Medievalism

The Year's Work for 1999

XIV

The Year's Work in
Medievalism

Edited by Gwendolyn Morgan

XIV
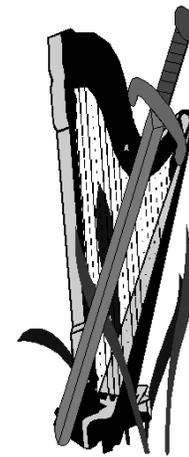
The Year's Work in Medievalism
Series Editor Gwendolyn Morgan, Ph.D.
Assistant Editor Tammy Anderson

Humanities.

The Year's Work in
Medievalism

VOLUME XIV 1999

INTRODUCTION

by Gwendolyn Morgan

The present volume marks a departure from previous issues in this series in that it emphasizes *living* medievalism, that is, bringing medievalism out of the academic closet and observing it at work in everyday life. And, indeed, the Fourteenth International Conference on Medievalism, held in Bozeman, Montana in September, 1999, reflected this trend. In addition to the more usual studies of medieval influences in the various arts and humanities, attendees participated in discussion of re-creations of the Middle Ages in Disney films and the college classroom, in new age mysticism and ecology. Expanded versions of several such studies are found herein.

The tone for this volume, and for the conference as a whole, was set by Ronald Hutton's remarkable examination of "The New Druids," a conglomeration of groups attempting to practice a spiritual system of the ancient Celts which many people may know by name but of which few really have the faintest understanding. Indeed, as Dr. Hutton points out, even so-called scientific and academic beliefs about the druids are founded on little more than a few highly biased and confused classical Roman accounts; and such beliefs can be (and are) shattered at a moment's notice. The fiascos surrounding the discovery of the Lindow man and a female head in the same swamp, the first believed to be a druidic ritual victim exemplifying the infamous "triple death" and the latter emblematic of ancient "head cults," are wonderful examples of medievalism at work in supposedly objective thought. By the mid-1990s, the female head was proven to be that of a 1960s' victim, and the Lindow man equally possibly a mugging victim of recent date, all evidence for the triple death having "evaporated" in a 1998 examination of Lindow man by a professional pathologist. Even more, the revival (or imaginative re-creation) of druidry, wicca, and other

ancient practices within various new age mysticisms indicates medievalism strongly at work in the popular imagination. Nor is paganism the only focus for medievalism, either in academia or popular culture: consider the "medieval" philosophies which Greg Stone finds operating in our return to a conception of nature as an intricate wholeness -- the "new" ecocriticism -- and James Keller's tracing of medieval cosmology through Spenser and into modern film.

The phenomenon of living out our perceptions of the Middle Ages, as Keller's essay points out, is not particularly new. Indeed, Kathyrn Wildgen's examination of gothicism as foundational (especially in Jungian thought) to modern humanity's conception of self and Elizabeth Emery's acute account of conscious nineteenth-century French re-creations of the pilgrimage offer evidence that we have, since the end of the period, tended to pay our psychic debts in medieval currency. Such as particularly evident to me last month, when I was fortunate enough to attend the re-enactment of the York mystery play cycle in the city's Minster: by the end of the evening, a large proportion of the audience had been moved to tears and exited the minster in awed silence. It seems that is not only the neo-pagans who return to the Middle Ages for spiritual revitalization. Moreover, despite the series' title of the "York Millennial Mystery Plays," the millennium seemingly has little to do with it: Emery has since furthered her exploration of medievalism in nineteenth-century French culture with investigations, presented at the Studies in Medievalism sessions at Kalamazoo and Leeds, of student re-creations of the Feast of Fools and French mystery plays during that era. Meanwhile, in concert with the burgeoning interest in popular culture of all periods, new examinations of standard medieval texts, iconography, philosophy, and folklore themselves, such as those of Tammy Anderson and Tiffany Raŝović, Michael Callaghan, Richard Lambert, and Richard Utz, continue to reveal our evolving understanding of the Middle Ages.

Medievalism, then, has not only become an accepted focus for academic study but revealed as a functional, evolving part of popular *and* academic thought. As such, it demands increasing attention, not only to understand the Middle Ages and their legacy, but as a key to understanding ourselves. We are no longer, as Umberto Eco put it, "dreaming the Middle Ages;" we are living them...or at least our conception of them. As we look forward to the 2000 through 2002 conferences in Holland, Michigan; in Buffalo, New York; and in Cedar Falls, Iowa, we can expect to see medievalism as an approach employed in an increasing number of fields. But we should be aware, as Dr. Hutton's essay suggests, that our very studies of the phenomenon may themselves be examples of it.

THE NEW DRUIDS

Ronald Hutton

"The Gods have returned to Ireland and have centred themselves in the sacred mountains and blow the fires through the country. They will awaken the magical instinct everywhere and the universal heart of the people will return to the old Druidic beliefs."

So wrote one of the main figures of the nineteenth-century Irish literary revival, George Russell, to another, William Butler Yeats, in 1896.[1] In one sense, this was, and is, poppycock, the emotional outpouring of an overexcited young man. Ireland did not undergo a Druidic revival around 1900, and no country on earth has done so to the extent that the "universal heart of the people" has returned to pagan Celtic beliefs. In another, it was merely premature, for exactly a hundred years after he wrote, people calling themselves Druids *had* appeared in the British Isles, numerous and determined enough to make a significant impact upon the public imagination. They had not done so in Ireland, however, but in England. It is these Druids who are the subject of this paper.

To set them in context, it is necessary to take a quick look at what is known of the "original" Iron Age, Druids, and at the manner in which these have been perceived in Britain during the past two hundred years. In doing so, I make a self-conscious and deliberate reversal of the priorities manifested by most books on Druids published by academic authors during the past forty years. Such authors have typically been either archaeologists or experts in medieval Celtic literature. They have devoted most of their space to assembling the evidence for the Iron Age Druids and, sometimes, added a section at the end to deal with people who have called themselves Druids since 1700. The latter have generally been characterized as lunatics, charlatans, or dupes.[1] A

collection devoted to studies of medievalism is probably one of the few places in the world in which I can be assured of a relatively sympathetic reception when I declare my opinion that this format should be reversed. The Iron Age Druids should be dismissed in the first chapter of a book devoted to Druidry, and the rest devoted to its modern manifestations. The reason for this is simple: that we have a lot of good data for modern Druids, while their ancient equivalents are so shadowy as almost to possess the status of legendary beings.

To establish this point it is only necessary to repeat some obvious facts: that no written records, and not a single artifact recovered by archaeology, can be associated beyond any doubt with the Iron Age Druids. All our evidence for them is either suppositional or second-hand. The main group of relevant literary sources is Græco-Roman, and here there is a clear division of opinion. Authors in the Latin-speaking west of the Mediterranean world, and a few in the Greek-speaking east, tended to represent them as savage priests or soothsayers, implicated in a barbaric tribal religion which included human sacrifice. There was, however, a rival tradition, associated with the great Hellenistic metropolis of Alexandria, which portrayed them instead as noble-hearted philosophers who had communicated wisdom to the world. There was a division by time as well as by space, in that writers in the century before the Common Era, when the lands in which Druids operated were just becoming known to the Græco-Roman world, tended to be more respectful of them. Those of the first century of the Common Era itself, when those lands had been conquered and added to the Roman Empire, were much more unequivocally hostile.

All of these authorities have been suspected of distorting reality to serve their own ends. The Alexandrian tradition has been accused of romanticizing and sentimentalizing the Druids as a mirror for its own society. Conversely, the writers who condemned the Druids have been denounced for demonizing them, in

order to claim superiority for their own cultures and justify the conquest of the lands where Druids had existed.   Classicists have become familiar with the ancient cultural game of the "invention of the barbarian." None of the writers concerned can be proved to have had any first-hand experience of Druids as operating in their own tribal setting; all of them have been accused of deriving their information from earlier authors.[3] All may be correct or none; it is likely that we shall never know. Our only other literary sources are from medieval Ireland, and here there is a similar problem.   Some texts characterize the Irish Druids as having been evil heathen priests or magicians, opposed to Christian saints and defeated by them. Others take a respectful view of them as wise councillors and mentors, and forerunners of Christianity.[4] Again, it is impossible now to conclude with certainty which, if any, provide a true picture. Taking the Irish, Greek, and Roman authors together, it is possible to state that the Druids were the religious and magical experts of the Iron Age tribes of northwestern Europe, and that they made a vivid impression on the imagination of the other Europeans of their time. That is all that can be said with any confidence.

Two examples may be cited to close these preliminary thoughts, and to illustrate the difficulties which attend the matter. One concerns the most extensive of all pieces of ancient literature which deals with Druids, the section on them in Julius Caesar's *De Bello Gallico.*   This provides a detailed description of the institutions and functions of Druids in Gaul.[5] Most of the same work, however, is an extended account of his conquest of that region. Had Druids existed as Caesar described them, they would have had to have played an important part in that war, but instead they are totally invisible. How do we reconcile his information on them with that in the rest of the book? Nobody is sure. It has been suggested that he was borrowing information which portrayed a situation which had obtained at an earlier time but ceased to exist by Caesar's own one.[6] If so, this still begs

the question of why he entered up the borrowed data in the present tense, and makes him even less reliable as an authority.

The other example is taken from material evidence. One of the most sensational discoveries of British archaeology during the 1980s was the well-preserved upper part of the body of a man, found by peat-cutters at the bog of Lindow Moss in Cheshire. Dated to the beginning of the Roman period, the corpse was declared by specialists in the Iron Age to be one of the most convincing proofs ever obtained of the practice of human sacrifice among the British of the age, as attested by the more hostile Græco-Roman authors. The man was naked, and appeared to have suffered a triple death of the sort which features in early Irish literature; his skull had been fractured by a blow and his throat cut with a sharp blade, while he had been strangled with a cord which was still around his neck. Such a degree of overkill, coupled with his nudity and the dating, powerfully suggested a ritual act of slaughter, and "Lindow Man" duly became the textbook example of one. The much loved and greatly respected pioneer of research into pagan Celtic Britain, Anne Ross, co-authored a book which hailed him as a "Druid prince" and suggested a specific context in which he might have been sacrificed.[7]

It was therefore extremely embarrassing when, in 1998, a television series devoted to scientific issues chose to make a programme about the find,[8] in which a professional pathologist was commissioned to examine the body. He found no sign of the normal trauma caused by strangulation in neck muscles, and concluded that the cord around the neck had not been a garotte but a simple necklace. He did not consider that the gash in the throat was either ancient or deliberate, and suggested that it had been made by peat-cutting before the corpse was noticed. That left the blow to the head as the sole possible cause of fatality; the evidence for a "triple death" had apparently evaporated, and it was now arguable that the man was a victim of mugging, who had been thrown into

the bog after being banged on the head and stripped. It was no longer certain, moreover, if he was even ancient. The date attributed to him, of the first century, had itself been a piece of guesswork after three different laboratories had come up with three widely divergent results.[9] The programme now raised the possibility that the acidic properties of peat bogs might in fact render the carbon upon which current dating techniques depend, unstable enough to make even approximately accurate results unobtainable. Before the male torso was found at Lindow Moss, peat extraction there had turned up a female head, which bore a striking resemblance to a woman called Malika Reyn-Bardt who had vanished in the area in the 1960s. On being confronted with this evidence, her husband had confessed to murdering her and dumping her body in the bog. Carbon-dating, however, had declared the head to be about two thousand years old and so it was dropped from the case-file. Now there is again a real possibility that an Iron Age relic may turn out to be a modern piece of forensic evidence after all. An apologist may fairly retort that the remains from Lindow Moss can be fitted into a context of bodies recovered from peat bogs across northern Europe which have been claimed without controversy to be evidence for human sacrifice. A sceptic can now make the reply that all of these finds are in fact equally controversial, for at least one scholar has recently argued the case that every one can be explained by other means.[10]

Historians of modern Druids, and of modern attitudes to Druids, are on much sounder ground, and their subject may be argued to have considerable importance as a study of themes in British culture since 1700. The British began to take a sustained interest in Druids from the seventeenth century, when they commenced a systematic and continuous study of their ancient past. I would propose that during the past three hundred years at least five different conceptions of Druidry have circulated in Britain, serving different functions and meeting different needs, and would briefly

characterize them as follows. The first is the Demonic Druid, a character based on the hostile ancient texts, but also on the Old Testament with its blanket condemnation of pagan religions. This Druid is a barbarian priest associated with ignorance, superstition, and human sacrifice, intent on keeping the people in subjection to false gods and needless fears for the sake of his own power and profit.

As said, this image has very old roots, but it was greatly enhanced by particular tendencies in British culture between the late eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries. One was the vogue for Gothic fiction, which fastened on its potential for evoking shadowy groves, bloodstained altars, and horrid rites. Another was the partnership of imperialism and the Evangelical Revival, which sold itself on the potential of the British to redeem tribal peoples from savagery by conquering, educating, and converting them. Portraits of tribal barbarism in the modern world and the ancient world could easily be assimilated to each other, especially when infused with the third force, the acceptance of the model of evolution in human and planetary development. This could make the Druids a convenient base-line in a story of national improvement. Two illustrations of such a base-line may stand as typical, in their different ways, of many. The first is a mural painted in 1843 to decorate the newly-restored Houses of Parliament, as one of a series depicting the "progress of Britain." The initial part of the work showed an ancient British Druid performing a human sacrifice. The second displayed a nineteenth-century British official saving a Hindu widow from being burned upon her husband's funeral pyre. It was a triumphant celebration of "then" and "now." The second example consists of one of the best-known and most frequently produced of Victorian paintings, uniting one of the most ponderous titles with some of the worst history: Holman Hunt's *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Priest from the Persecution of the Druids*.[11]

The second concept may be termed that of the Confessional Druid, and consisted of attempts by writers to use an imagined ancient Druidry to defend a modern theological position. The most celebrated example is William Stukeley, usually acknowledged as the most important of the pioneers of field archaeology but also a parson who pressed his researches into defending the basis of Anglican Christianity. He had some predecessors and many successors.[12] The standard modern picture of a Druid, as a bearded man in a robe and sandals, carrying a staff, has no grounding in the classical texts. He is a transplanted Old Testament patriarch, associated with attempts to trace the literal and ideological lineage of the Iron Age British from Noah. The Confessional Druid overlapped with a third conceptualization, the Patriotic Druid, the focus of ancient British nationalism and of resistance to the invading Romans. For much of the eighteenth century, this figure was put to the service of a generalized loyalty to the newly-unified state of Great Britain, but towards its end he was more particularly associated with the Welsh cultural revival. During the nineteenth century, Druidry became a prominent element in the ceremonial attending *eisteddfodau,* and was transplanted to Cornwall as a nationalist movement began there in the early twentieth, drawing upon a similar Celticist identity.[13]

A fourth reimagining was the Masonic Druid, represented initially by the Ancient Druid Order which was founded in London in 1781. The direct inspiration for this came from Freemasonry, and it represented only one of a number of international orders set up around this time to copy the Masons' achievement of comradeship, mutual support and free discussion of ideas within a bonding framework of ritual. Identification with Druidry allowed this particular one to compete with the others in advancing ever more ambitious claims to descent in unbroken succession from the remote past. It also gave its members the edge in ceremonial costume; whereas the others all used robes or regalia, the Ancient

Order had both, and donned false beards as well. In the nineteenth century, it gave birth to several other orders.[14] The fifth and last characterization of Druidry to emerge between 1700 and 1900 may be termed the Theosophical Druid. This was based on the notion that Druidry had preserved a portion of a universal system of ancient wisdom, other remnants of which were found in Indian, Hebrew, and ancient Egyptian religion. The work of the modern Druid was to recover it, and according to this mode of thought, it was entirely legitimate to characterize Augustine of Hippo, Pythagoras, William Blake, and Sufi masters (for example), as sharing portions of Druid wisdom. Orders were founded to nurture this work, based on the model of the Masonic Druid but with a more mystical cast. The most long-lived was The Universal Bond, which celebrated public rites at Stonehenge through most of the twentieth century and became the best known of the public faces of Druidry.[15]

By the mid-twentieth century, the Confessional Druid had more or less vanished, but all the rest were still around. The Ancient Order and The Universal Bond continued to flourish, the Demonic Druid occasionally reappeared in films and novels as an ingrained part of popular romantic culture, and the Patriotic Druid remained prominent in the bardic assemblies of Wales and Cornwall. None, however, had much dynamism left in them, and they increasingly gave the impression of relics from an earlier age. All this was to be changed, and the revival of the present time precipitated, by the sudden appearance of two new forms of British Druidry in the late 1980s: the New Age Druid and the Counter-Cultural Druid.

The New Age Movement may be crudely defined for present purposes as an American phenomenon of the 1970s, which spread across most of the Western world and was based on three premises. The first was that the modern world suffers from an unhealthy predominance of materialist values, destructive alike to individuals and to the planet. Second, that it is therefore necessary to

foster an enhanced spirituality in order to restore the health of our culture, or even to save the world. Third, that such a spirituality may be developed by individuals, according to personal needs and tastes, drawing upon the full range of models which history and ethnography offer. In practice, as the movement was promoted chiefly from the United States, the greatest influences upon it were native American traditions, and esoteric Buddhism and Hinduism filtered through American transcendentalism. The result was a very effective mixture, and one which had a considerable impact on Britain in the 1970s and 1980s. As such, it acted as an inspiration and provocation to two young Londoners, a wife and husband called Caitlin and John Matthews. Both fully endorsed the call for an enhanced spirituality in modern culture, but both felt that the models offered by American writers and teachers were less appropriate to Britain, which had its own rich native tradition of mysticism, rooted ultimately in Celtic paganism. Caitlin also faced a challenge relatively common in our civilization and peculiar to it; that she received apparent visits and communications from spiritual beings. Every culture apart from our own, across space and time, has provided a framework of support and explanation for people who undergo this experience. Our tendency to pretend that it does not exist, leaving those who have to live with it, and are aware that they are perfectly sane in every demonstrable respect, to find their own means of coming to terms with it. Caitlin did so by reference to the ancient tradition of the Otherworld, and of human interaction with it, which is such a major theme of early Welsh and Irish literature and of the Arthurian romances which are partly based upon it.[16]

The result was that from 1985 onward the two of them published a very large number of books; Caitlin alone wrote or co-authored 25 in the ten years following that date. They added up to a systematic attempt to present the world with a coherent native British mysticism, based mainly upon medieval Welsh and Irish

texts. This was linked directly to Druidry by a friend of the Matthews, Philip Carr-Gomm, who had been initiated into the 1960s into one of the "Theosophical" orders which had split away from the Universal Bond, the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (OBOD). In 1984, Carr-Gomm had a visionary communication of his own, from his former chief and mentor in OBOD who had died nine years before, directing him to revive Druidry in a form which would reunite human beings with the natural world and their own imaginations. This direction addressed one of the main preoccupations of the age, with the apparent disorientation implicit for many in an urbanized and industrialized existence dependent on mass media. It also, however, addressed the professional preoccupations of Carr-Gomm himself, as a psychologist with a very successful practice dedicated to making people feel at peace with themselves and the world. In 1988, he and his wife Stephanie refounded OBOD, and co-operated with the Matthews in writing a series of teachings which would enable those who received them to embark upon a process of personal growth and self-revelation under the label of Druidry.[17] To convey them to people, he adopted one of the most effective magical tools evolved by the esoteric societies of the Western world; the correspondence course.

