluttoning on all, or all away.
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 75:13–14)

Like as, to make our appetites more keen,
With eager compounds we our palate urge
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 118:1–2)

Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
Th’ uncertain sickly appetite to please
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 147:3–4)

³⁷ All references to Spenser’s sonnets come from Spenser (1999). 35 and 83 are, in fact, the same sonnet, the second version containing minor lexical differences. The repetition of the Narcissus motif could have been used to heighten its importance and impact, as well as provide relief from the gathering narrative movement. Opinions on the reasons for the repetition of this sonnet differ. Lever considered it the most important mark of “haste and botching” in the printing of the volume containing *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion* (Lever 1956/1966, p. 101), an opinion with which Donna Gibbs essentially agrees (Gibbs 1990, p. 30). Louis Martz, on the other hand, saw the repetition as a “designed reminiscence and recurrence of an earlier mood of pining and complaint” (Martz 1961, p. 151) while Alexander Dunlop saw it as part of the lover’s progress in the education of love while Alexander Dunlop saw it as part of the lover’s progress in the education of love (Dunlop, 1978, esp. p. 280).

³⁸ Conversely, Kenneth Larsen argues that Christian remodelling of Tasso’s classical apple references signals the prelapsarian gracefulness of the breast. Spenser (1997), p. 27.

Smell and Moral Intuition

The sense of smell is described in the early modern period in a way that can be associated with cognitive capacity in the form of intuition. Othello is accusing Desdemona of infidelity, when he catches a whiff of her body scent, and is caught off balance:

...and smell'st so sweet, that sense aches at thee.
(Shakespeare, *Othello*, IV.2.70–71)

Shakespeare's use of smell here appears extraordinarily contemporary. It is reminiscent of the use of colour that Luce Irigaray has called *chroma soma*—body speaking through colour³⁹ and without words—only in this case the body is speaking through scent. This quote shows arresting insight about the nature of the relationship between strong moral intuition and psycho-somatic phenomena and indicates that he is sub-consciously aware of her innocence and his love, portraying Othello as deeply distraught, yet self-aware. This place shows that those who believe that Othello is a hopelessly non-reflexive character (Bradley 1905; Stone 1996) might have been wrong. As the sense of smell is associated with unconscious processes, ethical applications of the sense of smell can be related to a quick emotional and ethical response sensed at a non-verbal or pre-verbal level, and, through it, with the inner moral sense/conscience. Othello uses the word “sense” to mean “the sense of smell”, but also “common sense”. He also uses the word in the meaning explained in *The Garden of Eloquence*: “the property of smelling findeth oftentimes the effect before the eye can discern the cause: [it refers] to providence and foresight, which this sense doth most aptly signifie in translation”.⁴⁰ Othello's aching sense stands for his mind and soul brought together through love and fear of God. His conscience—the Divine voice within him—aches at the wrongness of what he is doing and opposes the murderous dictates of his conscious mind.

The sense of smell is used metaphorically in early modern discourse in a way which semantically and substantially connects it to two important epistemological concepts: that of *synderesis*, which Thomas Aquinas considered a natural, innate disposition to understand ethical premises and be struck by the truth of ethical principles before the engagement of the rational capacity⁴¹, as well as *vis aestimativa*, “power of estimation”, one of Aristotle's three “internal senses” (together with imagination and *sensus communis*, or common sense), and the one responsible for foresight and prudence.⁴² Calvin explains the meaning of the verse from Isaiah, translated as “the Lord shall make him of quick understanding”⁴³, as “the Lord shall make him sagacious”, associating a speedy, intuitive response with wisdom. Calvin seems to draw, in part, on the Jewish teachings, in which the sense of smell is considered the most spiritual of all senses, the only sense that “the soul enjoys

³⁹ Irigaray (1993), p. 160. See also Harvey (2007).

⁴⁰ *The Garden of Eloquence*, 4.

⁴¹ Aquinas (1953), Q. 16.2; see also Cummings (2009), p. 469.

⁴² Aristotle, *De anima* 429a; see also Kemp and Fletcher (1993), 561.

⁴³ Isaiah 11:3, which is restated in 2 Nephi 21:3. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (1989).

and not the body”. The Hebrew word for “smell”—ריח (ray-ach) is cognate to the word for “spirit”—רוח (ru-ach). The sense of smell was thought to be the only one not to have participated in the primordial sin of man in the Garden of Eden, and, as such, was the sense of Maschiach (Messiah). “And he shall smell with the awe of God”—“he shall judge by smell” (rather than by sight or hearing. Isaiah 11:3; *Sanhedrin* 93b). By his sense of smell (his “holy spirit”) the Mashiah will know how to connect each Jewish soul to its Divine root, and thereby identify its tribe (branch) in Israel.⁴⁴ Calvin links cognitive and ethical processes to the sense of smell in his commentary on the Bible, particularly the discussion of the Fear of God, which, he argued, must be intuitive, as if smelled out; moral sense must precede the conscious judgment of “the sight of the eyes or the hearing of the ears”, rather than be arrived at consciously. This is how Christ behaves:

The verb ריח, (riach) which is here put in the Hiphil conjugation, signifies literally to smell; but may also be explained in an active sense, as meaning to give a keen smell; which agrees better, I think, with this passage, so that this sagacity may be also included among the gifts of the Spirit. And this effect is peculiarly applicable to the person of Christ, namely, that far beyond what the godly are able to conceive, he is endowed with shrewd discernment for governing his people. We ought to attend, first of all, to the metaphor in the verb smell, which means that Christ will be so shrewd that he will not need to learn from what he hears, or from what he sees; for by smelling alone he will perceive what would otherwise be unknown. (Calvin 1609, pp. 120–121)

Calvin appears also to be using the word in the same meaning used in England by the rhetorical handbook *The Garden of Eloquence*, in which “by smelling out, is signified knowledge gathered by prudent suspicion”.⁴⁵ Moral judgment is often implied in early modern literary metaphors involving a sense of smell, as in Hamlet’s observation that “something is rotten in the state of Denmark” (*Hamlet*, 1.4.:67). In Sonnet 94, Shakespeare memorably draws on this connection when he uses a metaphor of the smell of festering lilies to predict the young man’s moral decline:

Lillies that fester smell far worse than weeds.
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 94:14)

This image is deeply disturbing ethically. By comparing the young man to a lily, Shakespeare describes him as all things sweet, good and strong; the lily is a symbol of purity, virginity (it often appears in Renaissance paintings of Annunciation as the flower brought to Mary by Angel Gabriel), royalty (*fleur the lis* adorns the coats of arms of many European royal houses), and a hot and dry quality that characterises ideal Renaissance masculinity. However, lilies were also believed to be profoundly toxic, and their smell a harbinger of the plague:

...the flowers, leaves and rootes are used in medicine, but not in the kitchen. [...] They are a great ornament to a garden or in a house, yet the smell of them is discommended and accounted ill for the plague.
(Cogan 1584, *The Haven of Health*, p. 56)⁴⁶

The young man, then, combines in his person purity and filth.

⁴⁴ Gal Einai Institute (1996–2011), web n.p.

⁴⁵ Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence*, 4.

⁴⁶ See also Schoenfeldt, 94, and Duncan-Jones (2003), esp. 138.

The Garden of Eloquence makes clear the ethical implications of Shakespeare's decision to employ such a symbol:

The things which do please this sense [of smell], are sweete sauours, and pleasant odors, and therefore the vse of this sense in translation is commonly vsed to signifie the pleasure of the mind, as the contraries are vsed to expresse the hatred and offence of man's heart, as when it is said, that abominations of sinne do stink end are odious to God and all good men.⁴⁷

The unmistakable smell of faecal matter may account, to a certain degree, for the semantic link between the expulsion of faeces and the purging of the natural and political bodies. Macbeth talks of eliminating English invaders in terms of faeces that needs to be purged: 'What rhubarb, cyme, or what purgative drug/Would scour these English hence?' (57–58). As Peter Smith writes, purging was considered crucial for physical and mental health:

Essentially Galenic in origin, the Renaissance body was kept in order by the correct balance of the four humours. Phlebotomy and purging were the order of the day, designed to keep the bodily fluids in kilter. Laxatives, purges, clysters, enemas, carminatives and emetics were designed to cleanse the body of unwelcome influences.

(Smith 2012, p. 5)

Touch

Touch is distinguished from other senses by emanating from sensors covering the entire body—skin as well as mucous membrane—whereas other senses are located in small, contained sections on the human head. The fact that it is removed from the head, the seat of cognition, gives it the reputation of a baser sense; yet the fact that it covers a large area of the human body makes it also very powerful and necessary for learning, for, as Elizabeth Harvey has it, to touch is also always to be touched (Harvey 2011, pp. 386–389). On one hand, touch is situated in the hand, the locus of worthy human works; the touch of hand and the entire skin are associated with dangers of sexual temptation, as in this verse, in which Sidney uses touch to describe the power of Stella's eyes:

...of touch they are, that without touch do touch.⁴⁸

In Sonnet 8, parts of Stella's body are evoked by reference to alabaster, porphyry, gilded reliefs and the smoothness of shiny pearls: each tactile image augments the sexual impact of Sidney's blazon.

The comparatively high status—and vulnerability—of sight are powerfully compared with the low status—and robustness—of touch, by John Milton in *Samson Agonistes*:

...why was the sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confined?
So obvious and so easy to be quenched,

⁴⁷ Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence*, 5.

⁴⁸ Sidney (1962), *Astrophil and Stella*, Sonnet 9.

And not as feeling [touch] through all parts diffused
That she might look at will through every pore?⁴⁹

Touch helps us learn, as in Sir John Davies’ philosophical poem *Nosce Teipsum* (1599):

By touch, the first pure qualities we learn,
Which quicken all things, hot, cold, moist and dry;
By touch, hard, soft, rough, smooth, we do discern;
By touch, sweet pleasure and sharp pain we try.
(Davies 1599, section XVI, pp. 45–46)

The *Garden of Eloquence* suggests many metaphorical meanings for the sense of touch. The meanings listed include “test by ordeal”, “hurt”, “punish” or “bring to repentance”:

[F]rom this sense [touch] are sundrie Metaphors taken. An example of the holy Scripture, stretch out thy hand now, and touch him selfe and his flesh (Job. 1.): here to touch doth signifie another thing then it doth in the proper signification, for Sathan [sic] by touching vnderstandeth a piercing, and plaguing of Iobs bodie with grieuous and lothsome diseases (Job. 19.) In the same signification Iob afterwards vseth the same word, saying, the hand of God hath touched me, that is, hath grieuolusly smitten and wounded me.⁵⁰

The Garden of Eloquence “translates” the verb “to feel” in a way that associates it with touch; but it is the various violent forms of touch—the nipping, the pricking, the renting, tactile sensations of smoothness and roughness, dryness or embrace, hotness or wetness, that define the moral aspects of touch:

...by feeling is signified vnderstanding, and by the want of feeling is vnderstood the astonishment o mind or lacke of wit...by touchig is vnderstood prouoking... by nipping taunting or priuie mocking, by wounding confusion, by pricking remorse of conscience, by renting extreame grieffe, by smoothnesse faire speech or flatterie, by coldnesse want of affection, by heate vehement displeasure or feruent zeale, by drinesse defect, by embracing loue or possession of pleasure.⁵¹

But what if the same tactile phenomena can be given a different ethical interpretation? Can touch be trusted? Aristotle writes in *De Anima* that touch cannot be doubted: “We may assume that we actually have perception of everything which is apprehended by touch, for by touch we perceive all those things which are qualities of the tangible object.”⁵² Any such certainties are hard to find in the English Renaissance. When Othello takes Desdemona’s hand, he describes it as “hot” and “moist”. These are positive qualities; Othello also calls the hand “good” and “frank”, indicative of “fruitfulness and liberal heart”. But a hot and moist hand also indicates unguarded sexual appetites; it requires penance and spiritual exercises as it betrays “a... sweating devil here,/that commonly rebels” (3.4). The ethical ‘clues’ provided or gained by the sense of touch are highly ambiguous. When Othello moves to murder Desdemona, he decides not to shed her blood, but to find a way of killing

⁴⁹ Milton (1968), ll. 93–97; for a discussion of this passage, see also Harvey (2011), p. 390.

⁵⁰ Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence*, 7.

⁵¹ Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence*, 7.

⁵² Aristotle, *De anima*, 424b. Also cited in Assaf (2005), p. 82 and 95 (see footnote 34).

her which would preserve the lines of her body, whose beauty haunts him. The description is arresting because of the synaesthesia harnessed within it:

...yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster
(Shakespeare, *Othello*, V.2.3–5)

The crucial image here is the whiteness of Desdemona's skin, which attracts him deeply, as well as sets Desdemona forever apart from his own black skin. But beneath the discussion of whiteness are concealed tactile images. The mention of snow suggests that the fingers of the hand touching Desdemona will tingle with sensations as sharp as the pinch of the snow's iciness. The mention of alabaster evokes the sensual, cool smoothness of unmarked white marble, and the word "monumental" subtly conveys a flash of the curves of a voluptuous Greek statue. All of this is sexual; but the imagery also conveys death and oblivion—tombstones covered in snow. Sidney's Sonnet 8 reworks the Petrarchan *contrapositum* of fire and ice by having Cupid alternately burned by the hotness of Astrophil's desire, and frozen by the coldness of Stella's face. The clash of the opposites of Eros and Thanatos and the pent-up energy of the description are reminiscent of the throes of Ovid's Pygmalion, who loves his female statue with a creative and erotic passion intermingled with violence:

With many a touch he tries it—is it flesh
Or ivory?
Kisses he gives and thinks they are returned;
He speaks to it, caresses it, believes
The firm new flesh beneath his fingers yields
And fears the limbs may darken with a bruise.⁵³

Beating, hammering, chiselling, sewing/pinning and other instances of creative activities directed at shaping women's bodies and minds, used as a way of describing the sensations of love and poetic creation of the poetic works, but also of women themselves, are often employed in the love poetry of the Renaissance. Petrarch's word *scolpito*, sculpted or chiselled, also means "restored to wholeness" (with a sexual connotation) (Petrarch 1999, p. 543), and his use of the term *incarnare* involves several meanings—to create in the flesh (theology), to paint in a flesh-coloured colour (painting), to represent in a lifelike manner (poetry) and to insert one's flesh into (sexual meaning).⁵⁴ In Sonnets 32 and 51 of the *Amoretti*, Edmund Spenser the speaker compares his lady to iron "mollified with heate", then beaten, in order for her "stubberne wit" to be bent into shape he deems appropriate. It is the fashioning of the lady through sexuality that is made to be its focus of the forging image. In Sonnet 37 of *Delia*, Samuel Daniel proposes a similar point, with a light and ironic touch: his Pygmalion is not shown sculpting or fashioning hard matter, but sewing and embroidering his text with a needle and thread of his wit.

⁵³ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, X-259. See also Miller (1990) and Dinter (1979).

⁵⁴ 'Inedesimarsi', trans: 'insert oneself', Santagata (1996), p. 1186.

The gender twist toys with, but does not genuinely subvert a proposal of masculine authority: like Petrarch, Daniel’s speaker turns nouns “star” and “woman” into transitive verbs (“to instarre” and “t’ inwoman”), which aligns his own creative power with the grammar of divine creation, recalling Petrarch’s multi-faceted *incarnare*.

Paul Siegel writes that the new Tudor aristocracy focused on not on the Neoplatonist ideals of attaining love which is a vision of divine beauty, but on the Protestant ideal of what, in Spenser’s phrase, “seems on earth most heavenly”: marital harmony, which includes sexual hamony.⁵⁵ As Wim François writes, Jean Calvin saw sex in wedlock as *remedium concupiscentiae*, a remedy against immoral urges: offset by the goodness of marriage, sexual touch and intercourse cease to be sinful among baptized Christians. Instead, they become something pure, holy and good, believed to have been created by God in order to allow man and wife to foster their mutual affection and even sensitivity to each other’s needs.⁵⁶

The third kinde of humane love, is that, which resolueth into desire of vnition, with the thing beautifull, not only in minde, but also corporally, yet by lawful and honest meane; and this loue is that, which is the beginning of thrice sacred Matrimony.
(Romei 1598, p. 40)

From a Platonic exchange of *gazes*, we arrive at the exchange of sexual and intellectual pleasures inherent in a companionate marriage and mutual enjoyment of marital harmony.

Yet it is a reality of human life that not all desire for sexual touch is holy, no more than all love is sensual. What of desires which exist outside the senses, yet have the power to govern and direct the epistemological interpretation of what is received through the senses? Are they destructive or uplifting? Shakespeare describes his thralldom to the Dark Lady as being distinctly outside the physiological and rational realms:

In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes,
For they in thee a thousand errors note;
But ‘tis my heart that loves what they despise,
Who, in despite of view, is pleased to dote.
Nor are mine ears with thy tongue’s tune delighted,
Nor tender feeling to base touches prone;
Nor taste, nor smell, desire to be invited
To any sensual feast with thee alone.
But my five wits nor my five senses can
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 141:1–10)

It is possible that Shakespeare is referring to the Aristotelian common sense; however I do not think this is likely, as this division is rejected by Florentine Neoplatonists⁵⁷, and it is far more likely that Shakespeare is reinterpreting a Platonic idea that love is able to transcend the material and the rational. It is this view, perhaps,

⁵⁵ Siegel (1945), esp. 175, where Siegel cites Spenser (1596), p. 5.

⁵⁶ Calvin, *Commentary on I Cor. 7:6*, (1546), CR 49, cited by Francois (forthcoming 2014).

⁵⁷ Valla (1982), *Repastinatio*, 73.



Fig. 2 Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625) and Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), taste, sense of taste or allegory of taste (French title: Le goût, le sens du goût ou Allégorie du goût), 1618. 64 × 109 cm

that marks the beginnings of modernity and a new understanding a virtuous life as defined by a sensual exchange in harmony with not in opposition to, the senses (Fig. 2).

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The Material Soul: Strategies for Naturalising the Soul in an Early Modern Epicurean Context

Charles T. Wolfe and Michaela van Esveld

“Material”: “composed of matter. The soul of animals is material, that of humans is spiritual.” (Furetière 1702, p. 518
(Unless otherwise indicated all translations are ours.)

“The soul is to the body as scent is to incense.”
(*L'Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 174)

Introduction

In the radical streams of early modern thought, from ‘anatomical-metaphysical’ treatises such as the Epicurean physician Guillaume Lamy’s *Discours anatomiques*, clandestine manuscripts such as *L'Âme Matérielle*, and, some generations later, La Mettrie’s *L'Homme-Machine*, we find a unique intellectual situation in which materialism is asserted while the existence of the soul is not denied. At first glance this may seem contradictory: isn’t one of the key tenets of materialism the denial of the soul in favour of the sole existence of the body (or the brain)? In fact, as readers familiar with Lucretius and Epicurus and their early modern posterity already know, there is an intermediate, or perhaps we should say *hybrid* option, in which the immortal, or purely intellectual soul is denied, but a *material soul* is affirmed. And indeed, it was an old idea. The thesis of the materiality of the soul is considered to be a characteristic materialist tenet well before the thesis of the eternity of matter and motion (Motheu 1990–1991) or the inherence of motion in matter, with Toland. Thus the Abbé Pluquet, in his eighteenth-century catalogue of heresies—which, like other works by anti-materialist clerics (apologeticists), always proves to be

C. T. Wolfe (✉)

Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium
e-mail: ctwolfe1@gmail.com

M. van Esveld

Unit for History and Philosophy of Science, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
e-mail: michaelavanesveld@gmail.com

a helpful guide to the internal structures of heterodox thought—explains that the thinkers he calls “Materialists or Materials” (*Matérialistes ou Matériels*, terminology he attributes to Tertullian) believe “that the soul is born of matter.” (Pluquet 1762/1788, II, s.v. “Matérialistes,” p. 300)

This concept is sometimes presented as deriving from medicine (Thomson 2008) or from theological debate (Henry 1989; Kors 1990), and of course texts such as the revealingly titled *Religio medici* by Thomas Browne (on the religious side) and Guillaume Lamy’s *Discours anatomiques* (on the atheistic side) fuse medical and theological discourses together. The physician’s knowledge of the structure of the body can be presented as a posteriori knowledge of *design*—something Harvey and to a lesser extent Willis do, and Boyle did much more emphatically, particularly in his 1688 *Disquisition about the Final Causes of Natural Things*, in which he takes Harvey’s discovery of the circulation of the blood to be evidence of design, and presents Harvey himself as supporting this view: “when I asked our famous Harvey... what were the things that induced him to think of a circulation of the Blood? He answered me, that when he took notice that the valves in the veins of so many several parts of the body, were so placed... *he was invited to imagine, that so provident a cause as nature had not plac’d so many valves without design....*”¹ But the physician’s knowledge of the body can also support the claim that there is no immortal soul (Lamy, *L’Âme Matérielle*, La Mettrie); there may exist a material soul, that dies with us, as doctors claim to have observed. Of course, depending on their own ideological convictions, physicians can either claim that on the Last Judgment we are resurrected as a whole (body and soul) or, in proper Lucretian fashion, that we need have no fear because afterwards there is—nothing.

It is important to note that the very existence of such a concept as the material soul—in its different contexts, registers and intentions—challenges received notions of both materialism and the history of psychological concepts such as intentionality. Consider the following verdict on materialism, in a discussion of eighteenth-century French thought:

Materialism as a working philosophy, used as a tool in the scientific investigation of the material universe, is appropriate and highly effective. Intended for the objective analysis and description of the world of externals, it yields disastrous results when applied to the inner, subjective world of human nature, human thought, and human emotions (Hill 1968, p. 90).

Our response is not strictly that it yields, or yielded only the best results, but that the world of subjectivity, of inner principles of animation and desire, is far from being either a polar opposite of what the materialist project seeks to grasp, or somehow categorically out of its reach.²

¹ Boyle, *Disquisition about the Final Causes of Natural Things*, in Boyle 1772/1968, vol. V, p. 427; emphasis ours. But Boyle also warns against taking final causes to be more primary than natural science: “the naturalist should not suffer the search, or the discovery of a Final Cause of Nature’s works, to make him under-value or neglect the studious indagation [investigation] of their efficient causes” (Boyle 1772/1968, p. 411).

² For a related opposition between a more ‘static’ picture of early modern materialism and one which emphasises its fluid, humoral, dynamic character see Sutton and Tribble’s critique of Hawkes (2011).

In what follows we reconstruct the conceptual persona of the ‘material soul’ in the early modern period. There are many materialist concepts of ‘mind’ (as locus of mental activity), in which the soul can be presented as integrated within an embodied, material whole—whether in the metaphysical context of a ‘functional dualism’ (Wright 2000), the medicalised approach to types of soul (corporeal, incorporeal, etc.) or the more naturalistic context of soul as the product of the brain. Descartes is often granted a paradigmatic status in these debates, as having articulated a conception of body-soul relations that played a defining role in his time (also because his delimitation allows—up to a point—for the safe pursuit of medicine and natural philosophy, as distinct from the metaphysics of substance dualism). But as our discussion shows (see also Wright 1991a), he was not so paradigmatic: either because of a more pronounced *Epicurean* dimension of the debates (to which the concept of material soul in large part belongs), or because post-Cartesians such as Regius, Boerhaave and Gaub are actually quite far removed from either Cartesian mechanism and/or Cartesian physiology. In addition, figures at the intersection of medicine and metaphysics like Francis Glisson (Henry 1987) effectively do not belong to any of these ‘traditions’ or ‘trajectories’.³ A somewhat different point, discussed in Sects. 5 and 7, is the usage of Malebranche’s account of brain and animal spirits—itself an extension of Cartesian themes, but an original one—in a materialist direction.

One major objection to the materiality of the soul, which forms an alternate line of development, concerns its mortality or immortality (and its materiality or immateriality, which were often run together with the former distinction). At least as early as Locke in the late seventeenth century (himself perhaps influenced by earlier Puritans such as Richard Baxter⁴), and extending as far as Priestley in the late eighteenth century, the case was clearly and fluently made that one could be an observant and devout Christian without being committed to substance dualism (itself suspected of being a piece of Catholic metaphysics). These arguments about the divine superaddition of matter to thought combine sophisticated appeals to Scripture and a priori conceptual analysis of, e.g., thought and matter as substances. Thus Locke famously and influentially claimed that since we do not, and cannot know the essence of matter or thought, we cannot know with any certainty whether God (“Omnipotency”) could give (“superadd”) matter the power of thought (Locke 1975, IV.iii.6, pp. 540–541): “he who will give himself leave to consider freely... will scarce find his Reason able to determine him fixedly for, or against, the Soul’s Materiality.” (Locke 1975, p. 542)

But it was also possible to challenge this ‘doxa’ concerning the soul by appealing to a different source: an Epicurean, then humoral, then chymiatric and finally materialist tradition, from Epicurus and Lucretius to Robert Burton, Thomas Willis, Guillaume Lamy, the anonymous clandestine texts discussed here such as *L’Âme Matérielle*,

³ That Descartes has come to be understood in much more ‘embodied’ terms in recent years does not affect the story told in this paper. See Sutton (1998) and Wolfe (2012a, b).

⁴ In his 1682 work *Of the immortality of mans soule...*, Baxter challenged “the Cartesians” in the name of devotion to God, ironically “confessing” that he was “too dull to be sure that God cannot endue matter itself with the formal virtue of Perception” (cit. in Henry 1987, p. 36).

and La Mettrie. Should one speak of a humoral materialism? (For reasons of space if nothing else, we shall not focus on humoralism as an “alternative way to study the body” which allows for “a consideration of the ‘lived’ body.”⁵) Or an Epicurean tradition? The Epicurean concept of material soul—by which we mean an artefact of early modernity, not something found in the original Epicurean corpus, although some of its key components include citations of texts such as Lucretius’ *De rerum natura*—is a combination of several elements, including: the notion of the organic soul, coming out of the naturalistic appropriation of Aristotle’s *De anima* with Pomponazzi and others (to which specifically Epicurean elements are added); the corporeal soul in a ‘neuropsychological’ context, with Willis; and Malebranche’s post-Cartesian psychophysiology of animal spirits.

We shall present the key features of these three elements, along with some reflections on how medicine and metaphysics are articulated in this process, before showing how they come together in two key texts of the early modern Epicurean tradition: the writings of the seventeenth-century Epicurean physician Guillaume Lamy, and the clandestine manuscript *L’Âme Matérielle*. Then we turn to the explicitly materialist reception of these ideas in the mid-eighteenth century, before concluding with some reflections on models of the material soul and their implications for the history of materialism.

Early Conceptions of the Organic Soul

Aristotle defines the soul as “the first actuality of a natural body which has organs” in book II of *De anima* (412 b 5–6). In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries this supported a psychology that gave each activity of the soul both a psychological and physical explanation (Park 1988; Des Chene 2000). For example, memory was defined as a capacity for recall but was also located in the vapours in the posterior ventricle of the brain (Park 1988, p. 468). The way in which Aristotle’s *De anima* was, in his own view, inscribed in a ‘biological’ project, continuous with his more explicitly biological works (on the parts, generation and movement of animals) has been increasingly recognised in recent scholarship (van der Eijk 2005). And the availability of this work for more heterodox projects of ‘naturalisation’ in early modernity is patent in the opening lines of the treatise: the “study of the soul” contributes greatly to the “study of nature” (*De an.*, 402 a 5–6), because the soul is a “principle of life.” This began with commentators on *De anima* and other writers in the Aristotelian tradition, who introduced arguments based on anatomical information into treatments of the organic soul (Park 1988). Further, in the part of Avicenna’s *Shifā* (published 1020–1027) which came to be viewed as a commentary on Aristotle’s *De anima* during the later Middle Ages, we find a distinction drawn between the study of the soul in itself, which belongs to metaphysics, and the study of the soul as the principle of animation, which belongs to natural philosophy (Lagerlund 2004).

⁵ Smith (2008), p. 473. We do not discuss this aspect here; see Wolfe (2012a).

Overall, the initial naturalisation of the Aristotelian system took shape because natural philosophers did not restrict their analysis to the final and formal causes of psychological phenomena (the soul and its faculties), but also focused on efficient and material causes (perhaps primarily so), which they interpreted as the physical processes accounting for these phenomena and the organs in which they took place (Park 1988, p. 468; Rapp 2006). This increasingly marked turn towards physiological organs was, unsurprisingly, presented as Aristotle's own view in each case, which begins to look rather forced once the organic soul is explicitly presented as *material* (it was already accepted by many to be extended and divisible), and identified with *spiritus*, the vapour refined from humours in the blood that was thought to fill the arteries and the nerves (Park 1988, p. 483).⁶

Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), influenced by Alexander of Aphrodisias, argued in his scandalous *Tractatus de immortalitate animae* (published 1516) that Aristotle's analysis of the soul in *De anima* is inconsistent with the soul's immortality; since Pomponazzi is not denying the latter, he infers that we can only know it through faith, not reason. In Chap. 9 of this work, he specifically claims that the human soul is always dependent on its organs (a view familiar from Galen's late treatise on the soul's dependence on the body), and is hence material. Discussing Aristotle's doctrine of imagination (*phantasia*: cf. *De anima*, 431a16–17), he insists that it is entirely the product of material, sensory interactions.⁷

The ease with which Aristotle could be taken up in a naturalistic project *malgré lui* (like Malebranche could in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries) was noted early on by Pierre Bayle. In the entry "Pereira" of his *Dictionnaire*, Bayle remarks with many conditionals that "one might believe" that "Aristotle only granted a difference between the animal soul and the human soul in terms of greater or lesser [capacities] of organs (*une différence du plus au moins*)"; this merely quantitative difference would entail that the human soul could carry out subtle reasoning, while the animal soul could only do so "in a confused manner." And this "confirms the claim of those who say he [Aristotle] did not believe in the immortality of the soul."⁸ To be clear, Bayle is not agreeing with the view, but is noting the ease with which it can be proclaimed, and credited to Aristotle.

Thus natural philosophy by the mid-sixteenth century produced a concept sometimes referred to as the 'organic soul', in which the concept of soul—at some distance from Christian eschatology—becomes primarily an explanatory, natural-philosophical construct for our animating life functions, and how these relate to human intellectual or rational capacities. As Park defines it, the organic soul is "the principle responsible for those life functions inextricably tied to the bodies of living beings and immediately dependent on their organs" (Park 1988, p. 464; See also Sutton, 2013). Simpler, baser life functions of nutrition, growth and reproduction

⁶ Park mentions Melanchton and Telesio, to which we can add Pomponazzi and Cardano.

⁷ There are multiple strands of these naturalistic reinterpretations of Aristotle; for instance, the anonymous manuscript of 1659 *Theophrastus redivivus* tries to restate Aristotle's Prime Mover in these terms (Paganini 1985).

⁸ Bayle, "Pereira," remark E, in Bayle (1740), vol. 3, p. 653; see Paganini (1985).

were observed across different species, but sensitive, even cognitive, life functions were observed and collected into another level of organic soul. While the localisation of vital and cognitive functions was already an ancient research program (“among the ancients, there were many who located the soul in the brain, the heart, the chest, or ‘in some hidden place, from which like a spider it runs through the whole body when opportunity bids’”, Des Chene 2000, p. 191, citing the Coimbra Jesuit commentaries on *De Anima*), as can be seen in the above discussions of *De anima*, this increasingly becomes a vision of organic unity, with a growing emphasis on physiological explanations of parts of the soul. In some cases, physiology was the deciding factor in an argument, and even forced substantial revisions to common doctrine (Park 1988, p. 483). The soul as life function continues to be invoked at least as late as Descartes’s discussion with Plempius on how a heart freshly extracted from a living body continues to beat. As Lucian Petrescu shows, Descartes uses Plempius’ observation as an argument against the motor force of the sensitive soul: the soul is not supposed to remain and act in a dead heart: “how... can the movement which occurs in the cut-up bits of the heart depend on the human soul, when it is taken as an article of faith that the rational soul is indivisible, and has no sensitive or vegetative soul attached to it?”⁹

In medicine—and radiating outwards across disciplines, as exemplified with humoralism and the notion of melancholy—this Aristotelian or post-Aristotelian faculty psychology is combined with the Galenic humoral doctrine, providing a framework for understanding health, disease, and temperament which spanned cognitive, vital, and nutritive activity. A key text here is Galen’s late and rather provocative short treatise (sometimes referred to as a pamphlet), *That the Faculties of the Soul Follow the Mixtures of the Body*, or in shorter form *The Soul’s Dependence On The Body* (Galen 1997, pp. 150–176).¹⁰ According to Galen, the character or “substance of soul” is determined by, or ‘follows upon’ the mixture (*kraseis*) of elements in the body, which, in its turn, depends on diet and daily activities (*krasis* is usually translated as ‘blending’ or ‘mixture’: our temperament is the result of a given humoral mixture—hence ‘idiosyncrasy’, *idiosunkrasia*—to which Galen devotes a separate treatise, *On Mixtures*). The soul has three faculties (*dunameis*) that have their seats in specific bodily organs: reason is located in the brain, volition and courage in the heart, and desire in the liver; e.g., the reasoning faculty will be a “mixture within the brain” (Galen 1997, p. 153). A surplus of yellow bile in the brain, for instance, results in madness, and an accumulation of black bile in melancholy (Bos 2009, pp. 35–36) (thus *eukrasia* is the healthy balance of the elements while *dyskrasia* is an imbalance, which is a cause of disease). Health is defined as a proper mixture of the four humours, and a concomitant equilibrium in the balance of the four qualities.

More provocatively, Galen goes so far as to affirm that soul and its parts actually *are* the temperaments of organs in which they reside: the mortal part of the soul

⁹ AT I, p. 524/ CSMK III, pp. 80–81, discussed in Petrescu (2013). Thanks to Lucian Petrescu for sharing his work on Plempius and Descartes with us.

¹⁰ The original title is *Quod animi mores sequuntur temperamenta corporis*, or in Greek, ΓΑΛΗΝΟΥ ΟΤΙ ΤΑΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΣΩΜΑΤΟΣ ΚΡΑΣΕΣΙΝ ΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΨΥΧΗΣ ΔΥΝΑΜΕΙΣ ΕΠΙΟΝΤΑ.

(although he is at best agnostic, and in fact sceptical regarding the immortal part) is just “the mixture of the body” (Galen 1997, pp. 153, 157); even if there were a “separate substance” for the soul, it would still be dependent on (“a slave to”) the mixtures of the body (Galen 1997, p. 155). That is, given the presence of these various humoral mixtures in any part of our body, the soul “cannot but be a slave to the body”; but Galen then modifies this into an *identity statement* (rather than one of dependence): “it is preferable to say... that the mortal part of the soul *is* the mixture of the body” (Galen 1997, p. 157, emphasis ours). We could immediately label this a medical materialism, but Galen goes in a slightly different direction—still reductionist but more practical than ontological. On the basis of his vision of soul as produced by humoral mixture, he derives a further thesis: doctors rather than philosophers should be entrusted with the education or re-education of individuals, to lead them towards virtue. As Lamy and La Mettrie will loudly proclaim (and as we discuss later on), doctors can and should play this role precisely insofar as they are in a position to modify the moral and intellectual qualities of the soul, since it is viewed as dependent or ‘following upon’ the temperaments of the bodily organs. Hence the soul will be responsive to changes in diet, environment and overall tenor of life which medical science will manage.

Galen’s idea that the soul is susceptible to disease, and hence mortal, was also to be a powerful stimulus to heterodox, naturalistic and ultimately materialist arguments concerning the soul. This was seen early on and aroused both Platonic and Aristotelian-inspired responses.¹¹ Some defend the view that the soul is the form of the body—indeed the form that gives existence (actuality) to the living body—and thus a special, irreducible substance, rather than an accident of the body as a complete substance. The dependence relation goes the other way round, on this view; one can speak, as Des Chene does, of “ontological dependence”—and indeed Cesare Cremonini makes just this charge: that contemporary Aristotelians are inverting the causal relationship between soul and body (Des Chene 2000, pp. 71–72).¹² Galen had already reacted to Aristotelian counter-claims by granting that the soul is the form of the body—but in the sense that the parts of the soul are the forms of *each corresponding bodily organ*.

Interestingly, some Aristotelians could perfectly well accept that the soul is affected when the body’s qualities are altered; but they then added a categorical challenge: as Des Chene puts it, the question is not whether some parts of the soul are affected or not, but “what that tells us about the category to which the soul belongs.” (Des Chene 2000, p. 71) This will be rearticulated as a transcendental argument against humoral medicine and/or the psychophysiology of animal spirits, by various thinkers including Malebranche, Cudworth and Berkeley (for whom “the soul is indivisible, incorporeal, unextended, and... consequently *incorruptible*”; the decay and dissolution which occurs in natural bodies “cannot possibly affect

¹¹ For Platonic responses to Galen, see Hirai (2011), ch. 2 (on Jean Fernel’s Christianised- Platonic reaction to the resurgence of Galenism); for Aristotelian responses, Des Chene (2000), ch. 4, and for Renaissance responses (and artful combinations of Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galen) within a medical context, Martin (2014).

¹² On Cremonini see Martin (2014).

an *active, simple, uncompound* substance”; hence “*the soul of man is naturally immortal*”¹³). In the 1640s, Sir Thomas Browne, who was willing to accept the Galenic ‘evidence’ that the soul, for “the performance of her ordinary actions,” requires both a “symmetry and proper disposition of organs” and a “crasis (*i.e. krasis, CW*) and temper correspondent to its operations,” nevertheless considered that all of this “flesh” was the “instrument” of the soul, not the soul itself (Browne 1892, § XXXVI, p. 78).