This simple device meant that participants could rise through the three grades of OBOD over a minimum period of three years, at their own pace and in their own homes, by easy steps made available to them through their letter-boxes for a small fee. It built the order within ten years into one of the largest Druid organizations in the world, with over 6000 members in the United Kingdom and many more in North America and Australia. As it has carried on growing at the same rate since, it may well now be the largest, and two other orders have been created out of its members, operating the same notion of Druidry. People taking the course had the option of meeting others within the same locality, and discussing its ideas and working its rituals together. In

this way, regional groups or "groves" grew up within the order, with two particularly significant features. The first was that whereas until now women had played only a supporting role in the story of modern British Druids, they commonly ran the local groves of OBOD and became the most dynamic force in the order; some of these groups are the closest thing which I have ever encountered in the modern world to primitive matriarchies. The second was that whereas the official philosophy of the order followed that of the older Theosophical Druidry, in presenting itself as a system of thought which could be embraced by adherents of any religion, the local groves commonly had a strongly pagan identity. They were reaching instinctively for deities which were rooted deep in the land and in its past. In the era of rampant nationalism, imperialism, and militarism, Theosophical Druidry had sought for a system which could bring the world together. In the age of the global village, the Internet, and Coca-Cola culture, the new Druids were increasingly drawn to goddesses and gods which belonged to their own back garden.[18]

They were, however, only one of two significant new faces of Druidry in the Britain of the 1990s. The other is what I have termed Counter-Cultural, and drew like the New Age Movement itself upon the critique of contemporary society mounted during the 1960s and 1970s, but with a harder and more radical edge.[19] It arose directly from a particular manifestation of the "alternative" youth culture of those years, the free festival, and especially out of the most celebrated and long-lived of those festivals, the one held each midsummer between 1974 and 1985 at Stonehenge. The people who gathered there were attracted by the aura of antiquity and mystery which surrounded the stones, perhaps the most famous prehistoric monument in the whole world, and the spiritual centrepiece of the event was the rite still held at sunrise on the longest day by the Order of the Universal Bond. As the years passed, many of the festival-goers began to stage ceremonies of their own in the centre of

the circle, later in the day, including weddings, namings of children, and blessings. Creeping into these activities was a sense that Stonehenge was becoming a national shrine, a true temple of all the people of the land of Britain at which any who chose could worship, in their own way, at the apex of each year. The very lack of evidence as to the nature of the original religion and society for which the monument had been built, and the likelihood that none would ever be provided, set free the imaginations of the new worshippers to construct as many different perceptions of it as there were people to hold them.

This state of affairs ended abruptly and brutally in 1985. The official body which cared for the stones, English Heritage, was prodded by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government into suppressing the festival. In doing so, it was eradicating an especially flamboyant and provocative manifestation of left-wing culture, but to make the policing operation more effective, it also banned the century-old gathering of the Universal Bond. Both the festival-goers and the Druids immediately began to lobby to regain access, and the former soon discovered that the Universal Bond, reasonably enough, refused to argue any more than its own case. This meant that, for the first time, those who had attended the festivals and acquired a personal spiritual relationship with Stonehenge had to identify themselves as a separate religious interest group, with the label of "Druid" which had become so closely associated with the monument. In this fashion, three closely-connected organizations crystallized out of the festival goers between 1986 and 1992: the Secular Order of Druids, the Glastonbury Order of Druids, and the Loyal Arthurian Warband. They swiftly broadened their interests beyond the single issue of access to Stonehenge, promoting local festivals of the arts and campaigning against perceived threats to the environment and to civil liberties.

In taking on the identity of Druid, these new groups faced a problem: that the tenets of their counter-culture

involved a rejection of structures of hierarchy and authority associated with the parent society, and a stress upon individuality, playfulness, and decision-sharing in their place. There seemed to be a real risk that to take on the offices and trappings of the older Druid orders would entail succumbing to the very habits of mind to which the new three were opposed. They faced the dilemma of how to make themselves be taken seriously enough by the national authorities to win a bargaining position, without taking themselves too seriously. To prevent this latter development, they trod a delicate tightrope. On the one hand, they were committed to a genuine mysticism, increasingly identified with the land itself, as a (or rather The) Goddess, a living being requiring protection from human greed and selfishness, upon which prehistoric monuments represented the holy places of people who had possessed different and better values. On the other, they retained something of the atmosphere of pranksters. The very titles of their orders embodied jokes. The Secular Order abbreviated to SOD and the Glastonbury Order to GOD (so that it members could indeed claim to represent a high moral authority), while the Loyal Arthurian Warband became LAW, a significant label for an organization which was to cause severe headaches to police and security forces. The first degree of initiation into the Secular Order was that of Jester.

This paradox, and the dynamic uses to which it could be put, was very well illustrated by the career of the personality who emerged as the most prominent member of these new orders in the eyes of the public, or at least of the mass media. He began as a biker, with an involvement in the free festivals, who was marked off from his fellows by the experience of vivid dreams and reveries which seemed to be set in the early Middle Ages. In 1987, a friend told him that these could have been memories of a past life as King Arthur. He put this notion to the test by going to Stonehenge to seek a sign. A bird flew out of the circle, brushing his face with its wings. Taking that for an affirmative, he formally changed his name to

Arthur Uther Pendragon. He then asked The Goddess to help him recover Excalibur by the next full moon, accepting that if he did he would commit himself to the defense of the land. On the day before the moon reached its fullness, he saw a sword offered for sale in a shop window, which had been made to represent Excalibur in a film. He bought it, and vowed from that moment to fight for civil liberties and environmental issues. Henceforth, he appeared on all public occasions in a surcoat embroidered with a red dragon, the sword hung about him. His powerful build, flowing beard, and equally luxuriant hair, caught in a head-band, made him an imposingly medieval (or medievalist) figure. Within five years, not only did he hold honorific office in both the SOD and the GOD, but had gathered the Loyal Arthurian Warband around himself, of friends and followers dedicated to fighting campaigns of non-direct action against construction projects which had become particularly controversial for destruction and pollution of the countryside, and demonstrating against new legislation which eroded civil liberties. It now numbers well over a thousand, although only some are active at any one time.

A few comments need to be made upon this sequence of developments. The first is that Arthur is perfectly sane. He is certainly a mystic, but also an earthy and mischievous man, and an adroit operator of political performance art. In August 1995, I watched him making a number of new knights (the initiation rite of the LAW) on a hilltop near Bath. A crazed admirer knelt before him and asked for leave to worship him. Arthur's reply was instant:

"No. I am your brother and your servant, but not your deity. In the Warband, we aid each other; we don't worship each other. Now get off your knees and stand proud."

The second comment is that the fancy-dress aspect of the Warband, and the particular colour of the figure of Arthur as its head, fulfill a vital function in attracting the

attention of the media to the causes which it supports. A normal group of protestors would have no automatic claim upon the interest of television, radio, and newspaper journalists. The presence of the Warband, in full costume, has often been sufficient to guarantee coverage.

There are, however, some deeper resonances to its activities which should be of special interest to scholars of medievalism. One is the manner in which it appropriates and subverts a classic myth, of the sleeping hero who will awake when his country has need of him. In its specifically British form, this was attached to the figure of Arthur, and as such was activated at intervals earlier in the twentieth century. This happened, however, as part of a national and militarist rhetoric, directed against external enemies such as the Kaiser's or Hitler's Germany. This Arthur had redirected it against an internal enemy, an alliance of central government and big business which seemed to him to have betrayed land and people. A second consideration concerns the manner in which the LAW stood in a long tradition of British popular rebels who donned fancy dress and fancy titles while going into action. The seventeenth century gives us the figures of Captain Pouch and Lady Skimmington, while the nineteenth supplies Captain Swing, the Scotch Cattle, and The Hosts of Rebecca. These tactics had practical benefits in conferring some element of disguise, and that effect already noted, of attracting public attention. They also, however, very clearly had an emotional value in nerving ordinary people up to do extraordinary things, by turning them into emblematic heroes and heroines cut off from their everyday lives. So it is with the Loyal Arthurian Warband.

It does count for something, in addition, that England may well be the only state in the Western world to have no fixed date of origin. Thus, Ireland came into being in 1922, Scotland in 843, Switzerland in 1291, the USA (as the world knows) in 1776, France (depending on definitions) in 1789 or 1959, Germany in 1871 or 1945,

and so on. England, by contrast, gradually came together between the seventh and tenth centuries; it has an organic relationship between land, people, and government which is particularly closely related to the concerns of the new Druidry and may indeed have helped to shape it. Furthermore, England is very unusual among democracies in that its people have not traditionally regarded their liberties as reposing ultimately in representative institutions. Although their Parliament is clearly of immense emotional and symbolic importance, English freedoms have hitherto been seen as invested in a body of common law, descending from Anglo-Saxon antiquity and binding rich and poor, governors and governed, alike. It is precisely this body of common law and right which has been perceived to be undermined by recent government-sponsored legislation to control freedom of movement and assembly. Hence, the abbreviation of the name "Loyal Arthurian Warband" has a particularly loaded significance.

Finally, the counter-cultural Druidry is rooted firmly in some of the ancient images of Druids; the representation by Tacitus in particular of the latter as leaders of the resistance of native Britons to the Roman invasion and occupation. This representation had already contributed significantly to the construction of the eighteenth-century image of the Patriotic Druid. The fact that the Romans were a culture which drove huge new road-building schemes across the British landscape, designed purpose-built new towns with a grid layout and matching tiling, invented reinforced concrete, were dominated by a despotic central government, and quelled dissent with a standardized, professional, armed force, made them unusually suitable among ancient European peoples to represent the dehumanizing modern state, as perceived by the counter-culture. There was, of course, a direct clash between this concept of the Druid, as resistance leader, and that propagated by Philip Carr-Gomm, as giver of peace to a disturbed world; and both were equally well rooted in ancient texts. In practice this

produced considerable tension between New Age and Counter-Cultural Druidry during the middle and later years of the 1990s, and rendered impossible the full representation of both varieties (and the older Theosophical Druidry) in a Council of British Druid Orders. On the other hand, the two traditions made up a spectrum of personalities rather than two opposed blocs, and there was considerable overlapping; members of OBOD and the LAW were found side by side in the same actions over the same issues, whatever the public and formal breaches between their chiefs.

Finally, it may be of interest to fellow scholars to record a couple of special difficulties and challenges which the study of these Druids presented to me as an academic scholar. One concerns the problem of reactivity, of the effect produced upon a social group by a person studying it. There is no doubt that I am guilty of this on a huge scale. Before I began to make a systematic consideration of contemporary Druidry, I was already well known to many of its practitioners for my writings on prehistoric archaeology, ancient paganism, the history of the ritual year, and other varieties of modern Paganism such as Wicca. Those works had already to some extent conditioned and altered the self-image of a lot of British Druids; the latter were in this perspective, an integral part of the public whom I was paid to serve. I was welcomed into the company of members of all of the orders which I have discussed, and invited to many of their formal occasions, because they expected me to present and discuss my ideas with them and to keep them apprized of current academic discoveries and opinions. One very clear result of this interaction was that my very presence among them, let alone my words and deeds, tended to dissolve a self-image which many of them had possessed, of being the natural opponents of an academic establishment which denied any validity to their identity and beliefs. Our conversations and arguments hastened a process which I believe would have begun in any case, whereby many of

them assimilated most of the postmodernist lexicon of polyvocality and multivalency, of the social construction of knowledge, and of the evils of intellectual hegemony, which they could make into new ideological devices with which to express their views. I feel likewise that the interaction only speeded up their assimilation of new data and interpretative models from the worlds of professional history and archaeology. Nonetheless, it is reasonably clear to me that merely by writing my earlier books, let alone by studying Druids in the field, I have become part of the history of modern Druidry.

The other issue upon which I experienced some self-doubt was a very specific one: the trial of Arthur Pendragon at Southwark Crown Court, South London, on 5 November 1997. During the previous two years, he and his warband had gradually turned themselves into greater and greater irritants to the police of the Thames Valley and London areas, because of their prominence in demonstrations and their constant minor breaches of law consequent upon non-violent direct action. A determined attempt was eventually made to remove Arthur from circulation, based upon an incident in which he attempted to enter a demonstration in Trafalgar Square, the traditional centre for political rallies in the capital. He was carrying his ceremonial sword as usual, and this enabled the policemen present to arrest him upon a complex of very serious charges relating to public order and offensive weaponry. If sustained at trial, these would have committed him to prison for a substantial term. For me, this dramatic development might have furnished a particularly exciting twist in my research, an opportunity to attend the trial and observe exchanges which promised to reveal in stark form the interface between the new Druidry and its parent society. This detached role was prevented by a single circumstance: Arthur Pendragon named me as the expert witness for the defense.

His action was perfectly logical, because I was the perfect person for the job, an independent and professional observer who had been studying him as a

Druid chief for three years. The crux of his defense was to prove that he actually possessed such a status and that his sword was therefore a ceremonial object, never hitherto used as a weapon or intended to be one. I knew this defense to be correct, and could document it from my field notes, and so in justice, there was no way in which I could refuse to cooperate. I accordingly wrote a long report for submission to the court, and dispatched it in the full expectation of having it examined in public view by a highly-trained prosecuting lawyer who would attempt to undermine confidence in my ability and integrity. This did not occur. Instead, when the court went into session, the judge retired into a different room with my report, emerged a short while later, dismissed the jury, and threw out the case, declaring that I had proved that there was none to answer. Arthur went free, the police had to return his sword in front of the massed ranks of journalists and television crews, and I was left with mixed feelings. Most were characterized by fervent relief, that Arthur had been rescued from an act of clear injustice and that I had escaped cross-examination. I had also, however, some doubt concerning the process which had just occurred. The Crown's case, however flawed on face value, had not been determined by a jury, but rejected by the judge, on the word of a single hostile witness. It was certainly a stunning example of the power which an academic could wield in society, but left me wondering how far I deserved to possess such a power, and whether the traditional liberties which were defended by the Loyal Arthurian Warband had not themselves been further eroded by the events concerned.

The practice of participatory anthropology is now well established in the social sciences, although it is still not quite beyond controversy. The examples given above go well beyond this; they represent *precipitory* anthropology, and raise far more disturbing and difficult questions about the role of the scholar making the study. The most positive lesson to be drawn from them is that academic experts in medievalism, and its sibling phenomenon of

Celticism, are interacting with a living and dynamic culture, which is quite as capable of appropriating them as they are of observing it. Their subject material is indeed the stuff of which dreams are made, but also conflicts, freedoms, identities, and self-realization. This paper has attempted to illustrate how much the hazy ancient image of the Druid has been utilized, repeatedly and in many different ways, in modern Britain. It concludes with the perception that the traditional academic reaction to that process has been wrong two times over. Not only is the struggle to rediscover an "authentic" ancient Druidry a futile one, but those engaged in it are, willingly or not, locked into a relationship with a modern Druidry which they have at best marginalized and at worst derided. In favour of that traditional approach, it can at least be said that its blinkers have rescued practitioners from some challenging and disturbing experiences.

WORKS CITED

1. Richard Ellmann, *Yeats: the man and the masks* (London: Faber, 1949), 123.
2. The classic book of this kind is Stuart Piggott, *The Druids* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), which was the dominant work on the subject in the 1970s and 19805. Its emphases are reproduced by Barry Cunliffe, *The Ancient Celts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), and Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Druids* (London: Constable, 1994). Miranda Green, *Exploring the World of the Druids* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), is more polite about modern Druids but retains the same balance of interests, while Nora K. Chadwick, *The Druids* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966; 2nd ed. 1997), does not mention modern Druidry at all.
3. The texts concerned are by Diogenes Laertius, Julius Caesar, Cicero, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo,

Ammianus Marcellinus, Suetonius, Pomponius Mela, Lucan, Pliny, Tacitus, Dio Chrysostom, the various authors of the *Historia Augusta,* Ausonius, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, and Valerius Maximus. For sharply contrasting opinions of them, see Piggott, Chadwick and Ellis, above.

4. Compare, for example, *The Cycles of the Kings, The Annals of Tigernach, Togail Bruidne Da Derga,* and the *Vitae* of Berach, Declan, Fintan, Lassen, Ciaran, and Patrick (the latter both in the version by Muirchu and in the *Tripartite Life).*

5. VI.13-21.

6. T. D. Kendrick, *The Druids* (London: Methuen, 1927); J. J. Tierney, "The Celtic Ethnography of Posidonius," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 60 (1959-60), 189-275.

7. Ann Ross and Don Robins, *The Life and Death of a Druid Prince* (London: Rider, 1989). Among the textbooks which made a less adventurous, but still confident, acceptance of the find as evidence for sacrifice was my own *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 194.

8. "Overkill," screened by Horizon, on BBC 2, 2 April 1998.

9. J. A. J. Gowlett, R. E. M. Hedges, and I. E. Law, "Radiocarbon Accelerator Dating of Lindow Man," *Antiquity* 63 (1989), 71-79.

10. C. S. Briggs, "Did They Fall or Were They Pushed?" in *Bog Bodies: New Discoveries and New Perspectives,* ed. R. C. Turner and R. G. Scaife (London: British Museum, 1995), 168-82.

11. A range of such literary and artistic images are discussed in Sam Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 75-109, and Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon : a history of modern pagan witchcraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999), 7-11.

12. Stukeley's books are *Stonehenge* (1740) and *Abury* (1743). Other examples of the genre, from different

points of the chronological range, are John Toland, *A Critical History of the Celtic Religion and Learning* (1719: publ. 1815); Edward Davies, *The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids* (1809); and Morien 0. Morgan, *The Royal Winged Son of Stonehenge and Avebury* (1893).

13. Prys Morgan, "From a Death to a View," in *The Invention of Tradition,* ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 43-100; Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Cornish Language and Its Literature* (London: Routledge, 1974), 147-62.

14. *Ancient Order of Druids: Introductory Book* (1889); Charles Beale, *A Short Account of Modern Druidism* (n.d.).

15. The founder of this tradition of thought was Godfrey Higgins, in *The Celtic Druids* (1829) and *Anacalypsis* (1836). Later representations included Gerald Massey's *The Book of the Beginnings* (1881) and *The Coming Religion* (1889), and Ross Nichols' *The Book of Druidry,* published (very) posthumously by Thorson in 1990.

16. Caitlin Matthews, "The Testament of Rhiannon," in *Voices of the Goddess,* ed. Caitlin Matthews (Wellingborough: Aquarian, 1990), 87-97; and "Following the Awen," in *The Druid Renaissance,* ed. Philip Carr-Gomm (London: Thorson, 1996), 224-35.

17. Nichols, *Book of Druidry,* 9-13; Philip Carr-Gomm, *The Elements of the Druid Tradition* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1991), 58-59.

18. This is all based on participant observation in the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids.

19. What follows is based mainly on participatory observation (stopping short of political direct action) in the Secular Order of Druids and the Loyal Arthurian Warband, but some of the material has been published in Tim Sebastian, "Triad: the Druid Knowledge of Stonehenge," in *Who Owns Stonehenge?,* ed. Christopher Chippindale (London:

Batsford, 1990), 88-108; Elen Evert Hopman, "Interview with Tim Sebastian," *Keltria* 31 (1996), 20-23; interview with Arthur Pendragon in *The Big Issue* 132 (29 May 1995), n.p.

The Medieval Myth of Jewish Ritual Murder: Toward a History of Literary Reception

Richard Utz

Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora* relates the following story for the year 1255:[1] Around June 29, the Jews of the city of Lincoln abduct the eight-year old Hugh. They fatten him for ten days and send messengers to all Jewish communities in England to invite them to celebrate a ritual parody of Christ's crucifixion. After the visitors' arrival, one of the Lincoln Jews is selected to act as judge, a Pilate so to speak, and the Christian boy is sentenced to a variety of tortures. After being whipped, crowned with thorns, spat at, cut with knives and insulted, Hugh is finally crucified and his side is opened with a lance. Afterwards, his body is taken off the cross and his bowels are taken out for ritual examination. In the meantime, the boy's mother has been searching for her son for days. Neighbors have told her that they saw the boy playing with Jewish children and entering a Jewish house. The mother then finds Hugh's body in that same house. Her cries for help gather a crowd of people including John of Lexington, a member of the local clergy who explains that this is not the first such Jewish atrocity he has heard of. John threatens the Jewish owner of the house, Copin, that not even all the gold in England will free him from the consequences of his actions but promises him that he will not be put to death if he gives a truthful account of events. Copin confesses: he is made to admit that the Jews crucified a Christian child every year; after they found that the innocent Hugh's bowels were unfit for divination, they tried to bury the body, but the dead Hugh

---

[1]   Matthaeus Parisiensis. *Chronica Majora.* ed. Henry Richards Luard, (London: Longman, 1880) (Rolls Series, vol. 57), vol. 4, pp. 516-19, and 546. A preliminary version of this essay was read at the Thirteenth International Conference on Medievalism, in Rochester, NY, October 1998.

repeatedly came back from under the earth; finally, they threw the body in a well, but it had not sunk, which is why the mother had been able to find it.   After Copin's testimony, members of the Lincoln cathedral chapter ask for Hugh's body and bury it within the cathedral with all the rites appertaining to a martyr. When the king learns of the promises made to Copin, he does not approve of the deal. Copin, realizing that he will be sentenced to death, offers a complete confession: He declares that all English Jews share the guilt for the killing, and almost all Jewish communities in England have sent representatives to assist in the ritual murder as it is the custom with Passover celebrations.   After his confession, Copin is dragged to the gallows and hanged. Ninety-one additional Jews are transported to London to be imprisoned. The investigation carried out by royal judges proves that the murder was indeed a joint venture of the entire English Jewry. Consequently, eighteen more of the richest and most influential Jews of Lincoln are hanged.   The remaining Jews escape punishment, as Matthew Paris explains, due to bribes or the intercession of Franciscan preachers.

The chronicler's narrative is confirmed by a substantial number of entries in other chronicles and by an Anglo-Norman ballad.[2] However, the often mutually

---

[2] Cf, e.g., the descriptions in: *Anna monasterii Waverleia,* ed.   Henry Richards Luard (London; Longman, 1865) (Rolls Series, Vol. 36/I), pp. 346ff, *Annales de Burton,* in *Annales Monastici,* ed. Henry Richards Luard (London; Longman, 1864) (Rolls Series, Vol. 36/I), pp. 340-80; *Close Rolls of the Reign* of *Henry III* (London: The Public Record Office, 1931; repr. Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1970), pp. 141ff. Another thirty later entries in chronicles retell these reports with slightly varying content. The Anglo-Norman ballad closely follows the story as told by Matthew Paris, see Francisque Michel, *Hugues de Lincoln:*

exclusive details in the different coeval versions of the ritual murder of Hugh of Lincoln indicate that the authors of these versions and/or their sources were less interested in writing historiography than in paralleling stories they had heard about or read with salvation history. Like other false medieval accusations against the Jews, host desecrations and well-poisonings, the myth of Jewish ritual murder developed as one of the most virulent models for reading the world in medieval Christendom.   Accordingly, an analysis of this myth, beginning with the events around Hugh of Lincoln, is illustrative: The various literary and cultural transformations of the story provide an insight into the transition of the myth from its medieval genesis to its post-medieval reception.[3]

---

[2]   (...continued)
Recueil de ballades anglo-normannes et Écossaises rélatives an meurtre de cet enfant commis par les Juifs en MCCLV (Paris: Silvestre; London: Pickering, 1834), pp.1-16.

[3]   For my research, the following publications proved most valuable: Karl Heinz Göller, "Sir Hugh of Lincoln - From History to Nursery Rhyme," in *Jewish Life and Jewish Suffering as Mirrored in English and American Literature. Jüdisches Leben im Spiegel der englischen und amerikanischen Literatur* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1987), pp. 17-31; R., Po-Chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder. Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), Friedrich Battenberg, *Das europäische Zeitalter der Juden,* 2 Vols.. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990); Gavin I. Langmuir, ed., *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996); Alan Dundes, ed., *The Blood Libel Legend: A Casebook in Anti-Semitic Folklore* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Stefan Rohrbacher and Michael Schmidt, *Judenbilder. Kulturgeschichte antijüdischer Mythen und*

Although the allegations of ritual murder against the European Jewish minority begin in England with the case of William of Norwich as early as 1144, the particular charges are part of a larger   medieval   Christian mentality.[4]

---

[3]   (...continued)

antisemitischer Vorurteile (Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1991); and Rainer Erb, ed., *Die Legende vom Ritualmord. Zur Geschichte der Blutbeschuldigung gegen Ju den* (Berlin: Metropol, 1993).

[4]   The story of William of Norwich, the first "documented" case of martyrdom due to ritual murder, was authored by Thomas of Monmouth. Begun around 1150 and finished in 1172-73, Thomas's narrative relates the story of a seven-year old boy, William, who is distinguished by his piety, humility, and his desire for fasting. Although not wealthy himself, he distributes food to the poor, loves to attend church, and has memorized all important psalms and prayers. At the age of eight, after William has worked as an apprentice at a furrier's shop in Norwich, the Jews of the city offer him a job because of his reputation as naive and hard-working. Soon the Jews decide to torture the boy to death in a mock celebration of Christ's crucifixion on March 22, the date of Jewish Passover as well as Ash Wednesday. Under a pretext, he is lured into a Jew's house where he is tortured, hanged on a beam, and finally killed by stabbing his side with a lance. To cover up the murder, the Jews try to bury the body in a forest close to the city on Holy Friday. Because they are observed by a citizen, they bribe the king's local representative, the Sheriff John of Cheney, to oblige the witness to swear that he had not seen anything. However, the body's location is soon detected because of a miraculous light emanating from the site during the same night. Because of the Easter season, the Jews are immediately suspected of having committed the murder. A priest named Godwin, the boy's uncle, identifies the

Various other accusations on the continent (e.g., Würzburg, 1147; Pontoise, 1163; Blois 1171) indicate that the myth of ritual murder originated along with the unsuccessful second crusade (1147-48) and had its general historical causes in the competition between the two monotheistic religions in late antiquity. That English cities became the central sites for the accusation in the

---

boy, and the crowd demands that the Jews, eternal enemies of Christianity, should all be killed. Godwin accuses the Jews of the murder, but Bishop Eberard of Norwich and the Sheriff protect them against the furious Christian citizens until a royal edict guarantees them freedom from prosecution. In the meantime, a Cluniac friar, Aimar of Lewes, convinces the Bishop of Norwich, that the boy is a martyr, and the Bishop decides to have the body buried on the monks' cemetery, close to the cathedral. During the *translatia* of little William, his status as a saint is confirmed by the integrity of his body and by the sweet fragrance the body exudes. The entire rest of the *vita* recounts   manifold miracles which supposedly happened in connection with and after William's death. For a text of the vita (Latin and English), see *The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich,* ed. Augustus Jessopp and Montague R. James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896). For a survey of the history of Jews in England, see James Parke's, "Jewish Christian Relations in England," in *Three Centuries of Anglo-Jewish Relations. A Volume of Essays,* ed. V. D. Lipman (Cambridge: Heffer and Sons, 1961), pp. 149-68. The case of William of Norwich was the first ever documented. See Friedrich Lotter, "Innocens Virgo et Martyr: Thomas von Monmouth und die Verbreitung der Ritualmordlegende im Hochmittelalter," in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord,* ed. Rainer Erb, pp. 25-72, and Gavin I. Langmuir, "Thomas of Monmouth: Detector of Ritual Murder." *Speculum* 59 (1984), 820-46.

twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Gloucester, 1168; Bury St. Edmunds, 1181; Bristol, 1192; Winchester, 1232; London, 1244) had its reasons in the country's deficiency in saints' relics which the clergy attempted to compensate by claiming numerous children as martyrs. Matthew Paris's report demonstrates the pressing interest of the Lincoln cathedral chapter in burying the child inside their cathedral and thus hints at one of the important motives of local English clergy in the martyrdom of children reported missing and found dead, namely the desire to further the importance and wealth of one's own church as a place of pilgrimage.[5] This desire also explains the chroniclers' hasty reports about miracles and healings during and in the wake of the children's deaths. In addition, Paris's entry also shows that the uncovering of a child's body, at least in the first phase of the myth's genesis, necessitated the theological interpretation by an expert, in this case by John of Lexington, a member of the clergy. Only his knowledge of similar cases and his typological reading provided the laymen present with sufficient cause to accept the killing as a credible ritual murder. Specific knowledge of the Easter liturgy and the "Passio-Christi-Mysticism" are supposed to authenticate the details of the accusations against the Jews for the citizens of Lincoln as much as for the readers of Paris's chronicle: Just as the Christian Easter liturgy repeats the events at Golgatha every year

---

[5] Matthew Paris, e.g., realizes the economic background for the haste among the monks of St. Paul's in Norwich *(Chronica Majora,* p. 377), as they attempted to stylize the finding of a dead child as a ritual murder although the child's body did not show any signs of a ritual crucifixion. Thomas of Monmouth, the most vociferous of the Norwich monks, augmented the number of miracles in his later versions of the Vita of William of Norwich from five to thirty-five to press the issue of canonization. Cf. Lotter, "Innocens Virgo," p. 40.

on a set date, it was assumed, that the Church's enemy, the Synagogue, would repeat and reenact a perverted parody of the Christian celebrations.[6]

This typological interpretation fully informs Matthew Paris's explanatory insertions: The Jew appointed judge over Hugh of Lincoln is seen as a new Pilate; the stages of the killing corresponds with a series of the "stations" in Christ's passion. The typological worldview explains the irrational, abstractive judgment of mysterious infanticides. The chronicler is moreover intent on underlining that the witness, Copin, admits to the collective guilt of all Jews. This admission made it possible to extend the accusation to the whole of English Jewry and simplified deriving the guilt of future Jewish individuals from an abstract factual concept. Moreover, as soon as such readings became authenticated by church and state authorities, they degenerated into unreflected notions of Jewish otherness and, as Friedrich

---

[6] On the connections between the typological readings during ritual murder accusations and Christian liturgy, cf. Georg R. Schroubek, "Zur Tradierung und Diffusion einer europäischen Aberglaubensvorstellung." in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord,* p. 18, and Rainer Erb, "Zur Erforschung der europäischen Ritualmordbeschuldigungen," in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord,* p. 10. Ivan G. Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood. Jewish Acculturation in Medieval Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 94-1O1, believes that the blood libel needs to be understood not only in light of Christian cultural shifts but also in connection with the Jewish eucharistic sacrificing of Torah children. However, it is questionable how much medieval Christians would have known about these rare cases (Marcus documents only one such case in 1096). On this problem, cf. also Leah Sinanoglou, "The Christ Child as Sacrifice: A Medieval Tradition and the Corpus Christi Plays," *Speculum* 48 (1973), 491-509.

Battenberg has illustrated, could lead to large-scale popular exoneration mechanisms which helped justify earlier as well as future excesses.[7] In a final step, the stigmatization and demonization of all Jews in this popularized form of Christian doctrine facilitated its functionalization for private and political purposes without impending pangs of conscience. The *Annales de Burton* narrate how Richard of Cornwall, to whom his brother Henry III had mortgaged English Jewry *en masse* as a security for a major loan, had the Jews of Lincoln released from prison because their hanging might have endangered his important investment.[8]   Such a functionalization of English Jewry exemplifies the deterioration of the Jews legal status from a regular business partner to a commodity *(res propria)* of the English king.   This development, together with the interdiction on carrying arms (and thus the impossibility of self-defense), shows the increasingly inimical stereotypization of Jews which culminated in the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290.[9]

The disappearance of many Jews from English daily life after 1290 did not result in erasing the stereotype of the "Jew." England's close political and economic ties with western and central Europe conveyed news of conflicts from the continent where accusations against Jews multiplied despite numerous imperial, royal, and papal decrees in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The alleged Jewish atrocities also remained present in the

---

[7]   See Battenbevg, *Das europäische Zeitalter der Juden*, Vol. 1, p. 66-67.

[8]   *Annales de Burton*, pp. 340-48.

[9]   On this process of increasing functionalization in the entirety of late medieval Europe, cf. Friedrich Battenberg, "Die Ritualmordprozesse gegen Juden in Spätmittelalter und Frühneuzeit. Verfahren und Rechtsschultz," in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord*, pp. 95-132.

English collective memory by virtue of various places of pilgrimage: Hugh of Lincoln's magnificent cathedral shrine, to name only one example, was revered until the beginnings of the Protestant reformation as a martyr's resting place.[10] In addition, the popular sermons of late-medieval mendicants, the literary representations in mystery plays, iconographic depictions, and the often orally disseminated miracles of the Virgin made sure that the accusation was not forgotten. Chaucer's vernacular version of the otherwise mostly Latin miracles involving ritual murder in his "Prioress's Tale" is evidence not only for the widespread circulation of the myth but also for its adaptability to different cultural settings as well as to new literary genres and their audiences' horizons of expectation.[11]

Perhaps in reaction to the physical absence of Jews in England, Chaucer's Prioress situates her story's plot in an anonymous city in Asia minor: A seven-year old boy, driven by a natural and innocuous joy in the songs in honor of the Virgin, traverses the Jewish quarter of his town on his daily walk to school. The Jews, spurred on by Satan himself take offence at the boy's loud singing of the "Alma Redemptoris Mater". One day, they ambush him, cut his throat and throw him into a pit. After searching the entire city, the mother learns that her child has last been seen walking through the Jewish quarter. In her terrible predicament, she asks the Virgin for

---

[10]   The most recent research on these issues has been presented by Joseph Jacobs. "Little St. Hugh of Lincoln: Researches in History, Archaeology, and Legend," in *The Blood Libel Legend,* pp. 41-71.

[11]   A list of the more than 30 late medieval parallel versions of the story can be found in Carleton Brown, "The Prioress's Tale," in *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales,* ed. W. F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1941), Vol. 2, pp. 447-85.

assistance. The Jews deny any knowledge of the boy's whereabouts until he miraculously begins to sing the "Alma Redemptoris Mater" despite his cut throat. A large crowd assembles and the bailiff immediately imprisons the present Jews. The murderers are punished, first dragged by horses and then hanged. In the meantime, the dead child, still singing the hymn to Mary, has been transported into the nearby abbey where the abbot confirms the events as a miracle and relieves the child of his task as the miracle's herald. Finally, little Hugh's body is put to rest in a magnificent marble sarcophagus.

For her audience of pilgrims to the shrine of England's greatest martyr, St. Thomas à Beckett, Chaucer's Prioress had taken her personal pick from the pool of elements used to present the ritual murder myth. She transforms the Story into a crime committed in the heat of a deviant religious passion. In her final stanza, however, she connects her own story with all the other accounts on the death of Hugh of Lincoln:

　O yonge Hugh of Lyncoln, slayn also
　With cursed Jewes -- as it is notable,
　For it is but a litel while ago --
　Preye eek for us, we synful folk unstable.[12]

Thus, even toward the end of the fourteenth century the Prioress (and Chaucer) could be certain that every potential recipient would be familiar with the events which happened more than 150 years earlier. Her version lacks the ritual use of blood and body parts so central to the chroniclers' reports as well as the typological analogies with Christ's passion. Rather, she gears her story to glorifying the Virgin through a miracle which only uses ritual murder as a necessary literary

vehicle.[13] Chaucer's gendering of the tale as well as his characterization of the Prioress in his "General Prologue" offers an insight into the transformation of the ritual murder myth which would not have been possible on the basis of texts written and/or narrated by male authors.