This fear of contamination, disguised as a diagnosis of a category mistake, was justified if we consider the legacy of Galenic humoralism as ‘humoral materialism’, for in addition to the blurring of ‘disciplinary’ discursive boundaries between medicine and philosophy, it challenges one of the more powerful arguments in favor of substance dualism: the non-communicability of thinking substance and extended substance, or more aptly put, of soul and body (Galen 1997, pp. 282–283). Thus Timothie Bright, the chief physician at St Bartholomew’s Hospital in London, in his 1586 *Treatise of Melancholie* (which influenced Shakespeare’s usage of the concept in “Hamlet”¹⁴), is concerned with how “the body and corporall things, affect the soule,” and how the soul affects the body in turn (Bright 1586, Epistle Dedicatory, n.p. = p. iv). Whatever the effects of the body on the soul may be, these cannot bring about, Bright insists, any “alteration of substance, or nature” (Bright 1586, ch. X, p. 39).¹⁵ Namely, the idea of a communicability between body and soul via humours is a kind of *category mistake*, and a dangerous one. While Galen himself did not make any overt *philosophically* reductionist claims (as distinct from claiming to provide a *medically* reductionist account), in an early modern context these ideas, whether directly quoted or modified, sound quite different, e.g. when the Gassendist François Bernier suggests that “it would appear that Galen was persuaded the Soul was a spirit that emerged out of the blood” (Bernier 1678, vol. V, p. 452)¹⁶, or when Browne alludes to the ‘wrong’ sort of influence Galen could have: “I remember a Doctor in Physick, of Italy, who could not perfectly believe the immortality of the soul, because Galen seemed to make a doubt thereof” (Browne 1892, § XXI, p. 45).

In positive terms, this type of integrated view meant that “moral physiologists and medical psychologists alike could draw especially on rich traditions of psychological explanation in terms of alterations in the animal spirits.” (Sutton 2013; Sutton 1998, pp. 31–49; Iliffe 1995, pp. 433–434) Consider Robert Burton in his *sui generis* cultural-humoralist treatise *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, first published in 1621. Burton allows for an interaction between different kinds of “distraction” in body and soul:

¹³ Berkeley (1710), I, § 141 in Berkeley (1999), p. 87.

¹⁴ Dover Wilson (1935), pp. 227, 309 f. Bright was also the inventor of modern shorthand (*Characterie: an Arte of Shorte, Swift, and Secret Writing by Character*, 1588). On Bright and humours see Henry (1989) and Wright (2000).

¹⁵ On Bright’s warnings about the implications of the humoral concept see Trevor (2004), p. 49.

¹⁶ And generally Bernier (1678), vol. V, book VI, ch. iii: “What the animal soul is.”

For as the distraction of the mind, amongst other outward causes and perturbations, alters the temperature of the body, so the distraction and distemper of the body will cause a distemperature of the soul, and 'tis hard to decide which of these two do more harm to the other.¹⁷

How can the body, which is material, work on the immaterial soul? By means of humours: “the body, being material, worketh upon the immaterial soul, by mediation of humours and spirits, which participate of both” (*ibid.*).

In negative terms, consider also that Burton speaks of the rational soul as a “pleasant but doubtful subject” (Burton 1628, I, ii, 9, “Of the Rational Soul”). Even when physicians insisted that they were working within a circumscribed profession, and *not* seeking to be metaphysicians, their success could plead against them: thus Bright saw that precisely the success of physicians in curing diseases which involved ‘the soul’ implied that virtue and vice would gradually become “nought else but fault[s] of humour” (Bright 1586, Epistle Dedicatory, n.p. = p. iii). It was thus was a natural reaction to suspect atheism, whether willing or unwilling, in these increasingly imperialistic statements of medical ‘pneumatology’—which, as we shall see below, is precisely what Willis’s neuro-anatomical and metaphysical reconfiguration of the soul brought about.

From the organic soul to humoral medicine (and its philosophical ramifications or interpenetrations), soul and body are “continuously resubjected to a series of mappings, and experts recognised that this relationship was one of mutual causation” (Iliffe 1995, p. 433). In disciplinary terms, this should modify the presentation found of the ‘mind-body problem’ in early modern philosophy, since here we have a concept of soul as a product (loosely defined) of medical, anthropological, physiological knowledge (Iliffe 1995, p. 434)¹⁸, which is effectively travelling back and forth between natural-philosophical, medical and metaphysical discourses.

The Interpenetration of Medicine and Metaphysics: Models for the Material Soul

The soul is thus a go-between concept, a “boundary concept” (Star and Griesemer 1989) which crosses the borders between life sciences and metaphysics, but also between medicine and theology. For just as there were theologically motivated medical works such as Thomas Browne’s 1643 *De religio medici* (which begins with Browne deploring rumors of doctors being atheists as the “general scandal of my Profession” (Browne 1892, § I, p. 1)), there were also medically motivated works of radical or heretical theology, engaging in polemics such as that concerning the immortal or mortal soul,¹⁹ which, as the previous section should indicate, were

¹⁷ Burton (1628), I, v, 10: “Continent, inward, antecedent, next causes and how the body works on the mind.”

¹⁸ The tenor of our discussion owes a lot to the stimulating analysis in Sutton (2013).

¹⁹ The best study of this is Thomson (2008); see also Vartanian (1982), Thomson (2006).

something like low-hanging fruit for naturalistically inclined thinkers. One of these partly polemical works bears the explicit title *L'Âme Matérielle*, and we will return to it in the final sections of this essay.

This role of the medical works—and their impact on ‘philosophical’ works which deliberately locate themselves at the intersection of medicine, natural philosophy and (heterodox) metaphysics, like *L'Âme Matérielle* or, to an extent, La Mettrie’s writings—is systematically underplayed or unnoticed by commentators.

Historians of philosophy (here, Garber in an impressive survey of the issue) tend to present the situation of the soul in the seventeenth century as “by and large about the ways in which philosophers either make use of or reject incorporeal substance in accounting for life and other features of the physical world” (Garber 1998, p. 763). Earlier traditions remain, but the idea of the soul is no longer tied to form and matter. “It is a question of what (if anything) we must add to body, a question of establishing the limits of what can be explained in terms of body alone, and what must be posited over and above body” (Garber 1998, p. 762). For natural philosophers, this is a question of body qua matter, but for physicians it is mostly a question of body qua human body (or a comparative approach to human and animal bodies), and this is missing from the above analysis. The soul does not have to be derived from an analysis of substance. Physicians like Thomas Willis read the existence of the soul from the nature of the human being and others in a more explicit Epicurean context (from Gassendi to Lamy) sought to integrate the “life of the soul” with medicine and thereby modify metaphysics, turning it away from, e.g. substantialism, while also stressing either the Galenic theme of the soul as “mixture of the body” or the lack of any categorical separation between animal and human souls (Pomponazzi). Garber’s characterisation of the use or rejection of incorporeal substance is a useful philosophical reminder, but metaphysicians were not the only students of the soul. What is missing from view here is that, whilst physiological studies are the primary operation of the physician, these are not conducted without reference to the soul. As Katharine Park puts it, referring to the work of Walter Pagel:

Some began to approach the vexed problem of the origin of the soul as a problem in embryology rather than in metaphysics or theology; for many sixteenth-century philosophers, unlike their medieval predecessors, the answer lay in the sequential development of the organs rather than in the successive infusion of different levels of soul.²⁰

A different point from Garber’s, but which also runs somewhat counter to the narrative of this essay, and the texts discussed here, is John Henry’s, stressing the existence of a real divide between medical and philosophical texts in the period, such that that radical and atheistic ideas are more influenced by Hobbes, Epicurus et al. than by the ‘medicalisation of the soul’ we are interested in (Henry 1989, pp. 92–93; Repeated as such by Garber 1998, p. 764). He grants that Glisson’s 1672 treatise *On the Energetic Nature of Substance* is an exception, but notes that it was difficult and not widely discussed. The type of texts we deal with here, while they indeed did not circulate the way the writings of Hobbes or Spinoza did (and lack their fame

²⁰ Park (1988), p. 482, citing Pagel (1967), pp. 233–247. Thanks to Benny Goldberg for this reference.

over subsequent centuries), are a clear counter-example to this claim of Henry's (repeated uncritically by others).

It is not easy to reduce the history to either a clear conceptual claim or a set of neatly demarcated traditions and contexts, but in contrast to the disciplinary boundaries which both Garber and Wright seem to explicitly rely on, we would point to (i) the naturalistic appropriation of Aristotle's *De anima*, itself part of a trend we might call (ii) the medicalisation of natural philosophy, (iii) the Galenic challenge to traditional philosophical concepts of soul *in medical terms*, and (iv) the emergence of a 'humoral materialism' to which physicians such as Timothie Bright could react, as we saw above, with concern about what would befall the concept of an immortal, immaterial and causally 'out of reach' soul, if temperament could be explained in terms of humours. In this sense, Rob Iliffe is closer to our view when he writes that "In an important sense, the soul—its location and its function as the active and moral essence of the individual—should be seen as the product of this forensic and physiological knowledge" (Iliffe 1995, p. 434).

Similar to the analysis of the 'organic soul' in previous centuries, the idea is that theorists of the soul gradually moved away from traditional 'parts of the soul' representations, and "drew more and more from contemporary work in medicine, though this was of course still limited by theological doctrine" (*ibid.*). And contrary not just to mainstream history of philosophy but also history of medicine, this productivity of the concept of soul (naturalistically reconfigured) extends beyond Cardano, Willis and Lamy, for some observation reveals that up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, medical thinkers staked out their own scientific views in physiology, pathology but also emerging neuroscience through discussions of the role of the soul in the body (Wright 1991b, p. 22; Hagner 1992). It should be clear how much this contrasts with the old-fashioned view—here, in the words of Roger French—that "the advance of physiology after Whytt [*thus in the last third of the eighteenth century, CW*] was an erosion of the concept of soul" (French 1969, p. 161). The latter view relies on a separation between an increasingly scientific medicine and a more archaic, metaphysically influenced natural philosophy, which our work (in addition to that of Park, Wright and Thomson) should indicate is in serious need of revision. But elsewhere, in what is in many respects a landmark paper, Wright reintroduces a traditional distinction between what happens in metaphysics, and what happens in medicine, suggesting that *substance* dualism belongs to metaphysics, whereas *function* dualism belongs to medicine (Wright 2000, p. 238).

In contrast, the present analysis tends to show that they are always combined: physicians claim special authority when making pronouncements on the nature of the soul, and in doing so revise, eliminate and generally appropriate a tradition in which Aristotle, Galen, Pomponazzi or Descartes are as present as 'strictly' medical figures. Conversely, philosophers, particularly those of an Epicurean and/or materialist bent, will invoke medical 'evidence' (from mental trauma and the action of poisons to the behavior of decollated lizards) to support their critiques of the notion of an immortal soul. And at least as far back as Avicenna's reception of Aristotle's *De anima* and, closer to our period here, Girolamo Cardano's naturalisation of the problem of the soul's immortality, the question of the soul has produced

mobile differentiations (partly as a ‘go-between’, as mentioned above) between a metaphysical approach and a natural-philosophical approach. Cardano even entitled a section at the end of his 1545 treatise *De immortalitate animorum*, “A digression on the immortality of the soul in a natural-philosophical fashion” (*naturaliter loquens*).²¹ Cardano went so far as to claim that medical knowledge was more certain than natural philosophy, which he claimed derives causes from effects, while medicine infers effects from causes.²² He also argued that it was possible to use medical principles to investigate issues of natural philosophy that were not directed toward medical purposes, and cited the third book of Aristotle’s *Problemata* that concerns drunkenness as an example of such an investigation (Siraisi 1997, pp. 52–57; Martin 2014).

We find these episodes to be rather more conceptually significant than appears from the diagnosis given by John Henry, according to which “The eclectic neo-Platonism of the Renaissance gave rise to a number of confusions or contaminations between notions of *spiritus*, *pneuma*, and *anima*” (Henry 1987, p. 23). That various texts sought to bridge the gap between medicine and metaphysics (or pointed to the non-existence of such a gap in both the Galenic tradition and a certain reading of Aristotle on the soul via Alexander of Aphrodisias, the earliest commentator on Aristotle, and Pietro Pomponazzi), or blurred boundaries with their humoral materialism (as seen by Timothie Bright) is rather different from mere “confusion or contamination.” Similarly for the later two centuries, when early modern Epicureans discuss the claim found in Lucretius that the words ‘mind’, ‘soul’ and ‘intelligence’ really all mean the same thing, (Yvon 1765, p. 570) and do so in texts spanning medicine, natural philosophy and philosophy *tout court*, it may be “contamination,” but not just “confusion,” and if it is the former, it deserves to be understood.

Of course, ‘soul’ is not an unchanging object with fixed contents and boundaries, which itself is trans-disciplinary and can be taken up, here by an English physician, there by a Coimbra Jesuit. Rather, our point, modifying the more traditional distinctions in play in the above analyses, is twofold. First, we note historically that, with figures including Boerhaave, Gaub, Cullen and Le Camus, there was a body-soul problem *in and for* medicine, growing out of some of the medicalisation of ‘pneumatology’ in natural philosophy as discussed above (hence, the claim that early modern debates on the soul did not significantly involve medicine would be historically false, or at least in need of significant revision). Second, we note that physicians, natural philosophers, and medically ‘influenced’ philosophers—both physicians writing ‘philosophy’, like Lamy; physicians who become philosophers, like La Mettrie; and philosophers whose career reflects a continuous engagement with developments in medicine and physiology, like Diderot—engage with this

²¹ “Digressio de animi immortalitate secundum naturaliter loquentes.” Thanks to Hiro Hirai for this point.

²² “Et ob hoc intelligimus, Medicinam esse certiore naturali philosophia, cum naturalis philosophia semper procedat ab effectibus ad causas, Medicina vero persaepe a causis supra effectus” (Cardano 1663/1966, vol. 8, p. 585, cit. in Martin 2014).

medical version of the body-soul problem and thereby bring about a *naturalisation* of the soul, and more generally are the first to defend naturalistic arguments in philosophy (understood as arguments which seek to show that a scientific concept or discovery can have direct bearing on philosophical claims; and here the Epicurean tradition is very present). This sort of early modern naturalisation of the mental is not quite an elimination of mental or animate properties in favor of the properties of basic matter (Wolfe 2010); in Hatfield's phrase, "Ontological questions were bracketed in order to concentrate on the study of mental faculties through their empirical manifestations in mental phenomena and external behaviour" (Hatfield 1995, p. 188).

Why was there a 'body-soul' problem in medicine, and what was it? The first context that comes to mind is Cartesian; entire books have been written just on the specifically medical context of Cartesianism.²³ Both during Descartes' own lifetime and in the following decades, numerous physicians claimed to be carrying out a legitimate Cartesian project, e.g., eliminating final causes and explaining all of nature mechanically, including the human body, while in fact moving ever closer to Spinozism and/or materialism. Thus Henricus Regius (Hendrik le Roy), a physician and Professor of Theoretical Medicine at the University of Utrecht, often called the 'first apostle of Cartesianism' (e.g. in a review in the *Nouvelles de la république des lettres* in October 1686), asserted that the soul could be a mode of the body, with the body being understood as a machine, and that the human mind, inasmuch as it exists in a body, is organic (Regius 1646, pp. 248, 246). Even Marx (stealing from Renouvier's history of philosophy) mentions Regius as a precursor of La Mettrie: "Descartes was still alive when Le Roy applied to the human soul the Cartesian idea of animal structure, and declared that the soul was but a *mode of the body*, and ideas were but *mechanical motions*."²⁴ Others asserted that Descartes was too timid, and one should be a Cartesian in physiology while eliminating substance dualism, in favour of a parallelism of physical events and mental events (Louis) (de La Forge 1666, ch. XV), or, rather tortuously, tried to argue 'from' Descartes towards a materialist account of mind-body interaction (Antoine Louis, J.-B. Du Hamel, Pierre Dionis—influenced by Lamy—and others). Such thinkers tried to collapse their ideas into Descartes' own, but others—perhaps tellingly, outside of France—were quicker to dispense with any monopoly Descartes might have had over the prestige of mechanism in medicine, like Herman Boerhaave (1668–1738) or Hieronymus Gaub (1705–1780).

Boerhaave's 1690 doctoral thesis in philosophy at Leiden, where he was later Professor of Medicine, Botany, and Chemistry (he was widely viewed as the most influential lecturer in medicine in Europe, and taught figures including La Mettrie, Gaub and Haller) was entitled *De distinctione mentis a corpora*, and there he argued for a distinction between mind and body. But in his later *Praelectiones academicae* (Boerhaave 1739), he denied any medical or physiological pertinence to the substantival distinction between body and soul or mind (§ 27). Body and mind are

²³ Most recently, Bitbol (1990), Aucante (2006), and Manning (2007) (a useful review essay).

²⁴ Marx, *The Holy Family*, VI, 3, d, discussed in Bloch (1977).

united, communicated, mutually affect one another, and a change occurring in the one produces a change in the other (a view which may explain the unfair accusations of Spinozism that were laid against him). Boerhaave admits that he has no way of explaining this interaction experimentally (something La Mettrie is quick to fill in, both in his edition and translation of Boerhaave's lectures, *La Mettrie 1747* and in his own writings); he considers three hypotheses, "physical influx," occasional causes and divine harmony, and opts for the last (§ 27.7). He adds a remark that was repeated, with or without attribution, many times during this period (similar comments can be found in Galen): physicians should only concern themselves with the body, *even when dealing with mental illness* (or 'diseases of the soul'), for once the body is working correctly, the mind will return to its proper "officium" (§ 27.8)—the ancient Stoic term for the role we are destined to play, which in this context can be rendered as "function."²⁵

Boerhaave's student Gaub, who took over his Chair in Leiden, gave a lecture there in 1747 which La Mettrie claimed to have attended (some months prior to finishing *L'Homme-Machine*), entitled *De regimine mentis* (translated in Rather 1965). This text is important for us because there Gaub articulates—or at least suggests—a clinical perspective on the problem of mind-body interaction (for he is speaking of *mens* rather than *anima*) (Wright 2000, p. 249). La Mettrie spoke favourably about the ideas he heard, and his enthusiasm (more on which in our penultimate Sect.) makes sense, for Gaub had defended the view that for the physician, the metaphysical distinction between mind and body is irrelevant. "Although the healing aspect of medicine properly looks toward the human body only, rather than the whole man, it does refer to a *body closely united to a mind* and, by virtue of *their union*, almost continually acting on its companion as well as being itself affected in turn" (Gaub 1747, in Rather 1965, p. 70, emphasis ours). Gaub refers to the authority of Descartes, "the most ingenious philosopher of his age," who "yielded to physicians" regarding the priority of medicine in these matters (Gaub 1747, in Rather 1965, p. 74—a clear reference to Descartes' comment in the *Discours de la méthode* that because of the interpenetration of mind and the bodily organs, medicine is the best way to render people wiser than they have hitherto been²⁶), and states that due to the variability of temperaments, itself explainable in humoral (and hence medical) terms, the philosopher "cannot dispense with the aid of the physician" where the mind is concerned (Gaub 1747, in Rather 1965, p. 86). Of course, Gaub, like Haller, did not appreciate La Mettrie's materialist appropriation of his ideas, and in 1763 included a short essay against La Mettrie in his new edition of *De regimine mentis*, calling him "a little Frenchman" who produced a "repulsive offspring... his mechanical man." (Rather 1965, pp. 115–117; Gaub 1763, in Rather 1965, p. 115)

So whereas some of the Cartesians, Boerhaave and Gaub thought that the body-soul union (or relation, depending on their convictions) fell under the medical

²⁵ On 'officium' or 'office' as a functional, teleological or 'teleomechanical' concept in early modern medicine, see Wolfe (2014b).