In the vast majority of cases, Jewish men, sometimes rabbis, are accused of committing ritual murder. Sigrun Anselm links this feature with what she terms the phantasy of the male-paternal infanticide.[14] She is convinced that the patriarchal Christian model of family and its glorification in the God-Father/God-Son relationship made it necessary to displace the essential conflict of ambivalency between fathers and sons in families onto an external object, Jewish men. Interestingly, the myth of Jewish ritual murder in Europe begins at the very time when the cult of the Virgin and the presentation of Mary as Mother and of Jesus as Child, a Mother-Son dyad, gains greater currency. This propagation of Mother-and-Child images hints at a regressive solution of an underlying religious conflict. When the importance of the close connection between mother and child, the unity of the Mother-Son dyad, could not be reconciled with the Christian pattern of the Father-Son relationship, escape away from and fear of the overly-powerful father image and a desire for the

---

[12] Cited from *The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer,* ed. John H. Fisher (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977) p. 246.

[13] It should be noted that Chaucer might have had a personal connection with Lincoln cathedral. On February 19, 1386, his wife, Philippa, and other members of John of Gaunt's family were accepted into the "Fraternity of Lincoln Cathedral," and thus it is possible that the poet may have felt tempted to commemorate the local saint in his literary text. Cf. *Chaucer Life -Records,* ed. Martin M. Crow and Clair C. Olson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 91-93.

[14] Sigrun Anscim, "Angst und Angstprojektion in der Phantasie vom jüdischen Ritualmord," in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord,* p. 256.

unbroken unity and security with the mother was shifted and transferred onto Jewish father figures.

According to Anselm's reading, anti-semitic thinking develops as a result of unresolved conflicts implicit in the Christian model of patriarchy which imputes to the Jews a regression into a former and lower, pre-Christian stage of civilization, an archaic form of sacrificial anthropophagism which finds its outlet in the perversity of ritual murder. This regression, which the theological construct of transubstantiation had attempted to extinguish from the subconscience of medieval Christians since 1215, is still palpable in the fourteenth-century discussions on the Eucharist. Chaucer's meticulous description of the Prioress, her exaggerated table manners, consciousness of fashion and finery, and degradation of the child-killing Jews reveals her desire to give a personal display of civilisatory superiority. Her revealing selection from the existing pool of details to describe ritual murder confirms Anselm's theories: The flight away from the overpowering father into the Mother-Child dyad can be seen in her turning the child's mother into a widow. The intimate unity of mother and child, for the Prioress only attainable in her vicarious, narrative projection into the motherly joys of the Virgin, is represented linguistically through the conspicuous use of the ME adjective *lytel* (small) and the extreme punishment (dragging *and* hanging) for the violent separation and destruction of this unity. Similarly, the projection of her own fears for the Christian children onto the Jews is only accessible to her via a misdirected *caritas* toward her spoiled pet dogs and her excessive compassion for little mice caught in traps. However, to equate Chaucer's psychologically realistic critique of the Prioress with the writer's concomitant intention to mount a pro semitic critique of late medieval

views of Jewish life and customs is misguided. Chaucer's text does not support such modernizing views.[15]

As the myth of ritual murder moves from the late middle ages into the early modern period, it undergoes further transformation. During the Reformation a more differentiated relationship between the Christian majority and the Jewish minority evolves on the European continent. The establishment of general legal procedures, the legal assimilation in status of all Jews as citizens of their respective states, and a higher success rate in solving child-killings resulted in a substantial decrease in the number of ritual murder accusations toward the end of the sixteenth century.[16] However, these changes on the level of the legal superstratum had no significant effect on the popular reception of the myth which could be revived where- and whenever economic competition, political or personal animosity rendered it advantageous. On the continent, and even more so in England, where until the middle of the seventeenth

[15]   On this problem, see the discussions by Richard J. Schoeck, "Chaucer's Prioress: Mercy and Tender Heart," in *Chaucer Criticism: The Canterbury Tales,* ed. Richard I. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1960), pp. 245-58; Robert Worth Frank, Jr., "Miracles of the Virgin, Medieval Antisemitism, and the 'Prioress's Tale'," in *The Wisdom of Poetry: Essays in Early English Literature in Honor of Morton W. Bloomfield,* ed. Larry D. Benson and Siegfried Wenzel (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1982), pp. 177-88.

[16]   Cf. Po-Chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder,* p. 228.

century the survival of the myth oral forms incorporated stories.[17]

An exact dating of the first appearance of the ritual murder myth in ballads or nursery rhymes is virtually impossible.   The great number of English, French, Scottish, Irish, and American ballad versions indicates the regularly confirmed acceptance of the medieval allegations. Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1889) alone lists eighteen poems telling the tale of "Hugh of Lincoln," "The Jew's Daughter," or "Sir Hugh."[18] As children are the target audiences of these short texts, a ball game often becomes the point of departure for the story told. Bad weather hints at the presence of powerful supernatural forces. An adolescent Jewish girl lures one of the ball-playing Christian boys into her father's house, promising an apple, a golden ring, or a cherry. She leads the boy through nine dark doors to a table on which he is slaughtered like a pig and is bled to death. Afterwards, the girl bakes him into a cake of lead and throws him into a deep well sacred to the Virgin. His sorrowful mother finds him there, because he answers her calls. Sir Hugh begs his mother to bring his shroud outside the city gates the following morning. As promised, she finds his body outside   the Lincoln city gates early next morning.

---

[17]   James Joyce's use of an Irish version of the "Sir Hugh" ballad in his *Ulysses* demonstrates the resilience of the accusation even in the twentieth century. See Louis J. Edmundson, "Theme and Countertheme: The Function of Child Ballad 155, "Sir Hugh, or the Jew's Daughter," in James Joyce's *Ulysses*" (Diss., Middle Tennessee State University, 1975).

[18]   Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (New York: Dover Publications, 1965), pp. 233-54. For an exemplary interpretation of Ballad 155 in Child's collection, see Brian Bebbinton's "Little Sir Hugh: An Analysis," in *The Blood Libel Legend*, p. 72-90.

Suddenly, all the church bells of the city are ringing and voices read all the city's books out loud, all without human agency.

Karl Heinz Göller, who has investigated the transition of the Hugh story from the chronicles to the popular ballads and nursery rhymes, has shown that together with the increasing temporal distance from the medieval source texts, and the new genre-specific demands, the ritual character of the murder and the religious affiliation of the girl become less and less important as the ballads concentrate more and more on themes such as seduction, initiation, or love.[19] Nevertheless, the Romantic reception of the myth in ballads, collections of songs and popular religious manuals leaves no doubt that the gradual changes becoming noticeable in the literary tradition could be reversed at any moment.

Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano's inclusion of the accusatory poem "The Jews of Passau" in their collection, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn,* in 1805 thus does not happen by chance.[20] Arnim, who actively opposed Jewish membership in the ultra-conservative "Deutsche-christliche Tischgenossenschaft," because the inclusion of Jews might "replace the Christian community with a synagogue, substitute merry singing with the whirring of wood grouses and slaughter Christian children instead of pheasants" ("welche statt des frohen Gesangs auerte, statt der Fasanen Christenkinder schlachtete"), must

---

[19]   Karl Heinz Göller, "Sir Hugh of Lincoln," p. 26. The orientation away from the theme of ritual murder also increases the growing geographic distance from the sites of origin, as Göller's examples from Florida, Utah, and Kentucky demonstrate.

[20]   "Die Juden von Passau," in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn. Alte deutsche Lieder. Gesammelt von L. A. v. Arnim und Clemens Brentano*, part 1, in Clemens Brentano, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, ed. Heinz Rölleke, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975), Vol. 6, pp. 88-91 (my translation).

have regarded the Jews' general cultural and legal assimilation as a threat to his own status. Many of his texts are interspersed with the medieval anti-Semitic myths.[21] Brentano meanwhile was probably influenced by his study of a number of well-known Catholic authors. His interpretation of alleged ritual murders as crimes committed in analogy to the Christian Easter passion is typical of pre-Enlightenment thought and thus reminiscent of the typological readings of medieval clergy. These two romantic writers' texts are confronted by the perhaps first widely-known pro-Semitic critique of the myth, Heinrich Heine's *Rabbi of Bacherach* (1840). In his first chapter, Heine speaks as a true representative of the European enlightenment who warns against the potential negative side of the folk-tale revival in the nineteenth century. This side is present in what he calls "the foolish fairy tale, often ad nauseam repeated in chronicles and legends, that Jews would steal consecrated hosts, pierce them with knives until the blood flowed and that they slaughtered Christian children on the occasion of their Easter celebrations in order to use their blood at their nightly masses" ("das läppische, in Chroniken und

---

[21]   Quoted from Gunnar Och, "Alte Märchen von der Grausamkeit der Juden. Zur Rezeption judenfeindlicher Blutschuld-Mythen durch die Romantiker," in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord*, pp. 226-33, here p. 229 (my translation). Interestingly, Johann Gottfried Herder, often blamed for inventing the nationalistic concept of the German "Volksgeist," had criticized the ritual murder accusation when translating a Scottish ballad version, "The Jew's Daughter" (see Child, p. 244-45) into German, as based on a well-known "Nationalvorurtheil" which had already cost many Jews their lives. Cf. "Die Judentochter," in Johann Gottfried Herder, *Volkslieder, Übertragungen, Dichtungen,* ed. Ulrich Gaier (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1990), p. 125-26, and p. 1005.

Legenden bis zum Ekel wiederholte Märchen: daβ die Juden geweihte Hostien stählen, die sie mit Messern durchstächen bis das Blut heraus flieβe, und daβ sie an ihrem Passahfeste Christenkinder schlachteten, um das Blut derselben bei ihrem nächtlichen Gottesdienste zu gebrauchen").[22]

Heine's literary defense as well as Arnim and Brentano's attacks are, in the end, symptomatic of fundamental changes in European society. Enlightenment culture had succeeded in making Jewish and Christian citizens equals before the law. As a result, Jews became increasingly visible during the eighteenth century which meant that their Christian counterparts encountered them more and more in daily life, as competitors for jobs or even as superior civil servants. For many a member of the majority population, this encounter sufficed to revive old prejudices which, in turn, re-validated medieval models of thought even in the modern world. These models of thought became all the more vicious as the originally religious opposition was now transformed into an unconscious general animosity against Jews. No longer controlled and channeled by the church, long-standing popular superstitions were projected on to the Jewish culture. If medieval Christians had misunderstood and rejected Jewish religious customs, they had at least experienced them through direct contact. Now, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the unbroken tradition of the Jewish customs was only known by the vaguest of notions which made them appear almost automatically as strange, sinister,

---

[22] Cited from Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Schriften in zwölf Bämden,* ed. Klaus Briegleb (Frankfurt a. M.: Ullstein, 1981), Vol. 1, p. 462 (my translation).

and threatening, especially in rural and Catholic regions of Europe.[23]

The discrediting of numerous Enlightenment achievements in the wake of Napoleon's defeat led to a renewed deterioration of the social and political status of Jews. European national governments, intent on consolidating their power, instrumentalized the exuberantly growing rumors to divert their populations away from pressing economic or social problems and were eager to brand the Jewish minority as a scapegoat. This intimate intertextuality of ideological and mythographic discourses is unmasked by Arnold Zweig's 1914 play, *Ritualmord in Ungarn,* and by Bernard Malamud's 1966 novel, *The Fixer.* That both fictional texts are situated and that both their historical source materials originate in Eastern Europe is not a coincidence. In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the politically unstable Eastern European regions were inhabited by a predominantly uneducated and multi-ethnic population and thus provided a hotbed for another renaissance of the ritual murder accusation.

Both texts are based on actual legal proceedings against alleged ritual murderers. Arnold Zweig's play, written in 1913 and first published in 1914, is a fictional commentary on the murder of the fourteen-year old Esther Solymosi in the Hungarian village of Tisza Eszlár in April 1882, a case which received much public attention in Hungary and by the world press and which led to three heated discussions in the Hungarian

---

[23]   For a concise survey of this historical process, see Battenberg, *Das europäische Zeitalter der Juden*, Vol. 2, pp. 116-17.

parliament.[24] The Jewish "Schachter" Salomon Schwarz was accused of luring the girl into the local synagogue and -- with the assistance of other Jews -- of having killed her there for ritual purposes. After one full year, thirty-three days of court sessions, and despite the potent pressure through nationalist-Hungarian politicians, all defendants were acquitted because of overwhelming evidence in their favor. Zweig's text reveals that the myth of ritual murder at the end of the nineteenth century had not only undergone a geographical relocation but that the Hungarian accusation also represents a freshly motivated revival of the medieval model. In making his Esther figure four years older and having the murder committed by a member of the local landed gentry, Zweig exposes the repressive sexual character of the modern ritual murder accusation. Already in the three decades before the Tisza Eszlar case, the number of collective accusations against the Jewish minority for the ritual killing of children had diminished while those against Jewish men for the killing of Christian women had significantly increased. Moreover, Zweig exposes the public prosecutor's attempt to extract a false testimony from a thirteen-year old Jewish boy named Moritz Scharf. The prosecutor wants Moritz to establish a connection between the Jewish ritual slaughtering of animals, the "Schachten," and the Jewish ritual killing of human beings. This happened at a time when the Jewish practice of "Schachten," which consists of the bleeding to death and the subsequent ritual and hygienic inspection of the animal's body, was being attacked by medical

---

[24]   Cf. Albert Lichtblau, "Die Debatten über die Ritualmordbeschuldigungen im österreichischen Abgeordnetenhaus am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord*, p. 267-92. The details of the murder trial have been described by Andrew Handler, *Blood Libel at Tiszaesler* (New York: Eastern European Monographs, 1980).

experts as well as animal-rights activists all over Europe.[25] The paralleling of ritual murder with a daily practised religious and hygienic necessity of Jewish life shows Zweig's play as an eloquent critique of the prevalent anti-Semitic mentality in the central European fin de siècle. Julius Streicher's infamous Nazi-journal, *Der Stürmer,* would make use of this and similar accusations for cover and content of the first edition of May 1, 1934.

Bernard Malamud's *The Fixer* has its historical basis in a ritual murder accusation directed against Mendel Beiliss by the Kiev authorities in 1913. Beiliss, an inconspicuous employee in a local brickyard, was charged with murdering a Christian boy and using his blood for ritual purposes. The process was cut short and Beiliss was set free. In its publication of the judgment, however, the court made no formal statement about the general improbability of this kind of accusation, and the instigators of the heinous extrajudicial press campaign against the defendant remained similarly uncriticized.[26]

---

[25]   Cf. Sander Gilman, "Kafka Wept," MODERNISM/ modernity 1 (1993), 17-37 and Jost Hermand, *"Ritualmord in Ungarn* (1914) als prosemitisches Tendenz- und Läuterungsdrama,"* in *Engagement als Lebensform. Über Arnold Zweig* (Berlin: Sigma, 1992), pp. 35-49. During one such public protest as early as 1883, the mayor of London compared the arguments brought forward against the Jewish ritual slaughtering of animals with the ritual murder accusations during Chaucer's time.

[26]   On the historical Beiliss case, see Maurice Friedberg, "History and Imagination - Two Views of the Beiliss Case," in *Bernard Malamud and the Critics*, ed. Leslie A. Field and Joyce W. Field (New York: New York University Press, 1970), pp. 275-84, Maurice Samuel, *Blood Accusation* (New York: Knopf, 1966), and M. Rajagopalachari, *Theme of Compassion in the Novels of Bernard Malamud* (New

Malamud's fictional account is also situated in pre-revolutionary Czarist Russia.[27] The impoverished and divorced Jakov Bok leaves his *shtetl* in the country and moves to Kiev in the hope of finding work and a better life. As an agnostic, he has no qualms about concealing his Jewish origins and takes up a job under a false name in a brickyard situated in the Christian part of the city. However, his different behavior, a noticeable accent, and the help he offers to an old, helpless Jew, raise suspicions about him. When a young Christian boy is murdered in a conspicuously ritualistic manner, the Russian government attempts to use the case to divert attention away from its domestic problems and onto the Jewish majority. In this atmosphere, Jakov Bok (nomen est omen!) is revealed as a Jew and becomes a welcome scapegoat. In the story of Bok, Malamud sketches a typical example of a modern, government-sponsored myth of exoneration. The Fixer's case has been chosen by Czar Nikolas II, personally to justify his demagogic policies for suppressing the Russian Jews. During his three years of detention pending trial, Bok reconverts to the Jewish religion, and his newly gained Jewish identity helps him to resists all tortures administered and all bribes offered by the authorities. Thus, the novel turns into an all-encompassing counterdiscourse against many of the elements of the ritual murder accusation raised since the middle ages. He pillories Father Anastasius's medievalizing typological reading of the murder as committed in mockery of the Christian Easter passion, as well as the public prosecutor's

---

Delhi: Prestige, 1988). As Charlotte Kelin has shown ("Damascus to Keiv: Civiltà Cattolica on Ritual Murder," in *The Blood Libel Legend*, pp. 180-96), in both the Tizla Eszlàr and the Kiev case official Catholic publications supported the ritual murder accusations.

[27]   Bernard Malamud, *The Fixer* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1966).

pseudoscientific connection of the Jewish slaughtering of animals and ritual murder. A key scene in which Jakov Bok is lured into a bedroom by the daughter of his Christian employer with the help of cherry liqueur and a kiss, but refuses to sleep with her because she is menstruating, not only confirms the deep Jewish abhorrence of all physical contact with blood but can also be read as a conscious reversal of the characteristic situation in the popular ballads where a Jewish girl uses a cherry to lure a Christian boy into her house to have him killed. Malamud also reverses the best-known literary version of the ritual murder myth, Chaucer's "Prioress's Tale." He positions the final stanza of Chaucer's tale as motto for his novel; Bok's employer, who sheds tears for his dead dog but is ready to participate in a pogrom at any moment, reminds readers of the Prioress's misguided compassion with animals. The depiction of the murdered Schenja Golow's mother as a widow and the hyper-affected stressing of the boy's smallness and innocence similarly take up Chaucerian details.