²⁶ *Discours de la méthode*, part VI, AT VI, p. 62. Lalande observed in 1911 that similar remarks on the philosophical value and primacy of medicine can be found in Bacon's *De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum*, IV, 1–2 (Lalande 1911, p. 305).

purview, but that it was perhaps best to focus on the body, others were more aggressively materialist in asserting the autonomy of medicine with respect to theology or other disciplines. Thus Boerhaave's advice to physicians (only concern yourself with the body) becomes, in the Montpellier physician Ménéuret de Chambaud's entry "Mort" in the *Encyclopédié*, free of earlier niceties:

The separation of the soul from the body, a mystery which may be even more incomprehensible than its union, is a theological dogma certified by religion, and consequently is uncontestable. But it is in no way in agreement with the lights of reason, nor is it based on any medical observation; hence we will not mention it in this purely medical article, in which we will restrict ourselves to describing the changes of the body, which, as they alone fall under the senses, can be grasped by the physicians, those sensual artists, *sensuales artifices* (Ménéuret de Chambaud 1765/1966, p. 718b).

Here the medicalisation is administered in such strong doses that the concept of soul falls out altogether (and it is noticeable that the physician who wrote this article is 'trespassing' into theology or its opposite, with the term "mystery").

But these attempts to articulate and justify a specifically medical approach to body-soul relations (which, by the later eighteenth century, are gradually being termed 'body-*mind*' relations, although this is not at all absolute) can also accept substance dualism, albeit idiosyncratically. William Cullen, in physiological lectures given at the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in the mid-1760s, reflects on substance dualism, not in order to reject it, but to give it a peculiarly medical cast. For Cullen, we can know the mechanism(s) governing our bodies, not that which governs our minds. Yet, like Boerhaave, he also thinks that our mental states are inseparable from "some conditions in the body."²⁷ Perhaps on ideological grounds, Cullen immediately appeals to the good reputation of Boerhaave and Haller, who were never "suspected of Irreligion" (*ibid.*). However, he also recognises that the mind-body problem remains problematic, including for physicians; and yet, the specifically medical version of the problem as he states it sounds much like a materialist statement (granted, an *embodied* materialist statement) from Diderot or La Mettrie. For Cullen reduces "the problem of the action of the mind upon the body" to the problem: "how one State of the body or of one part can affect another part of it" (*ibid.*). Of course, when Diderot says such things (discussed below) he does not intend them to be circumscribed to medicine; rather, he (and La Mettrie) introduce into philosophy a *naturalistic* type of argument derived from the medical evidence (or theorizing).

Similar (although not in medical-historical terms) to Cullen's way of defending substance dualism while insisting on a *specifically medical* variant, the Paris physician Antoine Le Camus, in his *Médecine de l'esprit* (1753), put forth the program that medicine should know both minds and bodies, so that it can perfect the mind by acting on the body. Le Camus notes that most people would not deny medicine's expertise when it comes to the body, but they would be reluctant to grant it authority over the mind, and he wants to remedy this situation: "to remedy to the vices of the mind is nothing other than to remedy the vices of the body" (Le Camus 1753, I, p. 7). Although phrased in terms of Cartesian dualism, Le Camus' conception of

²⁷ Cullen, notes added to "Lectures on the Institutes of Medicine," cit. in Wright (2000), p. 244.

medicine and of therapeutics is a different creature, for it belongs to the conceptual scheme of the “animal economy”—a more integrated, organisational approach (Huneman 2007, p. 266; See also Rey 2000). Though his title suggests that Le Camus is a sort of Cartesian (since the Cartesian thesis is that passions are effects of the mind-body union on the mind), he has more of an expansive conception of medicine, which we can consider as an outgrowth of the material soul concept. Similarly, Le Camus gestures initially in a Cartesian direction, saying he knows the soul is rational and immortal, but he immediately adds that it is also true that the soul is “aided in its operations” by “genuinely mechanical causes” (Le Camus 1753, I, p. xviii). Whereas in some cases it was important to show that the medical dimension was an *embodied* dimension, Epicurean, and in other cases the medical argument is a strictly reductive argument (as in Ménuret), Le Camus’s program for medicine holds that it is the science which has equal knowledge of mind and body, and hence can treat their “abstract combinations,” and their “relations” (*commerce*). While terminologically he still refers to these as two substances, in practice he gives an integrated account of “virtues” and “passions” as being as much part of the body as of the soul (Le Camus 1753, I, p. 111 f.; II, p. 239).

From the medicalisation of natural philosophy in Cardano to the emergence of a specifically medical form of the body-soul problem in Boerhaave, then Le Camus, we hope that several points emerge clearly: (a) that it is a mistake to rule out medicine from an understanding of debates on the soul, particularly heterodox approaches to conceptualising the corporeal soul (and ultimately the material soul), and restrict that understanding to metaphysics (Garber 1998), or (b) to judge the overlap between these disciplines as merely “confusing” (Henry 1989). Rather, (c) some began to approach the question of the soul—its nature, its origin, and relation to the body—as a problem in embryology (Park 1988), medicine and natural philosophy overall, rather than in metaphysics or theology (Ilfie 1995; Sutton 2013). And this new approach is a major step towards the concept of a material soul, e.g. the materialisation of the soul “understood as the function of a particular organised structure” (Vartanian 1982, p. 152).

It was once debated whether these heterodox approaches to the soul were more Epicurean or more Cartesian (in the sense of a late, medically focused and/or radicalised Cartesianism). The older view was Aram Vartanian’s (who pointed to a hybrid of Malebranchian and Lucretian ‘pneumatologies’ in Meslier’s *Testament*, Vartanian 1982, p. 154), much criticised by Ann Thomson, who however did not replace it with another, clearly stated thesis but instead showed that particular textual passages contradict Vartanian’s model. Gianni Paganini has argued for a *third* model of material soul, neither Epicurean (Gassendi, Lamy) nor post-Cartesian-Malebranchian (*L’Âme Matérielle*, La Mettrie, obviously combined with the former model). He suggests that the other major clandestine work of the period, the 1659 *Theophrastus redivivus*, shows the presence of a specifically Averroist-Paduan model of the soul as “actus corporis organici,” as elaborated e.g. in Pomponazzi’s 1516 *Tractatus de immortalitate animae*, ch. IX (Paganini 1985, p. 349 f.). But it is not clear what impact this model had as such, since when it is discussed (typically in order to combat its ‘mortalism’), it is usually fused with variants of the other two

models (Mothu 1990–1991, p. 391, n. 273)—and after all, the soul as material in an atomistic sense, as subtle fire or wind in a later Epicurean sense, and as the functional ‘act’ of an organic body, are all material soul concepts! Ultimately, as concerns the present paper, most of the significant and original texts we deal with—obviously Lamy, *L’Âme Matérielle* and La Mettrie—are more or less deliberate fusions (or at least blends) of the two, so this question of whether the sources and conceptual filiation are particularly Cartesian, Epicurean or other, recedes in the distance.

One can thus speak, not just of overlap but of a rich and complex interrelation of medicine and metaphysics on the question of the soul. But we have not yet reached an understanding of the specific notion of the material soul. For that we need to turn back to the late seventeenth century, in the next three sections of this chapter: the place of the soul in the emerging neuroscience of the period, with Willis; the resources for a psychophysiology of animal spirits contributed by Malebranche, and the Epicurean concept of material soul put forth by Guillaume Lamy. Then we turn to the early eighteenth-century manuscript entitled *L’Âme Matérielle* (*The Material Soul*), as well as the reception and transformation of these ideas in materialist thought of the next generation, and conclude.

At the risk of oversimplifying, we suggest that what was meant to be merely a part of the soul we have in common with animals—and a subaltern part at that—is gradually expanded in explanatory scope (notably through Willis’ work on *Anima brutorum*) until it comes to be a full-blown monistic concept: the material soul (from Lamy to La Mettrie).

The Anatomy of Brutes and the Corporeal Soul: Willis

Thomas Willis (1621–1675) was Sedleian Professor of Natural Philosophy at Oxford (where Locke was one of his students, attending lectures in the 1660s which included material later published in *De Anima Brutorum*) and also taught medicine in London, where he was an eminent physician; he was a founding member of the Royal Society. He is best known for his discovery of the ‘circle of Willis’ and his great work on the anatomy of the brain, the 1664 *De cerebri anatome*. Willis interlinks anatomy, the brain and the soul in a variety of works, but the one which primarily concerns us here is his later *De Anima Brutorum* (1672; English translation 1683), for it is there that he puts forth an extensive concept of “corporeal soul,” and somewhat unwittingly provides resources for further materialisation of the soul *in toto*.

Willis’ account of the soul breaks down into three parts: a chymiatric theory (a chemical matter theory with particular focus on life functions), localised physiological explanations of cognitive processes, and the derivation of an incorporeal human soul on the basis of comparative anatomical studies—which is at the same time a blurring of the divide between the corporeal soul and the incorporeal soul. If one compares Willis to Descartes, the difference in their approach to matter is striking: whereas Descartes conceives of it mathematically, Willis is interested in

its behaviour. When examining, e.g., the brain, he wants to know how it functions, where all the impressions from the nerves collect and are processed. Because it is not easy to immediately ‘read’ functions from anatomy, Willis uses comparative studies to eliminate certain structures or functions of the brain, in order to both localise certain functions, and also generalise functions across species if the same basic structures are present—for instance, by classifying different types of animals in terms of respiration, humours and blood (Willis 1683, ch. III, p. 7), he can then go on to provide functional descriptions of different classes of animals. The same structures are seen by Willis to be replicated across species to varying degrees of complexity. Differences across species, such as the size and structure of the cerebral cortex, suggest the location of higher order functions such as memory; whereas similarities, such as the near identical nature of the cerebellum across species, suggest baser, automatic functions (Bynum 1973, p. 451).

Comparative anatomy both produces and complicates Willis’ account of the soul, but it is a method and a theory which is inherently organic. The human being is the origin and focus of his study, and is compared, not to the workings of nature, but to other living beings. One can see the organic soul taking shape in the emerging neuroscience of the seventeenth century. Willis describes complex cognitive processes in terms of the operation of animal spirits localised to different parts of the nervous system, largely based on comparative anatomy. He locates the imagination or “phantasies” in the middle or medullary part of the brain (Willis 1683, ch. VII, pp. 41, 43).

The nervous system of man is at once more refined and complex than any other animal, but so analogously constructed as to be indistinguishable in terms of cognitive function by any physiological principle. For Willis, structure and function are intimately linked. He can find no sufficient physiological difference between human beings and animals to account for their differences in cognitive capacity (Bynum 1973, p. 453). His conception of an organic soul is so strong as to only infer an immaterial soul from the limits of the human body. Another functional claim deriving from Willis’s anatomical inquiries was that in the cerebrum, spirits flowing up through the spinal column form imaginations, sensations and memories by virtue of their motions, and then flow back out of the cerebrum to produce wilful, or seemingly rational actions—and this was why he granted animals not only the powers of sensation, but those of memory and even a lower ‘brutish’ rationality. In contrast, the cerebellum regulates the involuntary motions—from the cardiovascular system to digestion and even sexual arousal. Part of Willis’s justification for this division between cerebellum and cerebrum, which he maintained in both *Cerebri Anatome* and *De Anima Brutorum*, was the fact that animals seemed to have smaller cerebri and larger cerebellums. But because humans are also animals, we also have a cerebellum. And motions in the cerebrum can disturb our otherwise involuntary functions; this is the basis for the passions, according to Willis, although he offers no systematic explanatory model (or at least nothing close to that of, say, Descartes).

Willis connects the different areas of comparative anatomy, the neurophysiology of animal spirits, a chymiatric conception of matter (explaining life through fermentation), and a complex differentiated theory of types of souls, with a strong

influence, often acknowledged, of “the famous Gassendus” (Willis 1684, p. 2).²⁸ He endorsed a modified version of what he had read in both Gassendi and in the theologian Henry Hammond: humans all possess a tripartite nature (Willis 1683, ch. VIII, p. 40). Like all animals they possess bodies and sensitive souls, but they also possess a rational soul, and the interrelation between these is the topic of *De Anima Brutorum*. Gassendi and the more general streams of Epicureanism associated with him influence Willis, both in the way he grants animals (contra Descartes) not just a sensitive capacity, but a rational one,²⁹ although he wavers on exactly how much, and in his chymiatric conception of matter—what we might call his pyrotechnic theory of internal chemical explosions in the body, for which he credits Gassendi: “But indeed, the same fiery nature of the soul, serves within the body by its own mobility, what a little flame of gunpowder does in a Cannon” (Willis 1684, p. 3).³⁰

The soul that interests Willis the ‘father of neuroscience’ and natural philosopher is the corporeal or sensitive soul, responsible for life functions (Willis 1683, p. 2). He divides the corporeal soul into two parts, the vital and the animal. The vital soul is the one he specifies in chemical and ‘pyrotechnic’ terms. The sensitive part of the soul is the animal spirits:

There are therefore Corporeal Souls, according to its two chief functions in the Organical Body, viz., the Vital and Animal; two distinct parts, to wit, flame and lucid, for what belongs to the said natural function, that indeed is involuntary of the Animal, and is performed by the help of the Animal Spirits (Willis (1683), ch. IV, p. 22. See also Willis 1683, p. 41).

The chemical properties of matter provide a basis for the organic soul, but it is in the operation of the body that this soul reveals itself. Animal spirits, considered as inherently volatile and active, play an important role in this conception of matter, which is chemically specified. The animal soul is “of a certain fiery nature, and its act or substance is either a Flame or a Breath, near to, or a-Kin to Flame” (Willis 1683, p. 5), its life is an “Inkindling of the Vital matter” (Willis 1683, p. 7), and “the Part of the Corporeal Soul rooted in the Blood, is truly flamy” (Willis 1683, p. 22). In rather lyrical terms, Willis also approvingly quotes Hippocrates to the effect that, so long as the soul survives in the body,

It is always Born, even till Death, In which respect also, it seems to be most like flame, or rather the same thing, which is continually renewed almost every moment: Some parts of eithers subsistence, in like manner are consumed by burning, and fly away, and others in the meantime are laid up anew from the Food continually laid in (Willis 1683, ch. V, p. 29).

Interestingly, Harvey also, when reflecting in *De Generatione Animalium* on the ‘epigenesis’ of the chicken embryo out of the blood, has the soul “reside” in the

²⁸ Willis (1684), p. 2; Willis (1683) opens with an admiring summary of Gassendi.

²⁹ See the chapter entitled “Of the Science or Knowledge of Brutes,” Willis (1683), p. 32; Wright (1991a), p. 249. The opening pages of Willis (1683) are in part a critique of the animal-machine concept (targeting Descartes and Digby).

³⁰ Pagination is specific to each text in this collection. Willis also says, however, that Gassendi does not provide the empirical details of how this vital chemistry of flame works (a gap he will presumably try and fill).

blood: “The blood is... the author and preserver of the body and the principal part in which the soul resides” (Harvey 1651/1981, p. 247 f.).

This quasi-metabolic idea of a perpetual renewal is indeed a chimiatic concept of living matter, and Willis ‘cashes it out’ through the concept of fermentation. His work on the topic, *De Fermentatione* (1659), was meant to be the introduction to his theory of fevers, which in fact he explained as the outcome of a vitiated fermentation of blood. Is fermentation chemical or mechanical? The chimiatic answer should be straightforwardly the former, since it describes all bodies as being composed of the principles of Spirit, Sulphur, Salt, Water and Earth and the mixture and proportion of these (Willis, *Of Fermentation*, chapters I–II in Willis 1659/1681).

But Willis complicates matters by sometimes speaking of fermentation in more purely chimiatic terms, sometimes in more mechanical terms, as a motion of the parts. Ferments helped kindle the particles of spirit and sulphur in the blood into a flame, a combustion that was also called effervescence of the blood, which is how Willis explains body heat and fever. The fermentation in the heart heats the blood like “Water Boyling over a Fire,” (Willis, *Of Feavers*, ch. I, § 1, in Willis 1659/1681, p. 59)³¹ and this heat is distributed to the whole body through blood circulation, constituting the common cause of ordinary body warmth as well as febrile heat. Our body heat is the effect of a chemical cause—fermentation. And, most relevantly for us, “The first beginnings of life proceed from the spirit fermenting in the heart” (Willis 1659/1681, ch. V, p. 13). Willis also uses the language of life as being *like a flame*, which as we shall see below, influences Lamy and through him the clandestine materialist tradition that is central to our narrative: “The Life and Flame of the Blood... are the same (p. 22). And further, “Life is not so like to flame, but even a flame it self” (p. 7). Willis did not limit the interaction between particles to mechanical manipulations, and his understanding of chemical properties and observations of the body led him to conceive of matter as chemical and active, not inert (Bos 2009, p. 43). To conceive of matter as “meerly passive” is for him “vulgarly delivered”; rather, and sounding just like Gassendi:

Atoms, which are the matter of sublunary things are so very active and self-moving, that they never stay long, but ordinarily stray out of one subject into another; or being shut up in the same, they cut forth for themselves Pores and Passages, into which they are Expatiated. (Willis 1683, ch. VI, p. 33. Gassendi in Bernier (1678), vol. V, book VI, ch. iii, e.g. pp. 407–408)

In sum, Willis has a comparative anatomy project from which he also derives an account of cognitive function, and he has a chimiatic conception of life and disease which occasionally reverberates with Epicurean motifs. But what does he contribute to thinking on the nature, status and types of soul? In his overall scheme, the sensitive soul supplies impressions and ideas to the rational soul by means of the animal spirits, and those ideas are in turn ordered and utilised by the rational soul. The sensitive soul, which governs both life and sensorimotor functions, is in fact corporeal, while the rational soul is not. It is the immaterial, immortal human intel-

³¹ Pagination continuous with *Of Fermentation*.

lect. The former is sometimes governed by the latter, sometimes dependent on it, sometimes in conflict with it:

The Corporeal Soul does not so easily obey the Rational in all things, not so in things to be desired, as in things to be known: for indeed, she being nearer to the Body, and so bearing a more intimate Kindness or Affinity towards the Flesh, is tied wholly to look to its Profit and Conservation: to the Sedulous Care of which Office, it is very much allured... (Willis 1683, ch. VII, p. 43)

Thus Willis finds himself dealing with perennial problems of ‘communication’ between levels of soul: “And so as our Intellect, in these kinds of Metaphysical Conceptions, makes things almost wholly naked of matter, or carrying it self beyond every sensible Species, consider or beholds them wholly immaterial” (Willis 1683, ch. VII, p. 39). Indeed, when trying to shed light on the relation between the two souls, Willis can get quite... metaphysical and opaque, here again building on “the most learned Gassendus”: “The Corporeal Soul is the immediate Subject of the Rational Soul, of which, as She is the Act, Perfection, Complement, and Form by her self, the Rational Soul also effects the Form, and Acts of the humane Body” (Willis 1683, ch. VII, p. 41).

More concretely (although some historians of science do not find animal spirits a particularly proud moment), Willis’s theory of soul is deeply interlinked with his account of how the animal spirits produce sensations and motions, an account which depended almost entirely on his anatomical claims about the brain and nerves. The spirits move through the nervous system in a tonic motion, flowing outward from the brain and returning to it. They “reside in the Organs of the Senses, and are like Watchmen” (Willis 1683, ch. X, p. 57). The motions of the spirits occasion sensations or natural instincts in animals, but they are also the corporeal basis for all human perception. The brain itself is the instrument that facilitated this pneumatic process. Willis’s theory of the soul thus emphasises the physicality of the sensitive soul in humans and animals, and the physical motions of these animal spirits through the nerves and brain. He held that the human soul was thus severely limited in its powers by the instruments of the brain, nerves, and animal spirits.

The sensitive soul is produced by the normal motions of the body. As noted above, for Willis there are five major elements: earth, water, salt, sulfur and spirits. Every physical thing incorporates these elements in some form, with the exception of spirits—this is especially true for spirits in the body itself. Willis adheres to a broadly Galenic model of how spirits are distributed in the body, but adds his own theories reflecting contemporary anatomical theories of the time (including those of Harvey). Blood flows to the brain, where the most subtle spirits in the blood are separated from its grosser parts by virtue of the nerves. Willis assumes like many of his contemporaries that nerves are hollow, pneumatic vessels constantly filled with animal spirits, which he defines as the most refined variety of spirit—so refined and so subtle that they were the only physical thing that might possibly be moved by any incorporeal agent. The soul resides at the very center of the brain, specifically between the corpus callosum and the corpora striata, where it receives impressions

from the flux of spirits into the brain from the external nerves, and can then return those spirits to the extremities to move the body in various ways.³²

An important aspect of Willis's corporeal soul that falls outside the province of this paper is the new way in which he rendered the soul accessible to psychopathology, or conversely, made mental illness an object that could be studied within the naturalistic framework of the new sciences.³³ This is because he produces an account of an immaterial soul that is "dependent on the sensitive soul for its proper operation, subject through this dependence to diseases which are potentially curable by physical methods, localised in its seat to a particular portion of the human brain" (Bynum 1973, p. 457).

Our concern here is not Willis's overall impact on thinkers of his time such as Locke, as one of the 'Oxford Physiologists', or on the later history of medicine and neuroscience. Instead, our primary focus is on Willis's contribution to the articulation of the concept of material soul. This includes a willingness to *look for types of soul* in the context of functional anatomy (in contrast, say, to Descartes, for whom the pineal gland is very much a top-down, a prioristic decision for where to locate these parts of our cognitive faculties), and a complex discussion of how the soul, in its corporeal part but not only, interacts with body, brain, and animal spirits. This is both a major step beyond the gradual privileging of physiology and medicine in metaphysical discussion over the previous centuries (discussed in Park 1988), and a move towards naturalisation, in the sense of a gradual blurring of the divide between human and animal souls. To be sure, Willis's bracketing off of an immaterial, immortal soul in no way reveals a covert atheist or heterodox attitude on his part.³⁴ Yet he provides, quite deliberately, a set of major resources for the naturalisation of the soul. We now turn to the other major 'set of resources' for this project, the psychophysiology of Malebranche (which certainly was not a planned legacy on his part).

Resources for a Psychophysiology: Malebranche

Nicolas de Malebranche (1638–1715) certainly considers himself in agreement with Descartes in terms of physiology, with the exception of the pineal gland. "For it must be noted that even when he [Descartes] is mistaken, as seems probable when he assures us that it is to the *pineal gland* that the soul is immediately united, this nevertheless could not basically invalidate his system, from which we shall always draw all the utility that can be expected from the truth."³⁵ Malebranche agrees with

³² Thanks to Louis Caron for his help with Willis. The literature on Willis has by now reached respectable proportions; we have found Bos (2009), Bynum (1973) and Caron (2011, chs. 1–3) particularly helpful.

³³ Conry 1978, Tabb (2014).

³⁴ See the clear corrective remarks in Henry (1989), p. 98.

³⁵ Malebranche (1674), II.i.1.ii, in Malebranche (1997), p. 89.

Descartes that the soul receives new ideas when new traces are imprinted on the brain and vice versa, but he denies that the soul considers these traces in order to sense, imagine or conceive of new ideas:

It is not that it [the soul] considers these traces, since it has no knowledge of them; nor that these traces include these ideas, for they have no relation to them; nor, finally that the soul receives its ideas from these traces; for... it is inconceivable that the mind receive anything from the body and become more enlightened by turning toward it.³⁶

Descartes' separation of the soul as thinking substance may have brought about a closer study of, and a more intimate relation with, the human body (discussed in the previous section), but it is Malebranche's articulation of this Cartesian science of mind and animal spirits that had the most impact. John Yolton notes that both La Mettrie and Joseph Priestley saw Malebranche as apparently "the first who brought into vogue the doctrine of *animal spirits*" (Yolton 1983, p. 186, n. 8)³⁷ Further, John Sutton emphasises that "reactions to 'the Cartesian philosophy of the brain' owed as much to Malebranche's as to Descartes' version" (Sutton 1998, p. 107)³⁸. Indeed, it is clear that Malebranche's impact extended well beyond any mere popularisation of Descartes' ideas, to the development of his own coherent and comprehensive psychophysiological account. He was willing to argue against aspects of Descartes' metaphysics in order to extend the explanatory power of psychophysiology, with respect to cerebral and mental processes and localisation, and particularly regarding memory as 'memory traces' imprinted in the brain (we pass here over more detailed aspects of Malebranchian 'neurophysiology', including memory and brain traces, a sustained discussion of which would also feature Descartes and Louis de La Forge³⁹). His account differs from Descartes in the following significant ways.

First, he denies Descartes' claim that we can have a clear and distinct idea of the soul, arguing that if Descartes truly had such an idea, he could easily discern its properties, just as he does concerning the nature of matter as extension (Schmaltz 1994, p. 578). The soul is distinct from the body, not because "the fact that I can clearly and distinctly understand one thing apart from another is enough to make me certain that the two things are distinct, since they are capable of being separated, at least by God" (Descartes, Sixth Meditation, AT VII, 78, CSMK, p. 54), but because the phenomenal features of our experience cannot belong to matter; they are excluded by its very nature.⁴⁰ Defining the soul in this way allows Malebranche to be more equivocal (cautious?) about the soul than Descartes:

³⁶ Malebranche (1674), II.i.5.i, in Malebranche (1997), p. 102.

³⁷ To La Mettrie and Priestley we can add *L'Âme Matérielle*, as discussed in section 7 below.

³⁸ Sutton cites psychologist William Burnham, who in 1888, after lamenting Descartes' "crude physiology" and "dogmatism," dubbed Malebranche "a true pioneer in the field of physiological psychology" for his account of brain traces and memory (Burnham 1888, in Sutton 1998, *ibid.*).

³⁹ Malebranche (1674), II.i.5.ii, in Malebranche (1997), p. 105; *ibid.*, II.ii.1, p. 135, and II.ii.4, p. 141. For a masterful treatment of Malebranchian neurophysiology see Sutton (1998), Chapter 3, Appendix 2, p. 106 f.; for a more internal discussion of Malebranche's argument, see Kolesnik (2011).

⁴⁰ Malebranche (1674), I.x.1, in Malebranche (1997), p. 49.

It is true that we know well enough through our consciousness, or the inner sensation we have of ourselves, that our soul is something of importance. But what we know of it might be almost nothing compared to what it is in itself.⁴¹

And he recognises that our idea of the soul is not as clear as that which we have of the body.⁴²

Malebranche's unwillingness to follow Descartes in his idea of the soul reflects a more cautious attitude regarding its derivation. He does not think God needed to give us a clear idea of the soul in order for it to perform its function united with the body, nor is a clear idea of the soul necessary for it to be revealed to us through faith. His emphasis on more experiential and functional aspects of the soul such as consciousness lent itself to later, materialist interpretations of its nature, as found in *L'Âme Matérielle*.

A further contribution to materialist interpretations of Malebranche's psychophysiology stems from his occasionalist metaphysics. Briefly, occasionalism is the doctrine that restricts causation to the will of God by denying the causal efficacy of all finite substances, whether material or immaterial. Malebranche takes this further in terms of psychological explanation by postulating the same type of causation for all occasional causes. In rendering physical and mental causation equally inefficacious, he is not subordinating one to the other. "He takes our inability to explain mental causation in the terms developed for bodily causation as an illustration not of the fundamental difference between the two sorts of substance but as an illustration of our ignorance of the mind" (LoLordo 2005, p. 398). LoLordo suggests that "there is no clear reason why one should place demands from the science of body onto explanations of the mind if, like Descartes, one views the mind as an entirely different type of substance. There is no clear reason why a dualist should deny agency to the mind just because she denied it to body" (LoLordo 2005, p. 398).

Yet as with the idea of the soul, Malebranche exhibits a sort of intellectual caution here: he is unwilling to assume we have knowledge outside of what God furnishes us with for our own survival. Our knowledge of causation need not extend beyond our immediate experience and so he does not privilege one type of causation above another. There seems to be a dual commitment on his part: he is committed to God and has a priori theological justifications for a belief in the immaterial soul, but this same belief leads him to value the study of nature, and of the human being, as a study in and of itself. This emphasis on the functions and limits of the human being leads to a comprehensive psychophysiology that understands the knowledge we have of ourselves as nothing beyond what is necessary for our human environment.

All its [the soul's] sensations direct the soul to the preservation of its machine. They agitate the soul and frighten it as soon as the least spring is unwound or broken, and as a result the soul must be subject to the body as long as the body is subject to corruption.⁴³

⁴¹ Malebranche (1674), III.ii.7.iv, in Malebranche (1997), p. 238.

⁴² Malebranche (1674), III.ii.7.iv, in Malebranche (1997), p. 239.

⁴³ Malebranche (1674), III.i.1. ii., in Malebranche (1997), p. 200.

Malebranche's account of this preservation extends from the operation of reflex actions to the complexity of memory as distributed patterns of animal spirits in the brain, beginning from a basic description of nerve fibres: "they are composed of tiny filaments originating in the middle of the brain"; he has "reason to believe" that these nerve filaments are hollow, "like little canals," and "completely filled with animal spirits, especially when one is awake; when the end of these filaments is disturbed, the spirits contained in them transmit to the brain the vibrations they have received from without."⁴⁴ He states later on that the soul "cannot impart movement to its body without animal spirits, and that it is through them that it recovers its control over the body."⁴⁵ Malebranche elaborates on the relation between soul and animal spirits several times; most relevant to our emphasis on the strongly naturalistic, causal flavor of his analysis is this passage:

At the moment when the animal spirits are forced from the brain into the rest of the body to produce in it the motion appropriate to sustain passion, the soul is driven toward the good it perceives, and the soul is the more driven as the spirits leave the brain with greater force because the same disturbance agitates the soul and the animal spirits.⁴⁶

And the soul is localised: "these things clearly show that the soul immediately resides in that part of the brain to which all the sense organs lead."⁴⁷ Of course, Malebranche introduces—not a caveat, not an argument-stopper, but a kind of token transcendental distinction: when he says it "*resides* there" (italics in original), he only means in the sense of a kind of awareness of what is occurring there (whether the action of the fibers or the reactions of the spirits within them); for "the soul can immediately *reside* only in ideas..." Later on, again in the midst of a swarm of naturalistic statements about the train of spirits, the mechanisms which produce ideas, and the fact that our sensations have to be related to our body, Malebranche again trots out a transcendental distinction (which in this case is mainly stipulative): "since ideas are spiritual, they cannot be produced from material images in the brain, with which they are incommensurable"; "a spiritual idea cannot be formed from a material substance."⁴⁸

A more explicit version of the transcendental argument is given by Berkeley, who appears to be targeting precisely our set of authors, described as "they... who hold the soul of man to be only a thin vital flame, or system of animal spirits," and thereby make the soul "perishing and corruptible as the body." Berkeley responds that it is "evident that bodies, of what frame or texture soever, are barely passive ideas in the mind, which is more distant and heterogeneous from them than light is from darkness," whereas:

⁴⁴ Malebranche (1674), I.x.2, in Malebranche (1997), pp. 49–50.

⁴⁵ Malebranche (1674), II.i.V.4, in Malebranche (1997), p. 107.

⁴⁶ Malebranche (1674), III.iii, in Malebranche (1997), p. 355.

⁴⁷ Malebranche (1674), I.x.3, in Malebranche (1997), p. 50; "to which the filaments of our nerves lead," I.x.5, p. 51.

⁴⁸ Malebranche (1674), I.x.5, in Malebranche (1997), p. 51.

...the soul is indivisible, incorporeal, unextended, and it is consequently *incorruptible*. Nothing can be plainer than that the motions, changes, decays, and dissolutions, which we hourly see befall natural bodies..., cannot possibly affect an *active, simple, uncompounded* substance; such a being therefore is indissoluble by the force of nature... *the soul of man is naturally immortal*.⁴⁹

Or, almost a hundred and fifty years earlier, in Timothie Bright's *Treatise of Melancholie*: "the soul hath a faculty one, single and essential," regardless of how many "parts are performed in the organical bodies" (Bright 1586, ch. X, p. 44). If turn back to Malebranche's psychophysiology, it becomes hard to miss the sheer weight of the naturalistic rather than the transcendental side of the analysis, and indeed it was the former that overwhelmingly predominated in the usage of Malebranche in the next generations—particularly in *L'Âme Matérielle*, as discussed below.

For he returns several times to the place of the soul's "residence," and adds an important theme which was present in Descartes but rather less overtly: that of our own physical self-preservation and survival. For the reason of the soul's location in the brain is "for the maintenance and preservation of all the parts of our body"; that is, it needs to be aware of the changes occurring in the body and to distinguish "those that are agreeable to our body's condition from those that are not."⁵⁰ Curiously, Malebranche seems to hold that the existence of involuntary nervous processes which themselves are crucial to our self-preservation (such as blinking an eye, lifting one's arm to ward off a blow, or reacting to a burning coal placed in our hand while asleep⁵¹, are "very useful for the preservation of the body" but "extremely dangerous for the soul."⁵² On the one hand, sensations are key to our staying alive—to the preserving of our "machine," Malebranche says (*machine* was commonly used to mean 'body' in this period in French); but on the other hand, they render the soul "subject to the body," "they act upon the soul much more than the soul acts upon them."⁵³

It is "the close union between soul and body" which both explains and obscures the nature of the human being; "which union prevents us from precisely distinguishing the properties of matter from those of mind."⁵⁴ Despite or perhaps because of the coherence and comprehensiveness of his psychophysiological account, Malebranche does not make definitive claims about the nature of the human being. But the localisation or "residence" of the soul; the detailed account of how its activity relates to cerebral processes ("the soul can never sense anything or imagine anything anew unless there is some change in the fibers of this same part of the brain"⁵⁵), and the application of these concepts to human anthropology and psychology itself ("it is easy enough to explain all the different characters encountered among the minds

⁴⁹ Berkeley (1710), I, § 141 in Berkeley (1999), p. 87.

⁵⁰ Malebranche (1674), I.x.5, in Malebranche (1997), p. 51.

⁵¹ Malebranche (1674), III.i.1.iii, in Malebranche (1997), p. 201.

⁵² Malebranche (1674), II.i.5.i, in Malebranche (1997), p. 96.

⁵³ Malebranche (1674), III.i.1.2, Malebranche (1997), p. 200; II.i.5.i, p. 96.

⁵⁴ Malebranche (1674), I.x.6, in Malebranche (1997), p. 53.

⁵⁵ Malebranche (1674), II.i.1.i, in Malebranche (1997), p. 88.

of men, on the one hand by the abundance and scarcity, by the rapidity or slowness of agitation, and by the density or lightness of the animal spirits, and on the other hand by the delicacy or coarseness, the moistness and dryness, and the malleability of the brain fibers”⁵⁶), makes for a set of resources for materialism. These can be *conceptual* resources, but also, for an author of clandestine manuscripts in the early eighteenth century without access to the spheres of experimental natural philosophy, *experimental* ones: Malebranche had both demonstrated the need for knowledge of anatomy and provided some of that knowledge, referring for instance to Willis on arteries and cerebral anatomy⁵⁷; Willis is the only physician named or cited in Malebranche’s enormous treatise.

To be clear, Malebranche disagrees explicitly with the Epicurean tradition (represented in exactly the same years as the *Recherche* was published by the physician Guillaume Lamy, in his *Discours anatomiques*, and in the next generation by anonymous texts such as *L’Âme Matérielle*, discussed in Sects. 6 and 7 below; both Lamy and the anonymous author of *L’Âme Matérielle* also rely on Willis, Gassendi and earlier sources). The Epicurean approach seeks to *materialise the soul* by defining it, e.g. as a special kind of fire or wind, a position Henry More called ‘Psychopyrism’ (Henry 1987, p. 34); Malebranche does not name names here but he recycles a Cartesian point that the soul can only be known by internal self-examination, and cannot be known via the mediation of any material entity like an “invisible fire”⁵⁸, which would be a category mistake.

But of course *L’Âme Matérielle* will ignore these counter-claims (which we have termed ‘transcendental’), will retain the surprisingly detailed psychophysiology of nerve fibers, animal spirits and cerebral traces,⁵⁹ and what appears to be a philosophical grounding of such descriptions:

The only alliance of mind and body known to us consists in a natural and mutual correspondence of the soul’s thoughts with the brain traces, and of the soul’s emotions with the movements of the animal spirits...⁶⁰

...and will fuse it with precisely the Epicurean configurations of a material soul Malebranche sought to avoid. Put differently, the anonymous author uses a procedure that is typical of these manuscripts (‘patchwork’ (Thomson 2008), ‘collage’ (Bloch 2000), or ‘cut and paste’, etc.), and brings the Epicurean and Malebranchean analyses together, deliberately disregarding Malebranche’s stated hostility to the former.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Malebranche (1674), II.i.1.iii, in Malebranche (1997), p. 89.

⁵⁷ Malebranche (1674), II.i.4.ii, in Malebranche (1997), pp. 89, 97; Kolesnik (2011).

⁵⁸ Malebranche (1674), III.i.1.iii, in Malebranche (1997), p. 202.

⁵⁹ *L’Âme Matérielle* (2003), pp. 200, 202, 234, reprising Malebranche (1674), II.i.5 and II.ii.1.

⁶⁰ Malebranche (1674), II.i.1.i, in Malebranche (1997), p. 102.

⁶¹ A less-known case is Bayle’s paradoxically Epicurean appropriation of Malebranche’s *Méditations chrétiennes*, analysed in Argand (2009); other cases of deliberately misreading Malebranche in the service of a new naturalistic scheme are surveyed in Kolesnik (2011).