In Malamud's revisionistic reception of the medieval and postmedieval myth of Jewish ritual murder, the Hugh of Lincoln story comes full circle. The story's resilience and its manifold transformations leave no doubt that to dismiss the myth of ritual murder as an unacceptable regression into medieval irrationalism or an atavistic delusion is to underestimate its continuing power. The ritual murder pogrom in Kielce, Poland, which led to the killing of 42 Jews in 1946, the commemorative plaque of little Hugh's alleged martyrdom which remained in Lincoln cathedral until 1959, and his inclusion as a Christian martyr in the *Acta Sanctorum* until 1966, are unmistakeable signs that the basic human dependence on mythographic discourse demands

conscious and unceasing analysis and enlightening education.[28]

---

[28]   The ritual murder myth has not even disappeared after 1960 and was revived especially in the anti-Zionistic propaganda of Arab countries. As recently as 1985, the Assistant Preimer Mininster of Syna, Mustafa Tias, published a book (in Arabic) entitled *The Matza of Zion,* in which he repeats a number of the typical nineteenth-century accusations against Jews (cf. Alan Dundes, "The Ritual Murder of Blood Libel Legend," in *The Blood Libel Legend,* p. 349-50). The alleged late medieval ritual murder of Anderl of Rinn (Rinn/Judenstein is situated close to Innsbruck, Austria) led to the instutionalization of a pilgrimage from the late sixteenth century on. The diocese of Innsbruck removed anti-Jewish depictions (1 961) and Anderl's relics (1985) from the church before officially ending the church's status as a site of pilgrimage as late as 1994. In reaction to this decision, ultra-conservative Catholic organizations made Anderl the symbol of their more general fight against the decisions of the second Vatican Council. This recent case has been documented in *Judenstien. Das Ende einer Legende,* ed. Diözese Innsbruck (Innsbruck: Redaktion Kirche, 1995) and by Bernhard Fresacher, *Anderl von Rinn: Ritualmordkult und Neuorientierung in Judenstein 1945-1995* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia Verlag, 1998).

JULIAN OF NORWICH:
THOMAS MERTON'S REASON TO HOPE

Michael J. Callaghan

How did a twentieth century Cistercian monk living in Kentucky become so deeply impressed by a fourteenth century English mystic who was a recluse? Julian of Norwich gave Tom Merton a sense of hope! The purpose of the following presentation is to answer the questions regarding what exactly Thomas Merton read about Julian of Norwich and her world, how Merton acquired such knowledge and how this experience of reading and writing about Julian gave Thomas Merton so much joy in the midst of a controversial and varied life style. By studying the editions of Julian's writings and volumes of English Medieval history available to Merton at Gethsemani, by paralleling themes in Merton's life and writings with Julian's themes and experiences, one can begin to paste together a living picture of hope from these two distinct and historically different mystics.

The appearance of the following texts in the monastic library at Our Lady of Gethsemani Abbey gives positive testimony to Thomas Merton's having read Julian of Norwich's *Showings*. Some texts are directly related to the light they shed on specific editions and translations of *Showings*; other texts, used by Merton show his general reading of fourteenth century English, religious history.

A text of Julian's *Revelations*, a thirteenth edition version of the British Museum manuscript, edited by Grace Warrack, and published by Methuen of London in 1949, appears in the holdings at Gethsemani. The full title of this edition is *Revelations of Divine Love Recorded by Julian, Anchoress at Norwich Anno Domini 1373*. Of particular interest for this study is the long text of Julian's *Showings*, the Harper publishers' 1961 edition of *The Revelations of Divine Love of Julian of Norwich*, translated into modern English by James Walsh, S. J. This was the text Merton used in his research on Julian.

In the Preface to this text, James Walsh remarked that, for the most part, he favored "the readings of the Paris MS against those of the Sloan MS."[1] This fact could be significant if there is any way to connect this manuscript with Merton's French background.

There is a note of purchase attached to *An Anthology of Mysticism*, by Paul de Jaegher, S. J. and translated by Donald Attwater, et al., published by Newman press of Westminster in 1950. The attached note on the inside cover is more than likely the date on which this text was purchased by Gethsemani: July 22, 1963. Pantin's *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, published by the University of Notre Dame Press in 1963, and stamped "April 3, 1963," could bear evidence to work Merton was researching at this time. Of interest in this regard is Merton's letter to W. H. "Ping" Ferry on June 12, 1963 which begins: "Thanks for the letter and the packet of things. I was especially glad of the little *Pelican* on mysticism [by F. C. Happold]. It looks great, so far."[2]

In the bibliographical notes to the chapter on the English mystics in *Mystics and Zen Masters*, there is an entry for Paul Molinari's *Julian of Norwich: The teaching of a 14th Century English Mystic*, published in New York by Longmans in 1958. Of note is the fact that Merton and Molinari share the following reading preferences regarding the fourteenth century English mystics: Dom David Knowles' *The English Mystics*, published in London in 1927; articles by Conrad Pepler, O.P. in the periodical *Life in the Spirit* for the year 1949; an English translation of De Guibert's *The Theology of the Spiritual Life*, published in London in 1954; Evelyn Underhill's

---

[1]   Julian of Norwich, *The Revelations of Divine Love*, James Walsh, S. J., Long Text ed. (New York: Harper, 1961) vi. All citations from *Showings* refer to this text.

[2]   Thomas Merton, ""To W. H. Ferry"," *The Hidden Ground of Love*, (June 12, 1963; San Francisco: Harper, 1985) 214.

Mysticism, not dated, published in London; and A. Poulain's *The Graces of Interior Prayer*, translated from the French 1931 edition, published in London in 1950.

Julian was an educated woman of the late middle ages, whose desire for union with God led her to a hope-filled request, in prayer, for a vision of Christ's suffering, a form of bodily sickness and the reception of the wounds of Christ's passion: "Mynde of Christ es passio*nn* . . . bodelye syeknes, and . . . to haue of goddys gyfte thre wonndys."[3]

Two accounts, one to a smaller audience, the other to a general readership, exist in seven manuscripts of *Showings*.[4] From the spirit of this text, Julian's audience gained a sense of her great hope that in a society of changing demographics, in a world at political and religious war, in a church divided and less clearly defined than in days gone by, "alle thynge schalle be wele"; "all things shall be well."[5]

Julian's mystical experience, narrated in the two versions of *Showings*, was Christo-centric, trinitarian, and eschatological. Christ, fully human and fully divine, was the goal and source of the revelations; the revelations were energized by a trinity of desires -- contrition, compassion, and union with the trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; hope was the ever-present eschatological theme throughout *Showings*. The trinitarian and Christological aspects of Julian's teachings about prayer were Augustinian and Franciscan in origin. Marian Glasscoe states that Julian's desire for

---

[3] *A Book of Showings*, 201.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1-28. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh give an extensive explanation of the manuscript tradition related to the short and long texts of *Showings*. Because of the space of time between the writings of the texts, each text has its own manuscript history.

[5] *Ibid.*, 249.

"visual experience . . . [was] catered for by texts like the immensely popular Franciscan *Meditatione Vitae Christi*."[6]

Julian's great service to her fellow citizens of England and to the Church in England was the fact that she carefully chose the clearest, simplest, most appropriate language to communicate her special experience of God. Her invitation to England to come to God is unequivocal. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh consider her task similar to Geoffrey Chaucer's:

> The experts tell us that Chaucer was at work on his translation of Boethius c. 1380, that is, at the time when Julian may be presumed to have been considering the problems which she must solve in the composition of her long text (if, that is, the short text itself were already published, which we do not know). Chaucer's problems were not dissimilar. Either writer was called upon to render into contemporary English matter which might seem intractable: in Chaucer's case, Boethius' haunting and evocative rhythms and meters, in Julian's, the *processe* of her visions and locutions, and her own given insights, often of a profundity which, she tells us, seemed as if it would defeat her powers of language. They were both rescued from their dilemma by rhetoric, Chaucer more easily than Julian, since he was turning into English another man's *colores*, whereas she was adapting to her own ends literary devices few of which anyone before Chaucer had attempted to employ in her native language.[7]

To understand Merton's attraction to and preference for reading French authors on the spiritual life, and how this experience led him to read, research, and be

---

[6] Marion Glasscoe, *English Medieval Mystics: Games of Faith.* (New York: Longman, 1993) 215, 335.

[7] *Showings*, 48.

influenced deeply by Julian of Norwich, readers can consult the sentiments of theologians concerning the French school:

> The French School offers a powerful spiritual synthesis, blending profound mysticism with zeal and energy for reform. Rarely has such a deep sense of the communion with God in the Spirit of Jesus Christ been expressed and written not only for priests and religious but for the laity as well. It is a spirituality of profound transformation and exquisite adoration. It is lyrical, poetic, and passionate in its love for Jesus Christ and, through his Spirit, in its devotion to the Father.[8]

The French method of spiritual theology spoke to Merton's style of learning by appealing to his mother tongue, the language he used, however briefly, to articulate the ideas of "mother" and "father;" the English style of prayer, found in Julian, spoke to that linguistic base from which Merton began to seek, ever so slightly, the answer to the "why" and "how" of his life. Seeking God in the French spirit gave Merton familiar ground on which to begin his intellectual journey to God; finding God in the English medieval mystical school sustained and strengthened Merton's desire to persevere on the journey. The French School of Spirituality gave Merton the authority with which to speak; the English School of Spirituality gave heart and substance to that authority.

Reading Julian's *Showings* confirmed Merton's hope in God, a hope which gave him enough confidence to share his vision with others. It is as if Merton's relationship to Julian's *Showings* began unconsciously in 1953 when he first recorded his thoughts for the text of *Thoughts in Solitude* and matured in 1960-61 when his

reading of *Showings* affirmed what he read and thought in 1953. Merton's *Thoughts in Solitude* was the prelude to his encounter with Julian. Merton's seven years of writing and reading prepared him to understand Julian's experience of how God's love is revealed. Julian's experience of God led her to see prayer as a service to her fellow Christians; Merton's solitude, being alone with God, and his reflection on that experience led him to conclude "no man is an island." Merton's thoughts became revelations not of God's love for one individual but for all people.

Merton wrote about Julian in an affective, personal way, so characteristic of the spiritual writers who wrote in his first language. On Christmas Day, 1961, Merton wrote:

> the main thought of my heart (it has been a thought of the heart and not of the head) is that while Christ is given to me as my life, I also am given to Him as His joy and His crown (Julian of Norwich) and that He wills to take delight in saving and loving me. And this is all for me.[9]

In this passage, Merton's comments were focused on the fifty-first chapter of the long text of *Showings*. The fifty-first chapter contained the parable of the lord and the servant. What seemed to appeal to Merton was Julian's comment regarding the place of the Servant/Son after his sojourn in weal, woe, joy, and bliss: "Now standeth not the Son before the Father on the left side, as a labourer; but he sitteth on the Father's right hand in endless rest and peace . . . right in the highest nobility of the Father's joy."[10] The servant/son's nobility was present only when "he had won his peace, rightfully, with

---

8   Lowell M. Glendon, S. S., "French School of Spirituality," *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, 1993 ed.:420-23.

9   Thomas Merton, *Turning Toward the World: The Pivotal Years*, Victor A. Kramer, vol. 4 (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 189.

10   *Showings*, 143.

his hard travail."[11] The final posture of the servant/son was "in his city in rest and in peace."[12] It appears that Merton's hope for Christmas 1961 was to continue to serve the God who called him to Gethsemani, to accept the city/community of God as it presented itself at Gethsemani and to find his peace at Gethsemani. In Merton's search for a posture of peace, he hoped to be numbered among those who were "the crown which is the Father's joy, the Son's worship, the Holy Ghost's liking and endless marvellous bliss to all that are in heaven."[13]

Julian's understanding of the parable of the Lord and the servant of chapter fifty-two emphasized the confidence God has, under any circumstances, in the servant he has chosen. For example, the Lord knows and sees the struggles of servant even when he falls:

> In the servant, then, was shewed the blindness and the mischief of Adam's falling; and in the servant was shewed the wisdom and goodness of God's Son. In the Lord was shewed the ruth and pity for Adam's woe; and in the Lord was shewed the high nobility and endless worship that mankind is come to by the power of the passion and the death of his well-beloved Son. Wherefore he mightily rejoiceth in his falling, for the high raising and fullness of bliss that mankind is come into, overpassing what we should have had, if he had not fallen. It was to see this overpassing nobility that my understanding was led unto God, in the same time that I saw the servant fall.[14]

Hope, as Merton read this virtue in *Showings*, was a way for God to express his confidence in his people and

---

11   *Ibid.*, 142.

12   *Ibid.*, 143.

13   *Ibid.*, 143.

14   *Ibid.*, 145.

a way for all believers to express their confidence in God in "ruth and pity, joy and bliss."[15] Presumably, Merton read this fifty-first chapter of *Showings* while wearing his Cistercian habit; it is safe to say, then, that the thoughts of the servant, also wearing a white "kirtle" appeal and apply to Merton's mind-set: "I stand before thee [Father] all ready to set out, and to run. I would be on the earth, to thy worship whenever it is thy will to send me. How long must I desire it?"[16] From 1961 until the end of his life, Merton would deal with his life of enclosed silence and the continuing threat of the Cold War of the 1950s erupting into nuclear holocaust.

Two days after his Christmas reflection on Julian, Merton recorded how deeply Julian's spirituality touched his life. On December 27, 1961, he wrote:

> This morning I was praying much for a wise heart, and I think the gift of this Christmas has been the real discovery of Julian of Norwich. I have long been around her, and hovered at her door, and known that she was one of my best friends, and just because I was so sure of her wise friendship I did not make haste to seek what I now find.
>
> She seems to me a true theologian, with a greater clarity and organization and depth even that St. Theresa. I mean she really elaborates the content of revelation as deeply experienced. It is first experienced, then thought, and the thought deepens again into life, so that all her life the contact of her vision was penetrating her through and through.
>
> And one of the central convictions is her eschatological orientation to the central, dynamic secret act 'by which all shall be made well' at the last day, our '*great deed*' [underlined

---

15   *Ibid.*, 137.

16   *Ibid.*, 141.

twice] ordained by Our Lord from without beginning.

Especially the final paradox--she must 'believe' and accept the doctrine that there are some damned, yet *also* the 'word' of Christ shall be 'saved in all things' - and 'all manner of thing shall be well.' The heart of her theology is this apparent contradiction, in which she must remain steadfastly. And I believe that this 'wise heart' I have prayed for is precisely in this - to stay in this hope and this contradiction, fixed on the certainty of the 'great deed' - which alone gives the Christian and spiritual life its true, full dimension.[17]

The "great deed" about which Merton read is the act of Christ's passion, mentioned in the twenty-seventh chapter of the long text. According to Julian, reconciliation came about not because of the individual's awakening to his or her personal sin, but by believers' realizing the painful effects of sin in the world. Whatever doctrinal ambiguities concerning satisfaction and repentance may be present in this text, Merton seemed to be struck by Julian's teaching on the nature of God's compassion. Julian's teaching on God compassion becomes, for Merton, an invitation to pursue the "high marvellous secret hid in God."[18] The desire, the ghostly thirst, is planted in each individual by the one who alone can satisfy that desire. Julian's comments in the thirty-first chapter give clarity to how Merton read the text of the twenty-seventh chapter:

This quality of longing and thirst cometh of the endless goodness of God, just as the quality of pity cometh of the same endless goodness. . . In this goodness is the essence of the ghostly thirst, which is lasting in him as long as we are

---

[17]   *Ibid.*, 189.

[18]   *Ibid.*, 92.

in need, drawing us up to his bliss. All this was seen in the showing of his compassion; and that too shall cease at doomsday. Thus he hath ruth and compassion on us, and he hath longing to have us. But his wisdom and love permit not the end to come, until the best time.[19]

For Julian of Norwich, the object, the goal of hoping and believing, was the person, the incarnate God, the mother of all creation who is

very Mother of life and of all. To the property of Motherhood belongeth kind love, wisdom and knowing; and it is God.[20]

In Chapter XIV of *Thoughts in Solitude*, Merton spoke of landscape as that which gave him faith enough to hope: "Landscape is a good liberator . . . for it calms and pacifies the imagination and the emotions and leaves the will free to seek God in faith."[21] Jürgen Moltmann's understanding of hope can be a key to understanding Merton's landscape as a way of hoping in God: "what matters is to perceive in the outward form of temporality and transience the substance that is immanent and the eternal that is present."[22]

The abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani in Kentucky provided constant proximity to and involvement in the natural world. Just as language about God leads to hope at the center of our silence before his Word, so the natural surroundings led Merton to the unseen Providence at the center of the cycles of Merton's monastic life, his season of hope. Jürgen Moltmann explains this kind of hoping: "The God of the exodus and of the resurrection is not eternal presence, but he promises his presence and nearness to him who follows

---

[19]   *Showings*, 97.

[20]   *Showings*, 164.

[21]   *Thoughts in Solitude*, 111.

[22]   Moltmann, 27.

the path on which he is sent into the future."[23] Hope has a silent geography centered in God.

While Merton became acclimated to the geography of Gethsemani and its surroundings, God used Merton's gift of writing to lead him into a new geography of the spirit. Writing of his vocation sojourn was a way that Merton gave hope to himself and others. Merton began *The Sign of Jonas*, the account of his years in monastic formation, the time of his life as scholastic, his advancement to Holy Orders, with a question:

> Where does all this take place? In a valley in Kentucky . . . hot in the summer . . . cold in the winter. [In] a monastery built in the 'knob country' about the time of the Civil War . . . A few miles from the place where Abraham Lincoln was born, and monastic childhood. [It] has had the same landscape of steep and wooded hills, broad fields of corn, and rocky creeks.[24]

This is a journal written at a most hopeful time in Merton's adult life; Merton's writing contained rich, visual imagery, yet the landscape was a means to a discovering a spiritual geography. Hope had its own geography below the natural surface:

> Much more important are the events that take place in the depths of a monk's soul. These usually keep pace with exterior events of one kind or another. [Yet] they have a free development of their own that may or may not flow quietly with the calm current of feasts and seasons.[25]

Thomas Merton learned to hope as he journeyed through the "feasts and seasons" of *The Sign of Jonas*. Upon his ordination to priesthood, he arrived at one of

---

[23]   Moltmann, 30.

[24]   *The Sign of Jonas*, 6.

[25]   *Ibid.*, 8.

the many points of discovery concerning hope and its relationship to love: "To love God is everything. And love is enough. Nothing else is of any value except in so far as it is transformed and elevated by the charity of Christ. But the smallest thing, touched by charity, is immediately transfigured and becomes sublime."[26] Julian, too, understood hope as that virtue which leads to love:

> And from the time that it was shewed, I desired oftentimes to know what was our Lord's meaning in it. And fifteen years after, and more, I was answered in ghostly understanding. 'What wouldst thou know thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well. Love was his meaning. Who sheweth it thee? Love. Wherefore sheweth he it thee? For Love. Hold thee therein. Thou shalt know more in the same, but thou shalt never know other therein, without end.'[27]

Merton's belief in hope being found at the center of the mystery of creation was summarized in *No Man is an Island*:

> Upon our hope, therefore, depends the liberty of the whole universe. . . the beasts and the trees will one day share with us a new creation and we will see them as God sees them and know that they are very good . . . the goodness of creation enters into the framework of holy hope.[28]

This statement echoed Julian's statement made some six hundred years earlier about a God longed-for in hope. God showed Julian the hazelnut which she held in the palm of her hand:

---

[26]   *Ibid.*, 182.