The Material Soul as “Purest Fire” and “Subtle Wind”: Lamy

We turn now to a self-proclaimed Epicurean, Guillaume Lamy (1644–1683), a philosopher and physician based in Paris, who received his medical degree in 1672 at Rouen and published his major works between the late 1660s and the late 1670s. Lamy aroused some fierce reactions: Bayle described him as an “over the top Epicurean” (*un épicurien outré*) and Haller simply stated he was an “impious man.”⁶²

His first work, the 1669 *De Principiis rerum*, is an explicit piece of early modern Epicurean atomism, favouring Gassendi over Descartes (who was also viewed as a covert supporter of atomism), to show that Epicurus was right in the first place (although, in a gesture we will find often in works of this period, e.g. those of Cyrano de Bergerac, he also seeks to present these theories as complementary or compatible). He discusses atoms and the nature of matter, hesitating as to which theory he finds most convincing, but we shall chiefly focus on his medical-materialist approach to the soul. In *De Principiis* (I, v) and in his later works, the *Discours anatomiques* (1675, 2nd revised edition 1679) and the *Explication mécanique et physique des fonctions de l’âme sensitive* (1677), with which we shall be mainly concerned, he claims that the soul and animal spirits are actually identical (*Discours anatomiques*, in Lamy 1996, pp. 102, 105). The functions of the soul are identified (a) with the nervous centres that receive impulses from external stimuli, and which ensure consciousness (*Explication*, in Lamy 1996, pp. 142–143, and 160–161), (b) with the animal spirits which carry the “agitation” produced by the objects to the brain, the “source” or “reservoir” of the soul (pp. 152–153), and then return to the heart, where they give rise to the passions, and to the muscles, which Lamy, following Galen, views as the instruments of voluntary motion. Lamy also says (unlike Galen or Willis) that the soul “flows” from the brain like rivers flowing through the “canals” of the nerves (*Explication*, in Lamy 1996, pp. 153, 160, and 142). He verbally still maintains a difference between the sensitive soul and the rational soul but ultimately locates all of these distinctions within a physiological frame.

Chemical explanations (partly taken from Gassendi and Willis) play an important role here: muscular motion is explained as a kind of fermentation which, as we saw earlier, was a basic explanatory principle of vital processes for Willis. Lamy has been described as a “discreet sympathiser with iatrochemistry,” and in his *Dissertation sur l’antimoine* (1682) he describes himself as a “Chymist” as opposed to the “Galenists,” and stresses that “Medicine owes a lot to chemistry” (Mothu 1990–1991, p. 405 and note 338).

Lamy puts together Epicurean and Cartesian models deliberately—a synthesis which, in different forms (here, more medical, in other cases more focused on atomistic physics) was characteristic of a *libertin* intellectual and argumentative culture at the time, including Cyrano de Bergerac, Boyer d’Argens and others, and

⁶² Bayle, *Nouvelles de la république des lettres* (March 1684), art. II, p. 32, cit. in Mothu (1990–1991), p. 430; Haller (1774/1969), I, p. 556.

extending beyond Lamy to clandestine texts such as *L'Âme Matérielle*, the better-known *Treatise of the Three Impostors* (which included the first French translation of a portion of Spinoza's *Ethics*; the text circulated in manuscript in 1712, was printed in 1719 and again in 1721, then later published by d'Holbach in 1777⁶³) and the work of La Mettrie. Lamy transposes Cartesian physiological analyses onto the issue of the soul, and by inquiring into the soul as a kind of substance, he inserts Epicurean content into these analyses. In addition, and this is also characteristic of *libertin* naturalistic thought, which is not 'science' but a programmatic naturalism,⁶⁴ Lamy uses the concept of animal spirits to bind together these two theoretical schemas.

Lamy's modern editor, Anna Minerbi Belgrado, notes that the substantial interpretation of the soul also takes on another form in Lamy, that of the world soul, in a passage (itself using elements from Gassendi) which was taken over in different versions throughout the clandestine tradition and all the way to La Mettrie, as a materialist and atheist argument (Lamy, VIth Discourse, in Lamy 1996, p. 104 f.).⁶⁵ The doctrine of the world soul of course allows of various interpretations, but here it serves an explicitly materialist purpose, in a faintly Spinozist sense given that it is an immanentist idea, implying that 'soul' is simply part of the material world (rather than something materialism would simply eliminate). An analogy with an amusing passage in d'Holbach's *Le bon sens* (1774) may shed some light on what this means.

The material *Jupiter* of the Ancients could move, compose, destroy, and create beings similar to himself; but the God of modern theology is sterile. He can neither occupy any place in space, nor move matter, nor form a visible world, nor create men or gods. The metaphysical God is fit only to produce confusion, reveries, follies, and disputes (D'Holbach 1774, I, § xxiii, p. 24).

The analogy would be that the material soul is not an overt denial of the soul's existence but rather an affirmation of its *corporeal* existence, which, like the "material Jupiter," allows it to interact with other entities populating the material world; it is not ontologically unique, yet it lives and acts, just like a heart, a liver or a worm in the blood. An implication that was crucial at the time was that this unified and immanent material world implies the greater proximity of animal and human souls, a danger which Bayle saw: "the natural consequence of this dogma is to declare that the soul of animals is of the same nature as that of man."⁶⁶ Out of the myriad rather murky discussions of human and animal souls, their relative or fundamental differences, and

⁶³ This section, which was known as *L'esprit de Spinoza*, is today attributed to the Dutch diplomat Johan Vroesen (as Prosper Marchand indicated at the time), although this is sometimes contested, and another prime candidate for authorship is Jean-Maximilien Lucas (Israel 2001, p. 696).

⁶⁴ For some indications as to the difference between the two in the 'radical Enlightenment', see Wolfe (2010).

⁶⁵ This is the only passage in Lamy's work that will be taken over and discussed in the clandestine tradition (notably the *Treatise of the Three Impostors*, chs. XIX, XX and *L'Âme Matérielle*, as discussed below), as well as by La Mettrie in his 1745 *Histoire naturelle de l'âme* (the revised version, entitled *Traité de l'âme*, appeared in 1750: see ch. VIII, in La Mettrie 1751, p. 104), and in the *Encyclopédie's* article "Âme."

⁶⁶ Bayle, "Rorarius," remark D, in Bayle (1740), vol. 4, p. 77.

the place of rationality, mortality and other key properties therein, Bayle saw most sharply that when a Pomponazzi or a Lamy reduces possible functional variations in “animal souls” to the “variety of organs and humours alone” (Lamy 1996, p. 104)⁶⁷, his argument is in fact meant to apply to the human soul, which only differs from that of the animal in quantitative terms (only “une difference du plus au moins”⁶⁸). Indeed, the later *Treatise of the Three Impostors* simply states, after a ‘chimiatic’ discussion of “subtle spirits” and the materiality of the soul, that “this soul [is] of the same nature in all animals” (1716/1904 edition, § VII, p. 99; 1768 edition, p. 85).

Lamy observes, referring to Seneca, that “we all agree that we have a soul,” but the difficulty lies in knowing what it is: some consider it to be a spirit, others a harmony between the parts of the body (a view he attributes to Galen amongst others, but Lamy notes that Galen is not entirely clear on the issue), a divine infusion, a “subtle wind,” or an immaterial power (VIth Discourse, in Lamy 1996, p. 99). He then suggests the general distinction between the soul as incorporeal and as corporeal, and produces a raft of arguments against the former view (including the perennial favourite: how could interaction take place?). Here we find a passage that was repeated in a number of other clandestine works, on the “subtle spirit” or very pure flame, and, as mentioned above, the “world soul”. Lamy’s adaptation and expansion of an old Epicurean motif served as a kind of resonance chamber for a number of radical, physiologically motivated, directed or influenced texts as late as La Mettrie’s first writings on the soul (some seventy years later), which at that point can seem a bit archaic, as Thomson has noted. In the passage, which we cite below, we find, in addition to the phrase “world soul” or “soul of the world,” several terms which functioned as quasi-technical terms in the period: “subtle spirit,” “very fine matter,” and “purest fire”:

It is certain that there exists in the world a very subtle spirit or a very fine and always mobile matter, the greatest part of which and, so to speak the source, is in the sun, and the rest is distributed in all the other bodies, more or less, according to their nature and their consistency. It is certainly the soul of the world, which governs and enlivens it, and all of whose parts possess a portion of it. It is the purest fire in the universe, which does not burn of itself but, by the different movements which it gives to the particles of the other bodies in which it is enclosed, it burns and gives off heat.⁶⁹

And in the version which appears in the *Treatise of the Three Impostors*:

It is certain that there is in the universe a very *subtle spirit*, or a very *delicate matter*, always in motion, the source of which is in the *Sun*, and the remainder is spread in all the other bodies, more or less, according to Nature or their consistency. That is *the Soul of the Universe* which governs and vivifies it, and of which some portion is distributed among all the parts that compose it. *This Soul, and the most pure Fire which is in the universe does not burn of*

⁶⁷ Lamy’s definition of an animal is simply “a mixture of humours and a particular structure of organs”, Lamy, VIth Discourse, in Lamy (1996), p. 106.

⁶⁸ Bayle, “Dicéarque,” remark L, in Bayle (1740), vol. 2, p. 287; “Rorarius,” remark E, vol. 4, p. 79 and (as noted earlier), for the formulation “du plus au moins,” the article “Péreira,” remark E, vol. 3, p. 652. See Paganini (1985) on the latter formulation.

⁶⁹ Lamy, VIth Discourse, in Lamy (1996), p. 104; Thomson (2008), pp. 88, 160, 170.

*itself, but by the different movements that it gives to the particles of other bodies where it enters, it burns and reflects its heat... [T]his fire being enclosed in the body, it is rendered capable of thought, and that is what is called the soul, or what is called animal spirits, which are spread in all parts of the body. Now, it is certain that this soul being of the same nature in all animals, disperses at the death of man in the same manner as in other animals, from whence it follows that... the other world is a chimera...*⁷⁰

As will be developed much more extensively in *L'Âme Matérielle*, which we discuss below, the vital flame or “most pure fire” is equated here with animal spirits (once we are dealing with what is “enclosed in the body”).

This is an ancient Hellenistic theme (found in Peripatetic, Epicurean and Stoic writings): human souls are not the only things in the universe that can be called souls, for “soul penetrates through the whole universe, and we by sharing in it, as a part, are ensouled.”⁷¹ Epicureans writing after Epicurus added some layers of detail and complexity to the account he gave in the *Letter to Herodotus*, of the soul as a kind of wind, but also a kind of heat. For instance, Aëtius presents the Epicurean view as distinguishing between four elements which make up the soul: a fire-like one, an air-like one, a wind-like one, and an unnamed fourth element, which is responsible for sensation because of its particular fineness (Liddell-Scott frag. 14C, cit. Rapp 2006, p. 189.).⁷² Cardano considers the view that the soul is a kind of “celestial heat” to be Hippocrates’ view—and a correct one: “Hippocrates correctly said, the soul is nothing but the celestial heat” (*De subtilitate*, 5, cit. in Hirai 2011, p. 111). The *Treatise of the Three Impostors* compares Leucippus, Democritus, Hippocrates and Empedocles, who define the soul either strictly as a kind of flame, or as a combination of flame and other elements, to Epicurus, who also believes this, but adds “that in that composition there enters some air, a vapor, and another nameless substance of which is formed a very subtle spirit, which spreads through the body and which is called the soul.” (Anon. (1716/1904), ch. V, § vi, p. 99; Anon. (1768 edition), p. 87). Walter Charleton, another early modern Epicurean (although one who has his spokesperson-character in one work declare that “as a Christian, I detest and utterly renounce the doctrine of that Sect, concerning Mens Souls,” even if he is “an Epicurean, in many things concerning Bodies”, Charleton 1659, reprint, p. 185), also presents a description of the corporeal soul as “of *Substance* either Fiery, or merely resembling Fire; of a consistence most thin and subtile, not much unlike the flame of pure spirit of Wine, burning in a paper Lantern” (Charleton 1674, pp. 5–6). As we have seen, thinkers including Malebranche and Berkeley denounced this concept, for its implicit or explicit materialism.

Briefly put, these images of ‘subtle wind’ or ‘subtle spirit’, ‘very fine matter’, fire or flame all convey the idea that the soul is composed of a special kind of matter. In Willis, this becomes a “subtle matter” which structures the body; this can be taken in an idealistic sense (thinking of Plato and Galen: the soul as the blueprint

⁷⁰ Anon. (1716/1904), § VII, p. 99; (Anon.) 1768 edition, p. 85, emphasis ours.

⁷¹ Cleanthes apud Hermias, *In Gent. Phil.* 14 (Diels, *Dox. Graec* 654 [=svf 1.495]), in Annas (1992), p. 43.

⁷² This is taken up and elaborated by Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, III, 262–265, 268–272.

or ‘form’ of a substance) and in a materialistic sense (emphasised in anonymous treatises such as *L’Âme Matérielle*). But as regards the former, he is careful to distinguish his view from that of the “Soul of the Beast [as] an Incorporeal Substance, or Form” (Willis 1683, ch. I, p. 4). And he is clearly committed to a new, chemically overdetermined concept of matter which is not “meerly passive” but active and self-moving (Willis 1683, ch. VI, “Of the Science or Knowledge of Brutes,” p. 33). Gassendi also describes the soul as “a very tenuous substance, just like the flower of matter (*flos totius materiae*) with a special disposition, condition and symmetry holding among the crasser mass of the parts of the body.”⁷³ It is a material soul, but with emergent properties, that are chiefly specified in chemical terms. As we will see in the next section, certain appropriations of the Lucretian motif that “the soul is to the body as scent is to incense”⁷⁴ take this chemical-emergent sense one step further (towards materialism), by making the soul, no longer a material entity in its own right (whether in a humorally interactivist sense, a structural sense in which it teleologically orders the functioning of the body’s organs, etc.) but a mere emanation or effluvium of a material substructure, the body.

L’Âme Matérielle

With the anonymous manuscript *L’Âme Matérielle*,⁷⁵ which can be dated to approximately 1725–1730 based on some of its citations, we witness a first, and rather general programmatic attempt at the *naturalisation of mental phenomena*, that is, at locating mental phenomena within an integrated corporeal and cognitive scheme (the distinction between these two levels being both anachronistic and irrelevant here).⁷⁶ Thanks to Niderst’s research, we know that this text is an ingenious patchwork of Spinoza via Bayle (particularly his article “Buridan” in the *Dictionnaire*, the *Pensées diverses sur la comète*, but also the *Réponse aux questions d’un provincial*), Malebranche’s psychophysiology, the doctrine of the (material) soul as a “fiery soul” from Gassendi as mediated through Bernier, Epicurean physiology (particularly borrowed from Lamy), travel narratives, and various materialist prodromes from Lucretius to Vanini and Hobbes, typically using the analyses and summaries given in anti-materialist works. Niderst comments, rather interpretively, that the anonymous author, handicapped by a lack of direct access to the sources,

⁷³ Gassendi, *Syntagma*, Pt. II, *Physica*, sect. I, Bk. IV, “De Principio Efficiente, seu de Causis Rerum,” ch. 8, in Gassendi (1658), I, p. 337a; see also Garber (1998), p. 771.

⁷⁴ “l’âme est au corps comme l’odeur à l’encens, l’un ne peut être détruit sans l’autre” (*L’Âme Matérielle*, 2003, p. 174); this is a shorter, non-literal but more assertive rendition of Lucretius, *De rerum natura* III, 327–330.

⁷⁵ Niderst first suggested Du Marsais as the author, who is now considered to have been the priest Etienne Guillaume (Mori and Mothu 2003), but this has been contested (Thomson 2008, p. 157, who does not say why). Guillaume was the author of, amongst other texts, *De la conduite qu’un honnête homme doit garder pendant sa vie*.

⁷⁶ On ‘clandestine’ strategies of naturalisation of the mind (in both *L’Âme Matérielle* and Fontenelle’s earlier *Traité de la liberté de l’âme*) see Wolfe (2010).

wanted to refute the “enemies” of materialism using the passages quoted in their own attacks!⁷⁷ This has an effect on the physiological portions of the work, since they are based on older notions such as the “innate fire” in the soul, and animal spirits (which by the 1720s is no longer exactly state-of-the-art neurophysiology), to which the author adds the idea of cerebral traces as a basis for memory and association. Ideas are nothing other than traces in the brain, which are the impressions ‘imprinted’ via animal spirits by the effect of objects on our external sense organs (*L’Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 200, 202, 234).⁷⁸

The argument for the materiality of the soul in this text has four basic elements;⁷⁹ the predominantly Malebranchian account of animal spirits, blood and brain; the rejection of the difference between animal and human souls; mortalism, that is, the affirmation of the mortality of the soul; and an Epicuro-Lucretian element, which conveys, however suggestively, the idea of an emergent-materialist conception of the soul.

As noted earlier regarding Malebranche, the account of materialist spirits is a prime case of the way in which clandestine manuscripts appropriate a piece of a text and leave out the original author’s protestations. Here, Malebranche’s account of brain traces is taken on board, *minus his denunciation of the idea*. Recall that Malebranche did describe various cases of mind-brain identity: the “variety found in men’s inclinations” depends on the “almost infinite variety found in the aural fibers, the blood and the spirits”; “the different characters encountered among the minds” can easily be explained “by the abundance and scarcity, the rapidity or slowness of agitation, and by the density or lightness of the animal spirits, and... by the malleability of the brain fibers; and finally, by the relation the animal spirits might have to these fibers.”⁸⁰ This is so true that one can even “take the soul for a certain configuration of the parts of the brain, and for the motion of spirits.”⁸¹ But Malebranche sometimes warns the reader against trusting too literally in such an identity:

It is not enough merely to feel, or to have a vague understanding, that the brain traces are linked to each other, and are followed by movement of the animal spirits, that the traces aroused in the brain arouse ideas in the mind, and that the movements excited in the animal spirits excite passions in the will. It is necessary, as far as possible, to understand distinctly the cause of all these different connections, and especially the effects they are capable of producing.⁸²

And above all:

It is true that there are some people stupid enough and others imaginative enough to constantly take the soul for a certain configuration of the parts of the brain, and for the motion

⁷⁷ See Niderst’s introduction to his new edition of *L’Âme Matérielle*, pp. 13, 16–17. For further discussion of this text see Vartanian (1982) and Thomson (2008).

⁷⁸ Even the Jesuit *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* has under “Trace” a sub-heading entitled “Brain Traces” (“Traces du cerveau”).

⁷⁹ Our aim is not reiterate the presence of every single possible historical source, which in any case has been done by Niderst over the course of his three editions of the text. See also Mori and Mothu (2003) for additional sources.

⁸⁰ Malebranche (1674), I.xiii.5, in Malebranche (1997), p. 64; Malebranche (1674), II.i.1, § 3, in Malebranche (1997), p. 89.

⁸¹ Malebranche (1674), VI.ii.7, § 3, in Malebranche (1997), p. 492.