[27]   *Showings*, 209.

[28]   *No Man is an Island*, 19.

Also in this he shewed a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, which seemed to lie in the palm of my hand; and it was as round as any ball. I looked upon it with the eye of my understanding, and thought, "What may this be?" I was answered in a general way thus: "It is all that is made." I wondered how long it could last; for it seemed as though it might suddenly fade away to nothing, it was so small. And I was answered in my understanding: "It last, and ever shall last; for God loveth it. And even so hath everything being -- by the love of God.[29]

Merton's images of God were primarily male; this is not surprising. God's masculine qualities were a safe haven. He reflected on his infant baptism: "My baptism at Prades was almost certainly father's idea, because he had grown up with a deep and well-developed faith, according to the doctrines of the Church of England."[30] There is justification, too, for his God's being a masculine deity. He had more confidence in Owen's power of decision-making: "My father came to the Pyrenees because of a dream of his own: more single, more concrete and more practical than mother's haunting ideals of perfection."[31] Merton evaluated his parents on their not choosing any organized religious practices for their sons. The insight into this "absence" centered on his mother:

It seems strange that Father and Mother, who were concerned almost to the point of scrupulosity about keeping the minds of their sons uncontaminated by error and mediocrity and ugliness and sham, had not bothered to give us any formal religious training. The only

---

[29]   *Showings*, 53.

[30]   *Ibid.*

[31]   *Ibid.*

explanation I have is the guess that mother must have had strong views on the subject.[32]

Merton found praise for Julian's ability to theologize on the maternity of God. In *Mystics and Zen Masters*, he wrote:

Lady Julian is the greatest of the English mystics . . . she is one of the greatest English theologians . . .the theology of Julian is a theology of the all-embracing totality and fullness of the divine love. . . she is not afraid to speak, with an utterly disarming simplicity, of "Jesus our Mother."[33]

Julian's opening remarks in the final chapter of the long text of *Showings*, chapter eighty-six, was "This book is begun by God's gift and his grace; but it is not yet performed, as I see it."[34] Colledge and Walsh note that this first paragraph of the final chapter contained Julian's call to other contemplatives to journey in hope, described as a

continuous life-long expression of a Christian's relationship with all the aspects of the person of Christ: at the heart of the Trinitarian mystery, as revealing the Father to men, as sending, with the Father, his own Spirit on the mission of mercy and grace, as one with mankind in the various revealed facets of the Hypostatic union. This expression is found in contemplative unitive prayer -- .[35]

Reading Julian could have been one factor which clarified Merton's questions about sharing his concerns for the future of the world with the world. In 1961, Merton "threw his hat in the ring" on the many debates

---

[32]   *The Seven Storey Mountain*, 9.

[33]   *Mystics and Zen Masters*, 140-42.

[34]   *Showings*, 208.

[35]   *A Book of Showings*, 731 n. 2.

taking place about the morality of and justification of war in the nuclear age. Articles such as "The Root of War" and "Auschwitz," a poem, appeared in *The Catholic Worker*.[36] Questions of obedience and silence constantly haunted him, concerning the issues of peace and war from 1961 until his death in 1968. At the same time, Merton was reading about Julian. In a letter written in December, 1961, or January, 1962, Merton spoke of Julian of Norwich to Clare Booth Luce of New York:

> Have you ever read the English mystic Julian (sometimes wrongly called Juliana) of Norwich? . . . She is a mighty theologian in all her simplicity and love. Though "all manner of things shall be well," we cannot hope but be aware, on the threshold of 1962, that we have enormous responsibilities and tasks of which we are perhaps no longer capable.[37]

Merton explained the historical context for this letter in the next paragraph: "Our weapons dictate what we are to do. They force us into awful corners. They give us our living, they sustain our economy, they bolster up our politicians, they sell our mass media, in short, we live by them."[38] Merton's turning to Julian at this time was perhaps due to his knowledge that for "all to be well," American society and Catholicism were in need of a "mighty theologian" like Julian. The fact that Merton referred so confidently to Julian indicates he already has some familiarity with *Showings*. In December, 1962, in a letter to Jacques Maritain, praising his deceased wife's, Raisa's, *Journals*, Merton wrote: "Especially she reminds me of that mystic that I love above all others, Julian of

---

[36] William Shannon, *Silent Lamp* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 192.

[37] Thomas Merton, *Witness to Freedom*, William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar, 1994), 26.

[38] *Ibid.*

Norwich . . . She has the same tone, the same candor."[39] Merton refers to Raisa's *Journal* as a "book full of windows."[40] Merton found hope in a book written during a hot period in America's cold war and found similarities between its author and Julian of Norwich. Holy women, hope, and wisdom were the signatures of Thomas Merton's search for peace in the absence of peace. Julian's teachings calmed his longings and set his sights on the nature of true peace and real love.

---

[39] Thomas Merton, "To Jacques Maritain," *The Courage for Truth: The Letters of Thomas Merton to Writers*, Christine M. Bochen, (December 18, 1962; New York: Harcourt, 1993), 33.

[40] *Ibid.*

Thomas Aquinas and the Debate over Introspection

Richard T. Lambert

Introspection as a method of discovering truth about human beings has been a controversial practice and concept since its inception (which some have connected to the Egyptian Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus,[1] and others to the Christian Platonist Saint Augustine.)[2] Classic modern psychology has been divided on it, as was (to a lesser extent and for different reasons) medieval philosophy. The objective of this paper is to assess the place that introspection as a topic and tool had in the medieval philosopher Thomas Aquinas. The Angelic Doctor has had many modern followers who have inevitably been affected by post-medieval thinkers, especially Rene Descartes; and Descartes was sympathetic to introspection as a philosophical program.

I shall first present the spectrum of views on introspection in relatively recent psychology and philosophy; then I shall discuss the depth and manner of Aquinas's commitment to introspection; and I will conclude by educing what I see as some connections that Thomas's treatment of introspection has to the general character of his thought, and to contemporary philosophizing.

Modern views on introspection

Many of the founders of modern psychology considered the immediate awareness of our own mental states to be among the necessary data for psychological analysis. Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) touted the method of "introspection," which he interpreted as scientifically

---

[1] D. B. Klein, *A History of Scientific Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 139-140.

[2] William Lyons, *The Disappearance of Introspection* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), p. 1-2.

controlled reporting of immediate data of consciousness, in his psychological "laboratory" (Lyons, *op. cit.*, p.4-6). Franz Brentano (1838-1917) was skeptical of purposeful inspection of mental states, but considered the validity of immediate subjective awareness to be self evident.[3] William James (1842-1910) supported an actively introspectionist approach to psychology: "All people unhesitatingly believe that they feel themselves thinking and that they distinguish the mental state as an inward activity or passion, from all the objects with which it may cognitively deal. I regard this belief as the most fundamental of all the postulates of Psychology, and shall discard all curious inquiries about its certainty as too metaphysical."[4] Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) encouraged "introspective" self analysis, as long as the practitioners were trained in general psychoanalytic method and could practice detached "self observation" instead of distortive "reflection."[5] Freud may be said to have regarded self knowledge as the goal of psychoanalysis, wherein the patients uncover repressed experiences and feelings and discover the real determinants of their personalities.[6]

---

[3] Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, 2nd ed., V. I (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), p. 38-39.

[4] *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Dover, 1950), c. VII, p. 185; Lyons, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[5] *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon, 1955), II, p. 134; *A General Introduction to Psycho-analysis*, trans. Joan Liviere (New York: Liveright, 1935), p. 21.

[6] Stuart Hampshire, *Thought and Action*, new ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1983), p. 132, 178-179; Leslie Stevenson, *Seven Theories of Human Nature*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University, 1987), p. 80; for another view, see D. W. Hamlyn, *Perception, Learning, and the Self: Essays in the Philosophy of Psychology*

More recent thought within and about psychology has generally rejected any suggestion of introspection and in the process has left self knowledge in limbo. Behaviorism has demanded public and controllable methods of psychological observation and so rejects private introspection and the fiction of the self.[7] Later phenomenologists repudiated Edmund Husserl's turn to an idealistic constitutive ego. Max Scheler (1874-1928) exposed the "idols of self knowledge" which lead to illusion in claims about inner experience (Spiegelberg, *op. cit.*, V. I, p. 243-244). Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) dramatized the problematic of an outer-directed consciousness's awareness of itself as a type of object, although he found a reflexive consciousness with the self as its subject to be unobjectionable.[8]   And Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) battled against the traditional dualism which had separated the ego from its body and from natural engagement with the world, and he denied that self consciousness (especially in the ineffable form of the bodily sense of life) could be consciously articulated like an ordinary object.[9]   While representatives of the British tradition earlier in this century, like C. D. Broad

(London: Routledge, 1983), p. 253-255.

[7]   B. F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), c. XVII-XVIII.

[8]   *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness*, trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1957), p. 40-41.

[9]   *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Humanities, 1962), p. 404, 426. Merleau-Ponty gives an excellent account of many of his reasons for rejecting Husserl's idealistic brand of phenomenology in "What is phenomenology?," trans. John F. Bannan, *Cross Currents*, 6 (1956), 59-70.

and Bertrand Russell, supported introspection,[10] much of analytic philosophy has either, like Ludwig Wittgenstein, indicated paradox in the claim of self reflective activity,[11] or, like Gilbert Ryle, reduced it to dispositions for public behavior.[12] Current philosophy seems more willing to accept the meaningfulness of reference to our own mental states, however; examples are recent positions taken by such figures as Donald Davidson, Gerald Myers, and Tyler Burge.[13]

Saint Thomas and Introspection

The main concern of this paper is whether Thomas Aquinas may be said to have believed in, or used, introspection, especially in the practice of "psychology" (that is, the "science of the soul").

At one time in the not too distant past, many Thomistic commentators, Robert Brennan for example, presumed that introspection was Aquinas's typical, and perhaps even exclusive, source of information when

[10]   C. D. Broad, *The Mind and its Place in Nature* (London: Routledge, 1925), c. VI; Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Mind* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1929), c. VI.

[11]   Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), #412-418.

[12]   Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949), c. VI.

[13]   Gerald E. Myers, "Introspection and self-knowledge," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 23 (1986), 199-207; Donald Davidson, "Knowing one's own mind," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 60 (1987), 441-458; Tyler Burge, "Individualism and self-knowledge," *Journal of Philosophy*, 85 (1988), 649-663.

analyzing the soul and its activities.[14]   Others, such as Patrick Coffey, saw introspection as one source of psychological knowledge, with sense perception being the other.[15]   A specific instance of a Thomist assuming the validity of an introspective method was when Michael Stock, in a study of sense consciousness, assumed that one would answer the question, "Did you remember to speak to X?" by reporting a "sensible act of recollection" which one performed.[16]   Little or no consideration was given by these authors to the problems which, as we have seen, both philosophers and psychologists have raised regarding this process. I shall summarize the range of these critical charges as including the following: (1) The very fact that mental acts are supposed to be the <u>objects</u> of introspection would lose for introspection any advantage of immediate subjective access to them, which is supposed to be introspectionism's strength. (2) If introspection really were as radically individual and private as it is portrayed to be, it would be quite unreliable as a source of information and knowledge. And some have gone as far as to say that (3) the "sphere of the

---

[14]   For example, Robert E. Brennan, *General Psychology: An Interpretation of the Science of Mind Based on Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 7-10. It is doubtful that Thomist "introspectionists" realized the debt they owed to Descartes in their interpretation of Thomas, or how close they had brought Aquinas to the Franciscan ideology of the later thirteenth century.

[15]   Joseph Bobik, *Aquinas on Being and Essence: A Translation and Interpretation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1965), p. 227, 230; Patrick Coffee, *Epistemology* (London: Longmans, Green, 1917), v. II, p. 1-2.

[16]   "Sense consciousness according to St. Thomas," *Thomist*, 21 (1958), 453.

---

mental" which introspection is claimed to observe is conceptually problematic, if not a downright myth.[17]

Perhaps with some of these concerns in mind, but primarily out of a sense for St. Thomas's levels of discourse and cultural context, Mark Jordan has recently discounted the place of introspection in Aquinas's methodology.[18]   Jordan claims that the only method that Aquinas used, and could have used, for psychology was that of external observation and third person account; introspection can at most be a negative check against philosophical absurdities (e.g., the denial that thinking occurs), and cannot provide any evidence upon which positive theory can be constructed.[19]

Jordan's claim is in a very general way correct, concerning the way in which Aquinas's typical presentations in "psychology" are phrased. Unlike late thirteenth century Franciscan "interiorists" like John Duns Scotus, Peter Olivi, and Vital du Four,[20]   Thomas

---

[17]   See the discussion of introspection in Gerald E. Myers, *Self: An Introduction to Philosophical Psychology* (New York: Pegasus, 1969), c. 9. Lyons, *op. cit.*, c. 1-2, presents historical versions of most of these objections.

[18]   Mark Jordan, *Ordering Wisdom: The Hierarchy of Philosophical Discourses in Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1986), p. 143-147.

[19]   Jordan's position is supported by the remark of J. Wébert, "Reflexio': étude sur les opérations réflexives dans la psychologie de saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Mélanges Madonnet*, I (*Bibliothèque thomiste*, v. 13), 319, that perception of one's own soul is too "indeterminate" to serve as a basis for science.

[20]   See, for instance, John Duns Scotus, *Opus Oxoniense*, IV, d. 43, q. 2, n. 11; Vital du Four, F. Délorme, "Le Cardinal Vital du Four, Huit questions disputées sur le problème de la connaissance," in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 2 (1927), q. 4, p.

almost never uses his own experience of himself as a datum for a claim about human knowledge or affection (or for any other type of claim, for that matter). Aquinas does occasionally cite common human experience as proof, or at least as confirmation, of some psychological claim; and sometimes these appeals mention what people will presumably discover if they look "inside" themselves. For instance, his major article on knowledge of the soul in the *Disputed Question on Truth* (De Veritate), q. 10, a. 8, announces that "each person can have a twofold knowledge of the soul" (...de anima duplex cognitio haberi potest ab unoquoque), as if a single individual will know her or his own soul and then perhaps using this experiential knowledge as a basis) go on to the general essence of the soul. But the frequency of this type of reference in Aquinas's writings pales in comparison to the numbers of his (1) general factual observations about human behavior, which presumably could be confirmed by all people about themselves and about others, and (2) purely conceptual analyses, as of the notions of "faculty" and "object."   And the other major treatments of knowledge of the soul do not use the De Veritate's form of reference. *Summa Theologiae* (*S. T.*), q. 87, a. 1 begins by describing experience of the soul in a personal manner: "Socrates or Plato perceives that he has an intellectual soul;" but it then becomes impersonal regarding knowledge of the soul's essence: "...we consider the nature of the human mind."[21]   And *Summa Contra Gentiles* (*C.G.*), III, 46 speaks impersonally virtually throughout, and makes a point of contrasting what an

---

235.

[21]   *S. T.*, I, q. 87, a. 1, c.: "Uno quidem modo, particularieter, secundum quod Socrates vel Plato percipit se habere animam intellectivam, ex hoc quod percipit se intelligere. Alio modo, in universali, secundum quod naturam humanae mentis ex actu intellectus consideramus."

individual soul can perceive of its own existence against what it can understand of the soul's nature. The place of introspection in the landscape of Aquinas's argumentation is thus not prominent; so much for the unreflective assumption that inward inspection was Aquinas's standard operating procedure for psychology.

Confirmatory to this general tendency in Thomas's texts is the theoretical point that the soul which an individual student of psychology might use as a "specimen" does not have to be his or her own. It could be the soul of some other person, or the souls of a number of people, or even an imaginary soul (as in a thought experiment). While the individual's own soul seems like the most natural candidate because of its accessibility, an excessive reliance on one's own soul, without comparison to the cases of others, runs the severe risk of narrowness and distortion. An observation of the vital activities of (a representative group of) others has the added advantage of avoiding self interest in making psychological claims.

Yet it should not be thought, as apparently Mark Jordan does (*op. cit.*, p.144-145), that Aquinas intentionally refrained from introspection or sought systematically to eliminate or reduce its occurrence in his psychological methodology. He had no theoretical motive for doing so, for the brand of introspection against which philosophical objections like the three mentioned previously are generally mounted incorporates a strong epistemological dualism which would have been foreign to Thomas's mentality.   The first objection (that introspection objectifies and thus loses immediate access to one's mental acts) would be muted by the fact that even the intentional objectification of mental acts would not remove the directness of our knowledge of them. That mental acts become "objects" of knowledge does not mean that they are now external objects, but simply that they are entities knowable by a cognitive faculty; and they are directly knowable, as the primary objects and concern of self-reflection (even if; as Aquinas insists, they are

knowable only as related to, and in the midst of; external objects).   He could easily have rebutted the second objection (which denied the value of the introspective process because of its radical privacy) from within his own philosophy, by denying that introspection is purely subjective, as witness the mutually confirming results of individual "self-awarenesses." The final "objection," which denies mentality itself; may be summarily dismissed as contradicting, of all things, "common human experience," and the very intelligence which must be used to perform such a denial.[22]

Besides these answers to objections, there are good positive theoretical reasons for including first-person introspection as part (even if a minor part) of one's arsenal in psychological argument.   The experience of one's own soul is necessary to psychology, in the sense that it demonstrates irrefutably the existence of a soul, and provides a consistent referent, and controlling instance, for one's general claims about the human soul. It is also a necessary motivator for carrying on psychology, because a natural interest that we have in this study is that it concerns us, and, there is no recognition of us without the affirmation that I am part of us.   In theory, a purely objective psychology, loosed from any ties to oneself (or any other individual), could be launched, and could be carried out as if a nonhuman class like snails or cosmic dust were being investigated. But the practical justification for such an approach might

---

[22]   *De Unitate Intellectus*, c. 3, n. 216: "Virtus auten huius demonstrationis et insolubilitas apparet, quia quicumbque ab hac via divertere voluerint, necesse habent inconveniens dicere. Manifestum est enim quod hic homo singularis intelligit: numquam enim de intellectu quaereremus nisi intelligeremus; nec cum quaerimus de intellectu, de alio principio quaerimus quam de eo quo nos intelligimus."

be hard to discover, as Michael Polanyi has pointed out;[23] indeed, the motives for an exaggerated and uncaring impersonality on a topic of such great moment to ourselves might actually turn out to be cruel, and thus "human, all too human," after all.

It can be shown textually that St. Thomas actually did make introspective references, and his appeal to introspection took several forms.   Some of these references simply point to or assume our acquaintance with basic facts about ourselves, which we know about through common reflective awareness.   One such fact would be our sensations: "From the fact that the senses report as they are affected, it follows that we are not deceived in the judgment by which we judge that we are sensing something."[24]   Another fact we know about ourselves is the actions of our interior faculties: "Those things which are in the soul by their essence are known by an experimental knowledge, insofar as a person experiences his interior principles through his acts; thus, by willing we perceive the will, and we perceive life in our operations of life."[25]   And we know that our intellects understand: "Man himself is intelligent, for we would not

---

[23]   See the criticism of "value free" psychology in Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-critical Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964). p. 3.

[24]   *S. T.*, I, q. 17, a. 2, ad 1: "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod sensum affici, est ipsum eius sentire. Unde per hoc quod sensus ita nunciant sicut afficiuntur, sequitur quod non decipiamur in iudicio quo iudicamus nos sentire aliquid."

[25]   *S. T.*, I-II, q. 112, a. 5, ad 1: "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod illa quae sunt per essentiam sui in anima, cognoscuntur experimentali cognitione, inquantum homo experitur per actus principia intrinseca: sicut voluntatem percipimus volendo, et vitam in operibus vitae."

speak of intellect unless through this fact, that <u>we perceive that we understand.</u>"[26] And finally, an introspective process is mentioned in connection with intellectual abstraction: "For a man abstracts from phantasms, and receives in his mind intelligibles in act; for we would not otherwise come into knowledge of these actions unless <u>we perceived that we understand.</u>"[27] Yet these references are so general and concern such (to Aquinas) incontrovertible matters that they could hardly be regarded as offering evidence for some thesis -- the "thesis" of our conscious life is already obvious. Also, the introspective activities mentioned are not appealed to as evidence for some wider conclusion, but simply described <u>ab extra</u> as occurrences.

Other introspective references seem to play the stronger role of citing evidence for or against some inferred psychological claim. "We know from experience of ourselves" that we form examples in the effort to understand concepts; this helps demonstrate the process of "return to phantasms" or retained images as the

---

[26]   *Quaestio de immortalitate animae*, in Leonard Kennedy, "A new disputed question of St. Thomas Aquinas on the immortality of the soul," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 45 (1978), 217-218; "Constat enim quod ipse homo est intelligens; non enim loqueremur de intellectu nisi per hoc quod percipimus nos intelligere."

[27] *C. G.*, II, 76, n. 1577 (#17): "...homo enim abstrahit a phantasmatibus, et recipit mente intelligibilia in actu; non enim aliter in notitiam harum actionum venissemus nisi eas in nobis experiremur."

normal human mode of idea formation.[28] "We perceive that we abstract universal forms," and this aids in establishing the existence of an agent intellect in each individual soul.[29] "Each one is conscious that it is he himself who understands,"[30] thus demonstrating that the soul is form of the body and a constituent of the whole person. "Anyone can experience in himself' that reason can diminish or increase anger and fear; thus the passions can be said to obey reason."[31]

In summary, St. Thomas seems to assume that introspection is an actual (and therefore possible) process which conveys genuine information. The process is not typical of human cognition, however, which is geared to inspection of external events and behavior, and to rational categorization of; and conclusions about, that behavior. Despite the presumptions of many Thomists, introspection was not, according to Aquinas, a systematic basis for pursuing psychology; but it can confirm claims

---

[28]   *S. T.*, I, q. 84, a. 7, c.: "Secundo, quia hoc quilibet in seipso experiri potest, quod quando aliquis conatur aliquid intelligere, format aliqua phantasmata sibi, per modum exemplorum, in quibus quasi inspiciat quod intelligere studet."

[29]   *S. T.*, I, q. 79, a. 4, c.: "Et hoc experimento cognoscimus, dum percipimus nos abstrahere formas universales a conditionibus particularibus, quod est facere actu intelligibilia"; Disputed Question *De Anima*, a. 5, c.: "utramque autem harum operationum experimur in nobis ipsis. Nam et nos intelligibilia recipimus et abstrahimus ea."

[30]   *S. T.*, I. Q. 76, a. 1, c.: "...experitur enim unusquisque seipsum esse qui intelligit."

[31]   *S. T.*, I. Q. 81, a. 3, c.: "hoc etiam quilibet experiri potest in seipso: applicando enim aliquas universales considerationes, mitigatur ira auto timor aut aliquid huiusmodi, vel etiam instigatur."

about human nature which general observation has, usually, established first.

Implications and Connections

Thus we have seen that, while the concept of introspection excited devotion in some Franciscans, Cartesian-influenced Thomists, early empirical psychologists), Aquinas's naturalistic tendencies ruled out anything more than a secondary function in our knowledge for this process.   But his Aristotelian emphasis on the body and external environment did not extend to a behavioristic-style elimination of introspection as inherently suspect, worthless, or impossible.   Such a reduction would have been impossible in the medieval period anyway, because of (among other things) its religious commitment to knowledge of the soul as the image of God, and the pervading belief in a conscious soul, including its consciousness of itself.   An eliminative methodology would also have been unlikely for Aquinas's balanced intellectual temperament, which found value in, and attempted to synthesize, a multitude of legitimate approaches and sources.

The other side of this balance is that, while Thomas did appeal to the evidence of introspection on occasion, these appeals were moderated and relatively infrequent. While he finds internal evidence valuable, he never appeals just to himself but makes his appeals applicable to everyone; also, he establishes no systematic program of inspecting his own consciousness but makes such appeals only when convenient or necessary. This seems to be much like his approach to logic: while he obviously finds much value in logic and can become absorbed in it when appropriate (as he obviously would in a commentary on one of Aristotle's logical works), Thomas performs argument analysis only when pragmatically necessary and with as much comment as the context

demands.[32]   Another example of his "contextualism" concerns the initial step of metaphysical thinking: although many Thomists, such as Herman Reith and Charles Boyer, have assumed that awareness of our own spirituality constitutes a "proof' which legitimizes the negative metaphysical judgment that not all things are material,"[33] apparently no such proof is actually extant in Thomas's texts.[34]   The expectation of a formal proof in this matter could well involve the taint of a Cartesian-type hypercriterion and penchant for formalized foundationalist systems, which are foreign to Aquinas's thought (although not entirely to medieval thinking); instead, Thomas gives us informal and indirect references to evidence which is presumed to provide sufficient justification for proceeding with metaphysics.

As a general and speculative conclusion, I shall suggest that, at least on our topic of discussion and perhaps somewhat generally, Thomas Aquinas was consistent with four important features that have

---

[32]   This fits in with Aquinas's conception (following Aristotle) of logic as an art or "organ" of the sciences, not itself a substantive science with an independent subject matter (*In Boethium de Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 2); see Robert W. Schmidt, *The Domain of Logic according to Saint Thomas Aquinas* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), p. 25-27.

[33] Herman Reith, *The Metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1958), p. 30; Charles Boyer, "le role de la connaissance de l'âme dans la constitution de la métaphysique," *Doctor Communis*, 1 (1948), 219-224.

[34] John Wippel, "Metaphysics and separatio in Thomas Aquinas," in *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Washington: Catholic University, 1984), p. 89-90 fn.; and Mark Jordan, op. cit., p. 160, confirm this, even to the point of saying that there is no proof of immaterial being, from whatever source, in Aquinas.

gradually evolved in twentieth-century thinking. First, he makes no dalliance with a subjectivization of knowledge; like many of our contemporaries, he insists that, to be legitimate, claims and methods be placed in the public realm of verification and/or discussion. An exclusive reliance on a purely personal introspection, by contrast, would have laid his approach open to all the problems of subjectivism. Second, Thomas avoids both constrictive ideology and philosophical systematization by the simple use of introspective methods, without spelling them out as parts of an explicit, exclusive, and comprehensive conceptual program.   This avoids an elaborate methodology and a concentration on procedural rather than substantive matters. Connected to this is the third similarity to the late twentieth century: Aquinas is not a "foundationalist," in that, while he subscribes to fundamental truths, substantive facts like one's own existence are not among them; regulative principles like that of noncontradiction act as negative checks on error rather than axioms from which all other truths can be deduced.[35] And the last contemporary-sounding feature of Aquinas's approach is that he is a pragmatist, using without apology what he sees as appropriate methods at opportune times for fruitful argumentative results. While he was obviously not a full blown pragmatist (thankfully, since this could well be an oxymoronic combination anyway) and had immovable bedrock commitments, he did somewhat foreshadow pragmatism in his use of multiple conceptual tools to accomplish the jobs of defending the faith and explicating truth.

---

[35]   F. C. Copleston, *Aquinas* (Hammondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1955); Ralph McInerny, "Analogy and foundationalism in Thomas Aquinas," in *Rationality, Religious Belief, and Moral Commitment: New Essays in the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Robert Audi and William J. Wainwright (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1986), p. 282.

Ecocriticism's Middle Ages
(On Genesis 1:28b and Humankind's "Dominion over the Earth")

Gregory B. Stone

The idea of "nature," which had been all but banished from post-structuralist critical discourse, is currently making a return under the banner of what is known as "ecocriticism." Whereas just a few years ago, the claim that "there is no nature" would have been highly uncontroversial in literary critical and philosophical circles, such a reduction of everything natural to the realm of "culture" is beginning to be seen as a potentially pernicious strategy by which rampant humanism, in the guise of self-critique, actually perpetuates and expands its power. If the past three decades have witnessed the merging of scholarship with the interests of various imagined human communities (e.g., feminism, post-colonial criticism, queer theory), there is now a trend toward scholarship that advocates the interests of the natural biosphere.

One emphasis of this emerging ecocriticism concerns the manner in which the understandings of "nature" prevalent in earlier historical periods either differed from or determined our present-day understandings. In various narratives reconstructing the past, contemporary ecologically-oriented scholars frequently summarize what they take to be the medieval view of nature, suggesting that this view played a substantial role is shaping modernity's destructive arrogance with respect to the non-human universe. Ecocritical attitudes toward the Middle Ages are generally hostile: much more often than not, the current ecological crisis is blamed on mentalities that supposedly were formed within the medieval tradition.[1]

For the purposes of this essay, I will focus on a single one of ecocriticism's charges against the Middle Ages: that the medieval Judeo-Christian tradition virtually unanimously asserts that the natural universe and its non-human beings were created to serve human needs. According to this ecocritical narrative, medieval thinkers

taught that man is superior to the rest of nature and that man was commanded by God to use all non-human beings for human ends. All created beings other than man find their ultimate *telos* or *raison d'être* in their utility as instruments for the achievement of human aims.

Several ecocritics locate the source of this supposed Judeo-Christian understanding of nature in Genesis 1:28 (more specifically, in Genesis 1:28b, the latter half of the following verse): "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth'." J. Baird Callicott, describing the prevailing ecocritical view of Genesis, sums up what he calls the "despotic interpretation" of this passage -- "Environ-mentally-oriented critics have claimed that since, according to Genesis, man is created in the image of God and given dominion over and commanded to subdue the earth and all its other creatures, Genesis clearly awards man a God-given right to exploit nature without moral restraint (except insofar as environmental exploitation may adversely affect man himself)."[2]

The classic statement of the ecocritical understanding of the early chapters of Genesis is Lynn White, Jr.'s 1967 article, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." White sees the first book of the Bible as establishing for the Judeo-Christian tradition an inexorably destructive attitude toward nature:

Christianity had inherited from Judaism ... a striking story of creation. By gradual stages a loving and all-powerful God had created light and darkness, the heavenly bodies, the earth and all its plants, animals, birds, and fishes. Finally, God had created Adam and, as an afterthought, Eve to keep man from being lonely. Man named all the animals, thus establishing his dominance over them. *God planned all of this explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in*

the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes [emphasis added] ... Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia's religions...not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends.[3]

According to White, "Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt" for the current ecological crisis, which will continue until we reject the Christian axiom "that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man."[4]

In this essay, I will challenge the axiomatic status of this supposed axiom. That is, I will suggest that White's version of the medieval Judeo-Christian tradition's attitude toward the non-human natural world is in need of substantial revision.[5] I will do so not by denying the mainstream medieval tradition but precisely with the aid of that tradition. In other words, a critique of the idea that the *telos* of all created beings is to serve man can be located not *in spite of* medieval Christian and Jewish understandings of Genesis 1:28b but precisely *within* those understandings.

In fairness, it ought to be noted that White, himself a medievalist of great distinction (whose seminal work on medieval technology is much to be admired) does not think the Middle Ages should be entirely overcome. For White, there is one medieval hero, St. Francis, whom he proposes as the "patron saint of ecology." But Francis, presented as a radical or a revolutionary, functions as the single exception that proves the overwhelming dominance of the rule -- as if Francis is in some basic way not really medieval.

Published in the same year as White's influential essay, Roderick Nash's similarly influential *Wilderness and the American Mind* also presents the medieval understanding Genesis 1:28b as the root cause of an ecologically malignant mentality.

Again Francis is singled out, this time explicitly and literally, as exceptional in an era that otherwise could

only take an entirely anthropocentric position with regard to nature:

Among medieval Christians St. Francis of Assisi is the exception that proves the rule. He stood alone in a posture of humility and respect before the natural world. Assuming that birds, wolves, and other wild creatures had souls, St. Francis preached to them as to equals. This challenge to the idea of man as above, rather than of, the natural world might have altered the prevailing conception of wilderness. But the Church stamped St. Francis's beliefs as heretical. Christianity had too much at stake in the notion that God set man apart from and gave him dominance over the rest of nature (Genesis 1:28) to surrender it easily.[6]

White's and Nash's narrative concerning medieval attitudes toward nature is picked up time and again in later ecocritical writings. Max Oelschlaeger's 1991 *The Idea of Wilderness* provides a good example:

The views of Albert the Great..., a dominant intellectual figure and prolific writer, epitomize the medieval outlook on wild nature: God created nature to serve human needs. The medieval mind had no misgivings about Genesis I, for humankind was intended to have dominion over all creation.[7]

Oelschlaeger also repeats the by-now conventional trope that celebrates Francis as a solitary alternative: "Viewed from a contemporary standpoint, Francis abandoned the abiding Judeo-Christian presupposition of human superiority and replaced the anthropocentric outlook of the Bible with what is analogous in part to a biocentric perspective...Francis refused to see the natural world as organized around and serving human interests only."[8]

What I am calling "Ecocriticism's Middle Ages" is this basic narrative repeated again and again in some of the most celebrated works of the emerging ecocritical canon.[9]

According to this narrative, virtually all medieval thinkers endorsed a reading of Genesis 1:28b that undergirds human arrogance with respect to nature, insisting that all other beings (indeed the very physical universe itself) were created to serve man's purposes.

I do not contend that this ecocritical narrative is entirely wrong. There is, in fact, much that can be said in support of its accuracy. Some Church Fathers unambiguously asserted that all non-human beings were created expressly for human purposes. In the fourth century, Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, asserted that "human nature...was made to rule the rest" of nature and that "the animals were made because of man."[10] Moreover, it is true that some medieval Christians used Genesis 1:28b to encourage humanity's unlimited exercise of technological mastery over and alteration of the natural world. Didymus the Blind (fourth century) understood humanity's "dominion over the earth" quite literally:

> "And master of" signifies an extensive power, since one cannot say of him who has a limited power that he has dominion. God has made this gift to the human being...in order that land for growing and land for mining, rich in numerous, diverse materials, be under the rule of the human being. Actually, the human being receives bronze, iron, silver, gold, and many other metals from the ground; it is also rendered to him so that he can feed and clothe himself. So great is the dominion the human being has received over the land that he transforms it technologically -- when he changes it into glass, pottery, and other similar things. That is in effect what it means for the human being to rule "the whole earth."[11]

But as shall become clear later in this essay, this literal reading of Genesis 1:28b is not the norm. Medieval exegetes most frequently understood "dominion" as an

allegory whose significance had little or nothing to do with nature.

It is undeniable that White, in formulating the basic ecocritical narrative of the medieval attitude toward nature, is describing a demonstrably Christian attitude. What is in question is whether this attitude is appropriately described as "medieval." A late twentieth-century fundamentalist Christian tells us matter-of-factly that in Genesis 1:28b "God also gives man a job to do: fulfill God's intention of man's exercise of dominion over the earth."[12] Does such an attitude really represent the lingering on of an older, medieval attitude toward nature, as White would suggest? Or is it rather a relative novelty, an essentially modern attitude? Did medievals really think that exercising dominion over the earth was their *imperative task*? Or is this thought possible only after modern capitalism and technology has made such domination both desirable (for some, namely those who possess capital) and to some degree achievable? White's endeavor is to trace the "historical roots" of our ecological crisis. Yet he fails to consider that modernity has been "cut" from its medieval roots, in such a manner that modern Christian readings of Genesis 1:28b are by and large not in accord with medieval ones. Rather than our current crisis being the result of the survival of ancient and medieval understandings of nature, it may well be a result of our having forgotten those understandings.

Perhaps the most significant flaw in the ecocritical narrative as recounted by White and others is that it assumes that Genesis 1:28b could have appeared to medievals (as it certainly does to moderns) as an etiological verse (a verse meant to explain the past origin of a current state of affairs). The reading of Genesis 1:28b attributed to medieval readers by modern ecocritics assumes that humans *do in fact* have the power to exercise dominion over nature; and this reading assumes that the point of the verse is to recount the origin of and to justify our exercising this *currently held* power to master nature. Leaving out any mention of the Fall --

arguably the most important event in the story -- White fails to acknowledge that for a medieval reader, Genesis 1:28b does not describe the relation between humans and nature as it *really now is* but describes that relation as it *would be* in some other, prelapsarian or utopian world.