⁸² Malebranche (1674), II.i.5, in Malebranche (1997), p. 101.

of spirits... *For what do we reply to a man who imagines that a desire, for example, is nothing but the movement of spirits; that a thought is but a trace or image of objects where spirits have formed in the brain; and that all reasonings of men consist only in the different placement of tiny bodies diversely arranged in the head?*⁸³

In contrast, the author of *L'Âme Matérielle* is happy to assert as a kind of new, state-of-the-art physiological knowledge what Malebranche had declared to be the view of “stupid people”:

The sense organs really act on the animal spirits... their action consist in pushing them into certain little canals rather than others.... Hence we must treat the relation between the senses as material or, which is the same, as a mechanical action of the sense organs on the animal spirits, which I consider strictly as the most subtle parts of the blood and other bodily fluids, and as the rarefied and highly purified essence of the various matters which compose the human body.⁸⁴

In addition, since memory is the preserving and renewing of this relation between the senses, it must be considered as material; memory is the “mechanics” of the process, formed by “material agents” (*L'Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 230). This idea of the materiality of memory, the material *traces* of memory, is again Malebranchian:

For it is enough that many traces were produced at the same time for them all to rise again together. This is because the animal spirits, finding the path of all the traces made at the same time half open, continue on them since it is easier for them to travel those paths than through other parts of the brain. This is the cause of memory and of the bodily habits we share with the beasts.⁸⁵

Or, as Kenelm Digby had put it some decades earlier: “there is no act of our soul, without speculation of phantasms residing in our memory” (Digby, *The Nature and Operations of Man's Soule*, ch. X, in Digby 1645, p. 96).⁸⁶ When we have referred to the medicalisation (a more specific historically specifiable process) and naturalisation (a more conceptual process) of the soul, we meant that this was not identical with a reduction of higher-level features (mind, intentionality, consciousness...) to the basic features of matter, or basic physics (whatever that might mean in this period). An indication of this is the usage here of the animal spirits concept and how it allows for a material account of memory and association of ideas, which can account for our immense capacity for memory, but also for the alteration and confusion of our memories. For memory is defined here as a set of inextricable connections between brain traces made by the flow of spirits, such that “none can be aroused without all those which were imprinted at the same time being aroused.”⁸⁷

Further, the manuscript also draws reductionist consequences from this psychophysiology, in the sense that our mental life is physiologically dependent on, and

⁸³ Malebranche (1674), VI.ii.7, § 3, in Malebranche (1997), p. 492, our emphasis.

⁸⁴ *L'Âme Matérielle* (2003), p. 230. Malebranche also defined life in terms of blood: “man's life consists only in the circulation of the blood” (Malebranche 1674, II.1.i, in Malebranche 1997, p. 90).

⁸⁵ Malebranche (1674), II.i.5.ii, in Malebranche (1997), p. 106.

⁸⁶ The two treatises are printed together but paginated separately.

⁸⁷ Malebranche (1674), II.i.5.ii, in Malebranche (1997), p. 105.

constituted by the movement of the animal spirits, and thus, in a separate claim (which is also characteristic of this tradition), we are not free: “Can man interrupt the emotions of spirits and blood, or the perturbations of the brain, precipitated by [external] objects?... Our happiness, wisdom and freedom are dependent on the motion of the animal spirits which we do not control, and these motions... cause the emotions in our soul. *None of this is free, nor can it be prevented*” (*L’Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 182).⁸⁸ The animal spirits doctrine is taken in a further ‘immoralist’ direction to mean that the composition of our blood determines us to virtue or vice, a motif which, as we saw, led the surgeon Timothie Bright to warn of the dangers of blurring the boundaries between soul and body, and which La Mettrie will happily and thus scandalously reprise (Wolfe 2009; *L’Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 178). God cannot judge us, because our inclinations and acts are the effect of the movement of the animal spirits: “Natural inclinations are continuous impressions of the motions of animal spirits. We are not free...; we do not have the power to love or not to love, and God cannot make this a crime (*L’Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 176).

What befalls the soul, then? What is the concept of the material soul articulated in a treatise entitled... *The Material Soul*? The text began by stating that the ancients, with the exception of the Pythagoreans and the Platonists, denied that there was a difference between the human soul and matter—not vile, low, palpable matter but “matter as understood by the chemists,” i.e. matter with active properties such as animal spirits—yet matter which is “as essentially bodily and material as mud and flesh can be.” (*L’Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 34) Further on we hear of various ancient authorities who also held the soul to be corporeal (*L’Âme Matérielle* 2003, pp. 34–48). The problem of the soul and the human mind (*l’esprit de l’homme*) is one of the most difficult ones there is in philosophy; in order to know it well, one needs to be “well versed in anatomy,” and have “in-depth knowledge of our body’s machine” (*L’Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 172), on which no one is a better source than “Father Malebranche” (on the brain and animal spirits⁸⁹)—except that the text continues with a long excerpt (pasted in as it were, according to a method of collage which is characteristic of the clandestine manuscripts) from Lamy’s *Discours*, on the world-soul and ‘animal chemistry’, which includes the reference to the Lucretian image that the soul is to the body as scent is to incense.

As noted, there are four basic points supporting the idea of the materiality of the soul here, of which we have discussed the first. We now turn briefly to the second and third elements, before focusing more fully on the fourth, which is of greater relevance to our analysis—it is perhaps the most original part of the text (including in the way it is articulated together with the brain and animal spirits theme), and, again, the most explicitly Epicurean.

The author argues that there is no inherent or metaphysical difference between animal souls and human souls, with texts partly taken from Montaigne and Bayle (and Dilly to a larger extent); recall Bayle’s comment in the article “Pereira,” that “On ne devoit point penser que l’âme des bêtes et celle de l’homme différassent

⁸⁸ Emphasis ours. Cf. Malebranche 1997, V.i.4.

⁸⁹ The text glosses on the brain and animal spirits, essentially based on Malebranche, at pp. 190–220.

autrement que du plus au moins... et par conséquent on a dû croire que la seule disposition des organes est cause” (Bayle, “Pereira,” remark E, in Bayle 1740, vol. 3, p. 652). Similarly, a parallel is suggested between the fact that human cognitive abilities vary, as they are affected by early childhood development, language acquisition, etc. (examples include ‘wild children’ from Poland and Borneo and the deaf and mute boy from Chartres), and the fact that animal cognitive abilities are also not uniform, especially in the absence of education (*L’Âme Matérielle* 2003, pp. 88–90), a point that will be made quite forcefully by La Mettrie and others with the “discovery” of the “orang-outang.” A faintly Spinozist point is made that if our “soul” (or mind) were attached to a different body, whether a less sophisticated body such as that of an animal or a body with more potential than ours, its abilities would be correspondingly affected (*L’Âme Matérielle* 2003, pp. 94–96). The Cartesian conception of animal-machines is challenged by appealing to various descriptions of animal emotions, loyalty, intelligence, etc.⁹⁰

The text also presents a case for the *mortality* of the soul, and replies to objections against it (chapters II, IV). The author identifies ‘body’ and ‘substance’ as bearers of properties, as substrates of change; hence the term ‘incorporeal substance’ is a “frivolous” term, internally contradictory (*L’Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 54). Also included are a series of familiar arguments against the non-locality or non-spatiality of the soul (*L’Âme Matérielle* 2003, pp. 68–70), familiar from Hobbes. After some discussion of the soul, the author employs an idea that was much discussed in radical journals such as the *Nouvelles de la république des lettres*, in the wake of Locke’s *Essay*: not just thinking matter *per se* but the specific insight (which would be popular in dissenting texts all the way to Joseph Priestley⁹¹) that nothing in Scripture prevents God from having “superadded” thought, or the capacity of thought, to matter, such that Cartesian substance dualism is revealed to be a philosophical construct rather than anything either (a) obviously true or (b) expressing the true content of Scripture (p. 144). In Locke’s own words:

...we shall never be able to know, whether any mere material Being thinks, or no; it being impossible for us, by the mere contemplation of our own *Ideas*, without revelation, to discover, whether Omnipotency has not given to some Systems of Matter fitly disposed, a power to perceive and think, or else joined and fixed to Matter so disposed, a thinking immaterial Substance.⁹²

We have encountered, both positively, in Lamy and the *Treatise of the Three Impostors*, and negatively, in Malebranche’s and Berkeley’s criticisms, the doctrine of the soul as a type of ‘wind’ or ‘flame’—which Henry More attacked as ‘Psychopyrism’ (Henry 1987, p. 34). Where Willis was only trying to bring together chemistry, anatomy and physiology to produce an integrated model of brain function and cognitive processes (without materialist intentions), the clandestine texts, including *L’Âme matérielle*, turn this claim that the soul is both like a flame, and also “formed of the most subtle parts of the blood,” into an explicit materialist claim: “man’s soul is

⁹⁰ *L’Âme Matérielle* (2003), pp. 96–106, with more details supplied after the criticism of Descartes, pp. 106–122, including an elegant combination of Bayle and Lahontan on beavers.

⁹¹ Priestley (1778), pp. xvi–xviii; Thomson (2008), pp. 223–224.

⁹² Locke 1975, IV.iii.6, pp. 540–541.

material.”⁹³ In that sense it was quite fair for Thomas Browne to describe the *Treatise of the Three Impostors* (chapter V of which is “On the soul”) as being written by a “villain and secretary of hell” (Browne 1892, § XX, p. 44).

L'Âme Matérielle brings together in a few sentences, the motif of the soul as a “little flame,” and Gassendi’s motif of the “flower of matter” (*L'Âme Matérielle* 2003, pp. 174, 175). He had described the soul as “a very tenuous substance, just like the flower of matter (*flos totius materiae*) with a special disposition, condition and symmetry holding among the crasser mass of the parts of the body.”⁹⁴ One can see a trend from Gassendi and Bernier through Willis, Lamy and now the early eighteenth-century clandestine texts such as *L'Âme Matérielle*, from a chemical conception of Life and a differentiation of types of soul, to a materialist attitude in which the soul is a mere emanation or effluvium of a material substructure, the body—a “flower of matter.”

More explicit yet is *L'Âme Matérielle*’s brilliant and elegant rendition of a passage from Lucretius (in fact, the author is using de Coutures’ translation of *De rerum natura*, which went through many editions between 1680 and 1720). Here, the passage becomes “the soul is to the body as scent is to incense.”⁹⁵ This is more direct than the original, which describes the bond between soul and body as a mutual guardianship, in which the soul is the cause of the body’s life; and then uses the image of scent and pieces of incense: just as one cannot tear the scent out of the pieces of incense, one cannot tear the (nature of) *animus* or *anima*, mind or soul from the body, without the whole dissolving (“Quod genus e *thuris* glaebis euellere *odorem*/haud facile est, quin intereat natura quoque eius/*sic animi atque animae naturam corpore toto*/extrahere haut facile est, quin omnia dissoluantur/Implexis ita principiis ab origine prima/inter se fiunt consorti praedita uita”, Lucretius, *De rerum natura* III, 327–329, emphasis ours). It is an intriguing image, because it simultaneously reduces the soul to a derivative, dependent feature or product of a corporeal, material entity—the body—and also ensures that the soul is part of the province of a medicalised natural philosophy (rather than denying its existence outright). The same idea is conveyed by Willis in an equally emergentist image, which he credits to Lucretius via Gassendi: “the Animal is as it were the Loom, in which the Yarn is the Body, and the Woof the Soul” (Willis 1683, ch. I, p. 2). A hard-boiled, reductive materialist faced with such ideas might respond that here, “we no longer really know if we are materialising the soul or animating matter” (Canguilhem 1977,

⁹³ Lamy, VIth Discourse, in Lamy (1996), p. 104; *L'Âme matérielle* (2003), p. 172 (the soul as flame), p. 228 (“l’âme de l’homme est matérielle”).

⁹⁴ Gassendi, *Syntagma*, Pt. II, *Physica*, sect. I, Bk. IV, “De Principio Efficiente, seu de Causis Rerum,” ch. 8, in Gassendi (1658), I, p. 337a (see also Garber 1998, p. 771); also in Bernier (1678), V, book VI, ch. iii, p. 456.

⁹⁵ “L’âme est au corps comme l’odeur à l’encens, l’un ne peut être détruit sans l’autre” (*L'Âme Matérielle*, 2003, p. 174). The author is apparently using de Coutures’ translation of Lucretius, *De rerum natura* III, 327–330 (Niderst, ed. (Anon.), p. 60, n. 1). In the 1692 edition, the passage is at p. 411. It is also discussed by Gassendi in the *Syntagma* (in the chapter on the soul, Pt. II, *Physica*, sect. 3, membrum posterium, Bk. III, “De Anima,” ch. 2, “Qui animam corpoream fecerint?”, in Gassendi 1658, II, p. 249b; thanks to Delphine Bellis for helping locate this citation), and in the *Theophrastus redivivus*.

p. 86). But that is the historical reality one has to deal with, once thinkers are no longer invoking a Cartesian distinction between thought and extension, or the metaphysical specificity of the rational and free human soul, or when such conceptual schemes are *never* invoked; and it only becomes more complicated in the eighteenth century, with the added focus on the (material, corporeal) properties of irritability and sensitivity as intentional properties, replacing traditional conceptions of the soul as the ‘pilot in the ship’.⁹⁶

Both Lamy, invoking a medical Epicurean conceptual framework, and the author of *L'Âme Matérielle*, working with a smorgasbord of elements both contemporary and ancient (and often removed from their own intended theoretical context, like the portions of Malebranche on the brain and animal spirits) are articulating a concept of soul as something material. We cannot be more ontologically precise than the texts themselves—thus for instance it is difficult to decide if the material soul here is an actual structure, something fully corporeal or organic, or if it is an emergent property of such a structure, as the incense image seems to indicate. However, the relation between scent and incense is a classic case of a relation between secondary and primary qualities, itself quite at home in a mechanistic framework (but that would be another paper).

L'Âme Matérielle speaks quite explicitly of the “materiality of the soul” (*L'Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 222), uses the argument (which La Mettrie will expand on considerably, especially in *L'Homme-Machine*) that states of disease are evidence for the interaction of soul and body—and further, that they establish that both are composed of one and the same substance (p. 56), such that “the mind is subject to the law of all corporeal beings” (*L'Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 222.). We are also told in the last sentence of the treatise (*L'Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 236) that it is the “matter of which the brain is composed” that thinks. But even if the soul is material, the ontological status of this materiality is not generic: “The human soul is material, and is made up of the most subtle parts of the blood” (*L'Âme Matérielle* 2003, p. 228). To use a distinction suggested by Wright (2000), but in a different sense from him, we can say that the soul as locus of mental activity is here being conceptualised both as *substance*—as a material substance subject to physical and biological laws—and as *function*—belonging to medicine in general and *medicina mentis* in particular.⁹⁷ Vartanian comments usefully that “if one conceives of the soul as the effect or function as certain structures of organised matter, it is inevitable that the more legitimate articulation of such a concept occurs through the progress of knowledge regarding anatomical structures themselves, and their modes of operation” (Vartanian 1982, pp. 159–160).

Of course, the objection made by Malebranche and others down to Kant, that there is a category mistake being made—with dangerous consequences, moral and other—when one allows for the medicalisation of the category of soul is, not *logically* refuted here, but rendered *practically* inert, as is also apparent in the popu-

⁹⁶ On sensibility (sensitivity) and irritability as properties of matter in the eighteenth century see Wolfe (2014a).

⁹⁷ On the naturalisation of the soul as ‘substance’ or as ‘function’, see Vartanian (1982) and Wright (2000); on the ontologically neutral aspect of this naturalisation, Hatfield (1995), pp. 188, 191.

larity of the concept of soul as a ‘heuristic’ in early localisationist neuroscience. (Kant had insisted, contra the anatomist Samuel Thomas Soemmerring, that one had to distinguish between the ‘seat of the soul’ and the ‘seat of the organ of the soul’; Soemmerring had maintained—in the 1790s!—that the cerebrospinal fluid, i.e. fluid of the brain cavity, was the locus of the *sensorium commune*, and decided to locate the soul there.⁹⁸) To be precise, one can either *deny* the very possibility of localisation (as Henry More did explicitly; Henry 1989, pp. 100–101), be ‘agnostic’ or ‘functionalist’ on the issue (like Malebranche), claim to have localised and materialised the soul, or present it as a functional property of a particular arrangement of matter (“the most subtle parts of the blood,” “the flower of matter,” etc.). The latter two perspectives reflect a tension between models of the materialist soul—not between Epicurean and other models, but *within* Epicureanism, where the soul is alternatively conceived, to speak formulaically, as a kind of *substance* or as the *effect* of a kind of substance.

The final historical episode we examine is an explicit outgrowth of the ideas surveyed in the previous sections, particularly Lamy and *L’Âme Matérielle*. A notable difference is that whereas the latter texts blur genres without self-consciously *defining* a genre, materialists such as La Mettrie and Diderot *are* self-conscious, both in defining themselves as as such (La Mettrie is the first recorded author to describe himself as a materialist; the term is used—pejoratively, but in the sense we would recognise today—by Henry More in the 1660s, in English, and by around 1700 by Leibniz in French, with earlier occurrences being unearthed every few years; but none of these are self-designations, prior to La Mettrie; see Bloch 1995), and in using medical arguments in support of naturalistic philosophical positions.

Materialism and the Soul’s Remainder: La Mettrie and Diderot

The question of the soul is approached in various ways within the materialist context. As noted, with thinkers such as Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1709–1751) and Denis Diderot (1713–1784) in the mid-eighteenth century, we are dealing with an intellectual context that is significantly influenced by the Epicurean and more generally heterodox traditions we have been discussing. La Mettrie himself changes his view on the soul, as Ann Thomson has noted (Thomson 2008, p. 188). Both in his revision of his 1745 *Histoire naturelle de l’âme* as the 1750 *Traité de l’âme*, and in his move from this work to *L’Homme-Machine* in 1748, La Mettrie moves from a more Epicurean view of a “fiery soul” (à la Lamy) to a model we would more immediately recognise as materialist, in which thought is the emergent property of the material arrangement of the brain. Yet this change does not affect the way La Mettrie is an Epicurean in a very thoroughgoing sense, both in his medical materialism and in his hedonistic ethics (Wolfe 2009). And indeed, as we have seen earlier, even

⁹⁸ For Kant’s attack on Soemmerring, see Hagner (1992), p. 9.

within the Epicurean tradition, both of these views exist: a fully substantialist view of soul in material terms, and a reductionist view which makes soul, if it exists at all, a functional property of a particular material arrangement.

More interesting to us is that this shift can also be seen in broader terms as a shift within *reductionist* strategies, which we can also classify as *types of reduction*. There is the classic, full-scale reductionist approach, which might be most familiar to a modern reader. This can vary from La Mettrie's "s/he who wishes to know the properties of the soul must first search for those which manifest themselves clearly in the body" (*Traité de l'âme*, ch. I, in La Mettrie 1751, p. 86) (which, one may notice, is not a statement that *there is no such thing as the soul*, but rather the advice to start with the body), to hard-line denials, such as the dismissive comment in the article "Physiologie" in the *Encyclopédie*: "If the body is healed, one need not worry about the soul."⁹⁹ Or La Mettrie himself: "The soul is just a pointless term of which we have no idea and which a good mind should only use to refer to that part of us which thinks." (La Mettrie 1751, p. 54; La Mettrie 1960, p. 180). In this case, soul is being reconstrued as a functional definition: it is neither eliminated in favour of a hypothetical 'basic physics' or the properties of matter in general, nor asserted as unique in its own right. But more often, in this type of reduction we find either (a) the weaker denial that the soul could be relevant at all to medicine, as in Ménéuret's statement we discussed earlier, that the soul is not "based on any medical observation; hence we will... restrict ourselves to describing the changes of the body" (Ménéuret de Chambaud 1765/1966, p. 718b), or (b) a stronger denial that there is no such thing, period, as in d'Holbach:

You speak of your soul but do you know what a soul is? Can't you see that this soul is merely the assemblage of your organs, from which life results? Would you then deny a soul to other animals, who live, think, judge, and compare, like you; who seek pleasure, and avoid pain, like you; and who often have organs, which serve them better than yours do? (D'Holbach 1774, I, XCIV, p. 92).

Sometimes this hard-line denial of the soul forgoes the polemical tone and turns wholly instrumental, as in Maupertuis' project of "modifying the soul" by administering drugs. Maupertuis, the Secretary of the Berlin Academy of Sciences in the mid-eighteenth century, proposed, using a rather odd term, that "metaphysical experiments" (*expériences métaphysiques*) be carried out to "modify the soul," by chemically altering mental states:

Might we not find here the art of producing dreams? Opium usually fills the mind with agreeable images; greater wonders yet are spoken of, concerning certain beverages of the Indies... There may be other means still, to modify the soul.¹⁰⁰

Clearly here 'soul' is a functional, material category, not one half of a dualist pair. Qua functional entity, the soul can be defined by the materialist as a term we "should

⁹⁹ Rather loosely rendering "Qui a guéri le corps, ne doit pas s'inquiéter de l'âme" ("Physiologie," 1765, p. 538a).

¹⁰⁰ Maupertuis, *Lettres sur le progrès des sciences* (1752), in Maupertuis (1768/1967), vol. II, p. 426.

only use to refer to that part of us which thinks” (La Mettrie), or as a “modifiable,” manipulable entity (Maupertuis). A locus of cognitive functions which has been so thoroughly naturalised that it is open to manipulation is, of course, rather like ‘mind’ from the psychologist’s point of view, something Lamy casually points to when he says “I used the words *soul* and *mind* interchangeably... because they are the same thing”; he adds, in a rather archaic-sounding technical flourish, that he is using ‘mind’ primarily for “the portion of the Soul contained in the nerves,” and ‘soul’ for the “spirits contained in the brain” (Lamy, *Explication*, ch. VII (conclusion), in Lamy 1996, p. 176).

But it is also possible for the materialist to be less overtly confrontational towards the concept of soul. Either because it has been naturalised, including through its reconfiguration in a medical tradition (be it Aristotelian-Averroist, Galenic-humoral, post-Cartesian or Epicurean); in that case the soul can be treated, La Mettrie suggests, as:

...but a principle of motion or a material and sensible part of the brain, which can be regarded without fear of error as the mainspring (*ressort*) of the whole machine, which visibly influences all the other [springs], and seems indeed to have been made first, so that all the other parts are but a kind of emanation from the brain. (La Mettrie 1751, p. 63; La Mettrie 1960, p. 186)

A material and sensible part, a spring—albeit a special, particularly foundational spring within the workings of the overall corporeal machine—and one which is located in the brain. Here, as in Diderot, the status of the soul is displaced away from metaphysics towards the particular case of the brain. Notably, Diderot’s late *Éléments de physiologie*, as well as his supplementary remarks in the *Encyclopédie* article “Âme,” stress both the complexity of the brain for any reductionist materialist project, and the ‘displacement’ of the soul therein. La Mettrie also recasts the soul as a kind of complex mechanism, or mechanistically specifiable force, in a dense comment which is partly a respectful criticism of Willis and the anatomist Claude Perrault:

Willis and Perrault, minds of a more feeble stamp, but careful observers of nature... seem to have preferred to suppose a soul generally extended over the whole body, instead of the principle which we are describing. But according to this hypothesis (which was that of Virgil and of all Epicureans, a hypothesis which the case (*histoire*) of the polyp might seem at first sight to favor), the movements which go on after the death of the subject in which they inhere are due to a *remnant of soul* (*reste d’âme*) still maintained by the parts that contract, though, from the moment of death, these are not irritated by the blood and spirits. Whence it may be seen that these writers, whose solid works easily eclipse all philosophic fables, are deceived only in the manner of those who have endowed matter with the faculty of thinking. I mean to say, by having expressed themselves badly in obscure and meaningless terms. Indeed, what is this *remnant of a soul*, if it is not the “motive force” of the Leibnizians..., which however Perrault in particular has really foreseen (La Mettrie 1751, pp. 66–67; La Mettrie 1960, p. 188, emphasis ours).

First, we are told that an Epicurean “hypothesis” of a ‘residual soul’ or a “remainder of the soul” dispersed in the body, is not quite correct (and La Mettrie had entertained more such views in his earlier work). Second, which complicates matters considerably, we are told that this hypothesis is akin—methodologically?—to

that according to which matter can think, i.e. the core materialist hypothesis. At the beginning of the book, La Mettrie had addressed the claim that matter can think, and instead of coming out for or against it, he stripped the claim of some of its incendiary character, and proposed the analogy between matter being able to think, and matter being able to tell time (La Mettrie 1751, p. 9; La Mettrie 1960, p. 150). This is actually a somewhat mysterious analogy which may simply be addressing how the functional properties of different material systems, differ accordingly: thought for the brain, time-telling for watches and clocks (which implies that La Mettrie could also actually be agreeing with the view—i.e., that the “remnant of soul” hypothesis is like the thinking matter hypothesis, which he had subtly endorsed at the beginning of his book). But in any case, his third point is that this “remnant of a soul” is like motive force—in other words, nothing supernatural, nothing immortal or immaterial; a natural function.

However, the materialist approach to the soul discussed here, inasmuch as it partly reflects the early modern Epicurean context (whether this is viewed as archaic or not), remains an *embodied* approach—which is partly reflected in La Mettrie’s rather surprising choice of the case of the polyp as further illustration of a “remnant of soul”: the polyp’s capacity to live in seccated forms implies that there is no central soul but rather a principle of animation dispersed throughout the body. Antoine-Martin Roche, in his 1759 *Traité de la nature de l’âme, et de l’origine de ses connoissances. Contre le système de Mr. Locke & ses partisans*, distinguishes between two materialist views of the soul, a ‘Spinozist’ view according to which the soul is coextensive with the entire body, and a ‘materialist’ view according to which it is just material *per se*¹⁰¹; La Mettrie’s usage of the example of the polyp here would be a prime case of what Roche calls the ‘Spinozist’ view.

Put differently, the concept of the body which is at work in these materialist texts is, if not ‘ensouled’, certainly animated and vitalised, as in this remark of Diderot’s:

Whatever idea we initially have of [the soul], it is necessarily a mobile, extended, sensitive and composite entity. It grows tired just like the body, it rests like the body, it loses its control over the body just as the body loses its control over the soul.... Is the soul gay, sad, angry, tender, shy, lustful? It is nothing without the body.¹⁰²

Even when La Mettrie is at his most reductionist, he speaks of soul and body as “correlative” (“the various states of the soul are always correlative with those of the body” (La Mettrie 1751, p. 22; La Mettrie 1960, p. 158)), although when he tries to describe mutual limitation it does not sound so symmetrical: “nothing is as limited as the empire of the soul over the body, nothing so extended as the empire of the body over the soul.” (La Mettrie, *Traité de l’âme*, ch. XII, § 2, in La Mettrie 1751, p. 155)

Ultimately, whether these forms of reduction are weak or strong, coherent or waver- ing, they do not reduce the soul to matter in motion, or to inanimate atoms. When Diderot, in his commentary on Franz Hemsterhuis’ 1772 *Lettre sur l’homme*, writes

¹⁰¹ Roche, *Traité de la nature de l’âme, et de l’origine de ses connoissances. Contre le système de Mr. Locke & ses partisans* (1759), discussed in Yolton (1987), p. 90 f.

¹⁰² *Éléments de physiologie*, in Diderot (1975), XVII, p. 334

“wherever I read *soul* I replace it with *man* or *animal*,”¹⁰³ he is encapsulating in a phrase a process of conceptual crystallisation we have been following in the previous sections. It is both a *medicalisation of metaphysics*, in the sense that medical knowledge and observation are allowed to modify metaphysical claims (a process we have traced back as far as the reception of Aristotelian natural philosophy and the emergence of humoralism, both in the sixteenth century), and—partly due to this specifically medical context—a reduction to *body*: “the action of the soul on the body is the action of one part of the body on another, and the action of the body on the soul is again that of one part of the body on another” (Diderot again, *Éléments de physiologie*, in Diderot 1975, XVII, pp. 334–335).

It is not just, as we argued in earlier sections, that medical debates are relevant to thinking about the soul. They also have an impact on the philosophically specific positions taken (whether as specifically medical approaches to body-soul relations, as in Boerhaave, Gaub, Cullen or Le Camus, or as deliberate syntheses of medicine and philosophy, as in Lamy or *L'Âme Matérielle*). The specifically medical flavour of the materialism we see here—which is also Epicurean—means that its reductionism is a reduction to *body*. Conversely, that these thinkers *are* materialists, and committed to a reductionist program, distinguishes them from other complex cases of the blending of medicine and metaphysics (such as Glisson).¹⁰⁴ But, as Willis stressed following Gassendi, the type of matter that is at issue here is not “meerly passive”: it is not the brutish matter, “lacking action, sentiment or any intelligence... the most vile of beings,” which apologeticists tended to portray it as (Denesle 1765, I, pp. 32–33, note a, and p. 90).

This specifically medical materialism is a materialism of fluids, affects, and spirits; it is humoralist, Epicurean and chymiatric, amongst other elements which compose it. In that sense, the material soul concept(s) as presented here show that materialists are not “merchants of vanishing” (Sutton and Tribble 2011). But what is its posterity? Diderot in his late manuscript on ‘physiology’ and its conceptual ramifications imagines what he calls a “physical medicine”: since “every sensation and every affection is corporeal, it follows that there is a physical medicine which is equally applicable to the body and the soul” (Diderot 1975, vol. XVII, p. 512). It is not clear what exactly this “physical medicine” might be (Rey (2000) suggests it would be more organismic, less reductive), but it hints (as does Le Camus with less philosophical sophistication) at the emergence of a scientific psychology—at a naturalisation of mental phenomena and beyond, which is quantitative and experimental (considering the role of poisons and hallucinogens, the organic dimensions of mental illness, and so on), and at the same time is squarely focused on an embodied, non-abstract type of consequence: “That the mind possesses such a corporeal nature need not be feared as a blow to our self-esteem” (La Mettrie 1747, p. 111).

¹⁰³ Hemsterhuis/Diderot (1772/1964), p. 277.

¹⁰⁴ On Glisson here, see Henry (1987) and Giglioli (2008). On how an Epicurean medical context produces a uniquely embodied form of reductionism, see Wolfe (2009) on La Mettrie and Wolfe (2012a) more generally.

Conclusion

We hope to have shown that the concept of material soul is neither reducible to a series of “confusions or contaminations between notions of *spiritus*, *pneuma*, and *anima*” (Henry 1987, p. 23), nor a kind of archaic remainder which gradually vanishes with the emergence of physiology after Haller in the later eighteenth century. Granted, from the standpoint of history of science, it should be construed as just that—after all, it is hard to build a scientific psychology on “subtle winds,” humours or animal spirits, and it is not even necessary to make an ontological commitment to materialism: “no one bothered to tell the early practitioners of natural scientific psychology that they had to be materialists in order to be natural scientific psychologists. In point of fact, of all the major eighteenth-century authors who made contributions to the development of psychology, only Erasmus Darwin allowed that mind might be material” (Hatfield 1995, p. 217).

But it would be absurd to judge Lamy, Malebranche, La Mettrie or *L'Âme Matérielle* as way stations between Aristotle's doctrine of the soul and faculty psychology (or rather, the emergence of experimental psychology in the nineteenth century). What they are (making an exception for the Oratorian Malebranche who would be unhappy to be presented as a fellow-traveller of materialism), aside from fascinating documents of intellectual history, or exemplars of the Radical Enlightenment, are crucial episodes in the articulation of materialism and the soul understood as the locus of mental processes—not just in a restricted sense in which they would be part of a family of early modern materialist theories like Hobbes's or d'Holbach's. Rather, as we have emphasised, they are outgrowths of an Epicurean tradition which is closely interlinked with a medicalised approach to natural philosophy: they present an embodied, humoral materialism, in which “the human soul is material, and is made up of the most subtle parts of the blood” (*L'Âme Matérielle*, p. 228); a “flower of matter,” as Gassendi put it.

The presence of these citations as motifs at the heart of the early modern Epicurean vision of the material soul does indeed seem to be a far cry from the history of medicine. Indeed, Lamy's contribution has been judged to be “a rather literary brand of medicine, overall” (Bloch 1992, p. 79). But this materialism of animal spirits and humours is unique in its *embodied* character: neither a crude mechanistic materialism in which matter is “meerly passive” (Willis 1683, ch. VI, p. 33) (since if we treat matter as merely possessing the properties of “*solidity*, *inertness*, or *sluggishness*,” we can then, as Priestley saw, only “derive... from this circumstance [its] *baseness* and *imperfection*”¹⁰⁵) nor an idealism in which Life is entirely the immaterial life of the soul, as it might have been for Ralph Cudworth or Henry More. And this uniquely embodied character stems primarily from the medical context.

That the view described here is sometimes called Spinozist (aside from opprobrium, which is not our concern) is intriguing, given that nowhere in Spinoza is there any kind of ‘biologistic’ or ‘embodied’ emphasis on living beings as possessed of a unique set of properties or powers. But clearly, in the eighteenth

¹⁰⁵ Priestley, *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit* (1777), in Priestley (1972), vol. 3, p. 230.

century, there was a kind of ready-made Spinozism which seemed to be a philosophy tailor-made to the developments in the life sciences (Ibrahim 1990), whether or not it was fair to accuse, say, Boerhaave of Spinozism, or whether La Mettrie is a Spinozist in the restrictive sense defined by extensive acquaintance with Spinoza's system. Abbot Tandeau de Saint-Nicolas, writing against La Mettrie in 1745, presents Epicureanism and Spinozism as the two possible forms of the abhorrent vision called materialism: matter and mechanism producing animate bodies, or cosmic determinism and the eternity of the world; but curiously, he diagnoses La Mettrie as falling into the second category rather than the first (Tandeau de Saint-Nicolas 1745, pp. 15–16, 17.). As noted earlier, Antoine-Martin Roche's 1759 critique of Locke and materialism makes a more apt distinction between two materialist views of the soul, a 'Spinozist' view (the soul is coextensive with the entire body), and a 'materialist' view (the soul is material *per se*). And Roche responds with a traditional invocation, both of the soul's indivisibility, and of its inherent 'inwardness' ("sentiment intérieur," in Malebranche's phrase¹⁰⁶), *targeting Le Camus and other physicians who sought to articulate a 'medicine of the mind'*. Even Buffon appeals to this kind of interiority: "The consciousness of one's existence, this inner sensation which constitutes the *self*, is composed in us of the sensation of our present existence and the memory of our past existence." (Buffon 1753, p. 51) But this can also be turned around into a statement of materialism, locating the soul in an integrated physiology or 'medicine of the mind'; it is because, Lamy suggests, "the soul, which knows all things, does not know itself" that there may be a limit to first-person knowledge and we should defer to medicine! (Lamy, *Discours anatomiques*, VI, in Lamy 1996, p. 95)

A question then is, what kind of materialism are we dealing with here? Clearly, the concept of matter at issue in these texts, at least from Gassendi and Willis onwards, is one which is heavily laden with chemical properties. Similarly, the specifically medical and thus embodied character of the soul appears with increasing force, from Boerhaave and Gaub to Ménéuret and Diderot, with frequent invocations of Galen's provocative claim that the soul is just the "mixture of the body" (Galen 1997, pp. 153, 157).¹⁰⁷ What may seem difficult to imagine for a reader of the post-Rylean era, is that a defence of a certain concept of soul is also an overt humoral reductionism, understood in a broad sense as a reduction to the substances of which the body is composed, its "mixture" but also its structure. But what conclusions can be drawn from this specificity? A methodological point concerning the history of philosophy and intellectual history, and a conceptual point concerning the very idea of the material soul.

Methodologically, the trajectory we have sought to describe indicates that there is a history, not just of materialist philosophies (Lucretius, Hobbes, Diderot, Priestley) but also of the presence of materialist 'components' or articulated wholes *within* philosophical systems that are not themselves materialistic: Descartes as appropriated by Regius, Malebranche as appropriated by *L'Âme Matérielle*, Spinoza and Bayle

¹⁰⁶ For Malebranche, too, we cannot have a clear idea of our soul, but only a "conscience ou sentiment intérieur" (Malebranche 1674, 11th Elucidation, in Malebranche 1997, p. 552).

¹⁰⁷ One of us discusses the 'embodied' aspect in more detail in Wolfe (2012a).

as appropriated by several generations of radical eighteenth-century thinkers—not to mention ‘scientific’ texts like those of Willis, Whytt or Haller, whose authors go out of their way to reject materialism, but who instantly become evidence for that view.¹⁰⁸ This is not just a theoretical game (collage, appropriation, etc.), for as noted with respect to Malebranche’s psychophysiology, sometimes the texts which were criticising a view could serve as the best evidential resource for an author who was not part of an inner sanctum of experimental natural philosophy. Thus Diderot in his writings on physiology can cite as evidence Robert Whytt’s ‘neuropneumatological’ assertion that “the soul is equally present in the extremities of the nerves through the whole body as in the brain,” even though Whytt had specified this was not tantamount to materialism, since these functions of the soul are themselves dependent on an “active sentient principle” which brought together sensibility and life, and could not be a property of matter itself (Whytt 1768, pp. 287, 128).

As to the material soul itself, it shows that the concept of soul is naturalised without being entirely eliminated: there is a *productivity* of the concept of material soul, once it becomes “wherever I read *soul* I replace it with *man* or *animal*.”¹⁰⁹ This is an approach to body-soul or body-mind union which is neither Cartesian nor Spinozist, neither squarely reductionist in a standard sense nor ‘supervenient’ or ‘emergentist’ in the sense of an insistence on the autonomy and/or ontological specificity of mental phenomena. That the soul is ‘materialised’ does not mean it is folded into a mechanistic ontology, as would be the case in a materialist approach taken by “merchants of vanishing”—which implies we are following a more ‘Epicurean’ than ‘post-Cartesian’ line.¹¹⁰ Rather than be content with asserting a flattened-out ontology in which there are only masses of matter in motion, atoms, molecules, and other merely aggregative relations of piles of matter, shouldn’t intelligent materialists—to borrow an expression from Deleuze (1990, p. 257)—take up the challenge of conceptualising material souls?

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¹⁰⁸ For more discussion of the methodological niceties involved in approaching the history of materialism, see Bloch (1995); Aury and Wolfe (2008).

¹⁰⁹ Diderot, in Hemsterhuis/Diderot (1772/1964), p. 277.

¹¹⁰ Although if we consider Malebranche’s psychophysiology, or the multiple lines of fracture between Epicureanism and Spinozism suggested by interpreters of the period, this distinction loses its sharpness. For more on the chymiatric, non-mechanistic context of the material soul in Lamy et al., see Mothu (1990–1991), p. 390; on the Epicurean context, Wright (1991a); on La Mettrie’s Epicuro-Cartesian combination, Wolfe (2004).

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