Indeed most medieval commentators regard Genesis 1:28b as telling not of the dominion over the earth that we currently do have but rather of the dominion that we might have had; but for the Fall and the subsequent expulsion from Eden. In other words, *medievals were not deluded into believing that they held mastery over nature.* This is clear in the early Christian *Epistle of Barnabas* (written around 100 AD), whose author indicates that human dominion over the earth and its creatures is not a reality *in this present world*; rather, it is a promise made to those humans who, through faith in Christ, may be perfected in the fullness of time. In achieving this future perfection, the faithful will regain a dominion that was lost as a consequence of the Fall:

> But as it was already said above: "And they shall increase, and multiply, and rule over the fish." Who, then, is presently able to rule over beasts or fish or birds of heaven? For we ought to understand that "to rule" implies that one is in control; so that he who gives the orders exercises dominion. *If, then, this is not the present situation,* he has told us when it will be -- when we ourselves have been perfected as heirs of the Lord's covenant.[13]

Barnabas assumes that his readers will accept as obvious that here-and-now, in the current state of affairs, we are not at all in control of nature. Not taking Genesis 1:28b's mention of dominion over the earth as a description of the present, he therefore does not attribute to the verse an etiological import. If medieval readers did in fact find an ecological message in the early chapters of Genesis, that message was most likely not to have been that humans *do* or *ought to* master nature but rather that humans cannot (since the Fall) master nature.

This notion that humans do not now have the capacity to exercise dominion over the earth remains a constant of medieval exegesis throughout the Middle Ages. As Jeremy Cohen says, summing up much of medieval Christian commentary concerning the issue of "dominion over the earth" in Genesis 1:28b: "When Adam and Eve ate from the tree and fell from paradise, they forfeited much of the dominion that once was theirs. Participating in the sinfulness of the first parents and inheriting their punishment, the descendants of Adam and Eve no longer enjoy the power that God intended his human creatures to have, a power that God will restore only with the final redemption."[14]

Given that the final redemption is also the end of time, "dominion over the earth" will never be a temporal, literal reality. Those humans to whom the power of dominion will be restored will thereafter no longer inhabit the earth, the "dominion" that they will enjoy over the earth and its creatures will be a metaphorical and not an actual one. This "dominion over the earth" is generally understood allegorically as indicating that those humans whose souls are saved at the end of time will enjoy a fate --eternal life of the spirit -- superior to that of purely material and ultimately mortal beings. In temporal human history following the Fall, humans *never have had and never will have (literal) dominion over the earth.* And even if they did once have dominion, it was never meant to be unlimited: the ban placed by God on our appropriation of the fruit of the tree of knowledge was, as Cohen points out, taken to signify that there are ethical limits to our exploitation of the natural world.[15]

One might object to my point here by saying that medievals nonetheless imagined mastery over nature as a goal or ideal that a perfected or redeemed humankind would enjoy. Perhaps (one might surmise) medievals *would have* endorsed every effort to dominate the earth and its creatures, had they thought such domination possible.[16] But the prevailing emphasis of medieval Christianity seems to be on getting Christians

accustomed to the idea that humans do not master nature and never will, not on urging them to try to master it. As the ecocritic Harold Fromm suggests, Christianity's counsel that humans turn away from "the world" did not stem so much from a belief that the world was "evil" as from an implicit *recognition* that humans could never be victorious in a contest with nature:

> The idealized emphasis on "rational" in the concept of man as the rational animal which characterized Platonic-Christian thought for two millennia had generally been the product of man's sense of his own physical weakness, his knowledge that Nature could not be tamed or bent to his own will. In lieu of the ability to mold Nature to serve his own ends, man had chosen to extol and mythify that side of his being that seemed to transcend Nature by inhabiting universes of thought that Nature could not naysay... An approximation to spiritual perfection, however difficult, was a more realistic goal than that of bodily self-sufficiency or domination over Nature.[17]

Christianity, insofar as it renounced the message of immanence originally preached by Christ ("The Kingdom of God is at Hand") and began to foster a message of transcendence, is grounded on the assumption that humans never master nature. Christianity indeed depends upon the categorical denial of a literal reading of Genesis 1:28b. If Christianity has faded away as a viable worldview this is, as Fromm says, because now that we think that we can master nature we no longer need a message of transcendence as compensation for our lack of dominion over the earth.

I will now turn to an analysis of the question of humanity's "dominion over nature" as this question is treated by some of the most authoritative figures in the mainstream medieval Judeo-Christian tradition-- Augustine, Aquinas, and Maimonides.

In the *Confessions*, Saint Augustine considers Genesis 1:28b in great detail. Understanding "dominion" as a synonym for the act of passing judgment, Augustine reads Genesis 1:28b as a directive concerning the proper boundaries of Christian judgment. The gist of his argument is that Christians ought not have "dominion" (i.e., ought not pass judgment) on anything or anyone that is outside their own Christian community. Church leaders have "dominion" over (the right to pass judgment concerning) the administration of church sacraments and, to some extent, over the members of their Church, but not over anything or anyone else; conversely, the members of a Church may have, to some extent, "dominion" over (the right to pass judgment concerning) the leaders of their Church. For Augustine, Genesis 1:28b has nothing to do with humankind's relation to non-human nature and everything to do with some humans' relations with other humans.

Augustine's first point in his reading of Genesis 1:28b amounts to an insistence that the Bible does *not* give humans a general dominion over all of nature:

> Likewise man, whom You made to Your image; has not received dominion over the light of heaven, nor over that mysterious heaven itself, nor over day and night, which you called into being before the creation of heaven, nor of the gathering together of the waters which is the sea; but over *the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air and all the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moves upon the earth.*[18]

Even *if* Genesis 1:28b were to have given humans dominion over *any* non-human beings (and, *as we* shall see, Augustine's exegesis ultimately denies this hypothetical), then that dominion *is* specific and limited, not general or absolute. We are perhaps to have dominion over some parts of nature but not over others. Augustine, who is nothing if not a close reader, reminds us that Genesis makes the following distinction: between

some parts of the physical creation over which man apparently has been given dominion (fish, birds, animals, earth, insects) and other parts of the physical creation over which man has no such dominion (e.g., the sea). Man has, Augustine emphasizes, dominion over fish but not over the ocean. Perhaps Augustine recognizes that humans are as a matter of nutritional necessity, constrained to impose themselves on other creatures; yet they are not mandated to "master" the environment--in this case the sea--in which those other creatures dwell. Whatever else this means, it is clear evidence that the lesson of Genesis, for Augustine, cannot possibly be that man has dominion over "all creation" (Oelschlaeger, cited above) nor over "the rest of nature" (Nash, cited above); nor can it be that "no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes" (White, cited above). Since Augustine emphasizes that man has apparently been given dominion over *some elements* of the created universe but not over others, one ought to at least be suspicious of the prevailing ecocritical narrative according to which Genesis teaches man's absolute privilege with respect to all non-human elements of the created universe.

I say "apparently" because in fact the main thrust of Augustine's exegesis of Genesis 1:28b is to *de-literalize* the scriptural account of man's dominion. Augustine reads those limitations set on our dominion over nature as an indication that such dominion is not to be taken literally. The ecological implication of Augustine's interpretation is: man has been given dominion over *no elements* of the created universe, since when scripture *appears* to say that we have dominion over some elements of creation (fish, birds, animals, earth, insects) these very elements do not really signify anything natural but rather are *allegorical signifiers for entirely cultural phenomena.* Following directly after the passage just cited, Augustine interprets those creatures over which we have been given dominion as if they stand for sacraments and/or members of a Christian community. Speaking of

the good leader of such a community (he who has been given "dominion" or the right to pass judgment), Augustine says the following:

> He judges, and approves what he finds good, and blames what he finds evil, whether in the ministration or the sacraments by which those are initiated whom Your mercy has sought out from the midst of many waters; or in that ceremony figured by the Fish raised from the depths which the pious "earth" eats; or in the significations of words, and the voices subjected to the authority of your Book which fly like the fowls of the air under the firmament -- interpreting, expounding, discussing, disputing, praising You and calling upon You, words coming from the mouth and sounding forth that the congregation may answer Amen...The spiritual man judges also by approving what he finds good and blaming what he finds evil in the works and morals of the faithful, in their almsgiving which is symbolized by the fruitful earth.[19]

In Augustine's reading, the "fishes of the sea" signify those people who have been recruited from various locales ("fished" out from "many waters") to become members of a Christian church. The "fish" also signify the Eucharist consumed by a Christian community who are called "the earth." The "birds" ("fowls of the air") stand for human readings and interpretations of scripture. The "earth" signifies both the community of the faithful and acts of charity *performed* by members of this community. Augustine reads Genesis 1:28b as *if every signifier that might be taken as a representation of a non-human being or practice ought really to be taken* as a *signifier representing human beings or human practices.* For him, the verse is not at all about humanity's relation to non-human nature but rather about some humans' relations to other humans. Some humans have been given dominion not over nature, but rather over "the

works and morals of the faithful." Dominion does not at all extend the realm of the Other: humans are not lord over that which is non-human, nor are any humans lord over other humans who are not members of their own community ("Nor does any man though spiritual judge of the troubled citizens of the world. For what has he in his ignorance to do to judge them that are without?"[20]). The ecological thrust of Augustine's exegesis of Genesis 1:28b is the strict delimination of the realm of human dominion. The only valid dominion is that judgment proper to members of a self same community: authorities can judge the practices of their subjects, and subjects can judge the practices of their authorities. For Augustine, the only imperative delivered by Genesis 1:28b is that humans ought to have dominion over their own human institutions.

Augustine is quite strident in telling us not to read this part of Genesis literally. In *On Genesis: Against the Manichees,* he uses the patent falsity or absurdity of Genesis 1:30 ("And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food. And it was so.") as proof that the passage in which Genesis establishes human dominion over the earth is pure allegory. For it is simply not true that every kind of animal is herbivorous. We cannot take the passage literally (or, as Augustine puts it, "carnally") -- as if it presented true facts about nature -- since it is obvious that the passage is factually incorrect:

> *We should also be warned not to understand these matters carnally* from the fact that in Genesis the green plants and fruit-bearing trees were given to every kind of animal and to all the birds and to all the reptiles as food. Yet we see that lions, hawks, kites, and eagles feed only on meat and the killing of other animals. I believe this is also true of some serpents which live in sandy desert areas where there are neither trees nor grass.[21]

Taken as "natural science" (as a description of the "way natural things really are"), this part of Genesis, says Augustine, must be deemed illegitimate. As Augustine points out in On *Christian Doctrine,* some things recorded in Scripture, if taken literally, are manifestly absurd. Such absurdity is, for Augustine, a sure indicator that such passages are allegory. Evidently Augustine finds it absurd to take the notion of humankind's dominion over the earth and its creatures literally. Accordingly, Augustine's incomplete *Literal Interpretation of Genesis* abruptly ends with his gloss of Genesis 1:27. One might playfully speculate that his work halted there at least in part because he was unable to take Genesis 1:28 literally. At any rate, Augustine's effort to read Genesis literally fails to provide the medieval Christian tradition with a literal Augustinian interpretation of Genesis 1:28b. This Augustinian insistence that Genesis 1:28b is not about nature but about culture, not about humanity's relation to non-human nature but about some humans' relations to other humans, clearly survived as the dominant interpretation throughout the Middle Ages. The thirteenth century Oxford bishop and theologian Robert Grosseteste, for instance, repeats Augustine's claim that the import of the passage is not its contribution to a scientific knowledge of the material world: "The legislator [Moses] did not seek to instruct us in the nature of marine creatures as much as in the regulation of the Church and in matters of behavior."[22] For Grosseteste, the lesson of Genesis 1:28b concerns ethics (moral philosophy), not physics (natural philosophy). It tells some humans something about how they ought to comport themselves with respect to themselves; it does not tell humanity anything about how humans ought to comport themselves with respect to non-human beings.

The ecocritical narrative relies on the assumption that medievals read scripture literally. But throughout the Middle Ages, passages such as Genesis 1:28 -- which was patently absurd since it was manifest that humans did not master nature -- were taken as allegories. The

issue is nicely summed up by Jeremy Cohen in his book on the medieval Jewish and Christian reception of Genesis 1:28: "When Christian writers did elaborate on the dominion granted humans in Genesis 1:28...rarely, if ever, did they perceive the primordial blessing as a commandment to conquer and subdue the forces of the physical world... Christian exegetes...[read] it as an allegory of the soul or of Christ and his church....Among both rabbis and churchmen, the nature that was of doctrinal concern was not that of the physical environment---but that of the human being."[23]

There is no doubt that Genesis 1:28b has frequently been invoked as justification for human projects of altering and appropriating the physical environment (as Nash shows, the verse was used by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Americans as part of an exhortation to convert the "wilderness" of the frontier lands into "civilized" farms and towns[24]). What is in doubt is whether *medievals* used the verse in such manner, and hence whether it is legitimate to suggest, as White and so many ecocritics do, that there are substantial medieval "roots" to our current ecological crisis.

The great philosopher and theologian Meister Eckhart, who flourished around the turn of the fourteenth century, similarly reads Genesis 1:28b in an allegorical manner. For Eckhart, the verse teaches human leaders that they ought, above all, be rational in their exercise of dominion: "one who cannot rule over his own passions should not rule over others."[25] Repeating an allegorical reading that was commonplace since at least the early third century when it was formulated by Origin, Eckhart regards the "beasts" that human leaders ought to subdue not as real animals but as their own human passions. Then, as if to compensate for having had to denigrate fish in order to produce this gloss (Eckhart *says* that reason is superior to passion as humans are superior to fish), he turns to drawing a lesson in "animal rights" from the following verse, Genesis 1:29 ("See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the

face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food"). Eckhart insists that this verse be read as an imperative to vegetarianism: "Note how little food is ordained for the human species: there is no mandate for humans to use meat -- which is why the teacher [Vincent of Beauvais] says that we do not read of Christ having eaten any meat except the Paschal lamb."[26] Eckhart continues by citing various authorities -- Ovid, Boethius, Seneca -- who agree that humans were not meant to be carnivorous. Clearly, Eckhart's intent is to disarm the apparent imperative of Genesis 1:28b (it being potentially destructive to animals) by using Genesis 1:29 to undermine a literal reading of Genesis 1:28b. This insistence on a vegetarian Christ, coming right from the center of the medieval tradition (Eckhart was a philosophy professor at the University of Paris when he wrote these words), is evidence that the lesson of Genesis 1:28b for medieval Christians, is not primarily one of human "dominance over" the animals (White's phrase, cited above).

Thomas Aquinas plays an important role in the ecocritical narrative, since he is frequently taken to be the villain responsible, more than anyone else, for the idea that the universe was created solely to suit human purposes. Paul Shepard, for whom "medieval Christianity...portrayed humans as the central fact in the universe," claims that the current prevailing philosophy of anti-nature and human omniscience" is an attitude "whose modern form was shaped when Aquinas reconciled Aristotelian homocentrism with Judeo-Christian dogma...For such a philosophy, nothing in nature has inherent merit. As one professor recently put it, "The only reason anything is done on this earth is for people."[27] George Sessions associates Aquinas with what he calls "The ecologically destructive 'anthropocentric detour'" (implying that Aquinas is, in large part, responsible for sending us down the "wrong road"): "In the medieval Christian synthesis of Saint Thomas Aquinas...Aristotle's anthropocentric cosmology was quite

compatible with Judeo-Christian anthropocentrism....In summarizing the medieval culmination of Greek and Christian thought, philosopher Kurt Baier remarked: "The medieval Christian world picture assigned to man a highly significant, indeed the central part in the grand scheme of things. The universe was made for the express purpose of providing a stage on which to enact a drama starring Man in the title role."[28]   And Roderick Nash similarly suggests that Aquinas complacently celebrated man as the ultimate *telos* of creation: "Scholastic logic held that as man was made to serve God, so the world was made for the benefit of man."[29]

This ecocritical image of Aquinas can only be constructed by neglecting a great deal of what Aquinas actually wrote concerning the purposes for which the universe was made. Far from claiming that the universe was made for humankind, Aquinas consistently endorses what might be called an "agnostic" position: we cannot know why the universe is as it is, other than to know that God willed it that way. God's actions, says Aquinas, were not determined "by some ultimate goal." Aquinas, in effect, denies that things were created such as they are that they might be useful to man. Rather, they were created in such manner simply because it was God's will to do so:

> lf you want to know why the heavens are so big and not bigger, the only answer is that he who made it wanted it that size. And that, according to Moses Maimonides, is why scripture urges us to look at the stars, since their order above all shows how everything is subject to the will and providence of the creator. There is no answer to the question why this star is that far from that star -- or any other such question about the order of the heavens -- except that God planned it so in his wisdom.[30]

What is important about the "order" of the stars is nothing other than their very *lack* of order.[31] Looking at the stars, humans do not see a perfect and orderly distribution of things. Instead they see an apparently haphazard distribution that teaches them that they cannot fathom God's intent. Certainly the answer to the question, "Why is the cosmos such?" is *not* "Because this is the order that most perfectly suits human needs." Moreover, Aquinas explicitly denies that one creature (i.e., man) can be set apart from the rest of the universe so as to function as its explanation or *raison d'être*: "When we talk of the bringing into existence of the whole universe, there is no other created thing which can be used to explain why the universe is as it is."[32]

Elsewhere, Aquinas ventures to offer a somewhat less "agnostic" explanation for the universe's being as it is. Yet, the idea that man is the universe's purpose is conspicuously absent:

> Now from all this it is clear that God's providence, when it distributes a variety of properties and activities and changes and spatial arrangements to the things it has created, has its reasons. That is why sacred scripture ascribes the production and management of things to God's wisdom and discretion, saying...*You have ordered all things by measure, number, and weight* (Wisdom 11 [20]), meaning by measure the amount or mode or degree of perfection in each thing, by number the *diversity and plurality of species* [emphasis added] that results from these degrees of perfection, and by weight the *diverse attractions to specific goals and activities* [emphasis added], agents and patients, and properties resulting from the *diversity of species* [emphasis added].
>
> Now in the hierarchy of reasons behind God's providence just described we have placed first God's own goodness: the ultimate goal as it were which first starts activity off; and after that the *manyness of things* [emphasis added], which in turn required the different degrees of forms and matters, agents and patients, activities and

properties. So just as the absolutely first reason behind God's providence is God's goodness, so *the first reason within creation is manyness in things, to set up and maintain which everything else seems to be ordered* [emphasis added].[33]

Here Aquinas distinguishes between the "absolute" reason behind the universe and a secondary reason. Insofar as God is the reason for the universe, one cannot designate anything in the universe itself -- neither a species of creature nor a principle -- as being its reason. The "ultimate goal which first starts activity [creation] off" is clearly *not* man. One cannot attribute to Aquinas the idea that "the universe was made for the express purpose of providing a stage on which to enact a drama starring Man in the title role" (Baier, cited above). Nor is man even the secondary reason behind creation. Insofar as there is a reason for the universe *in the universe itself,* this reason has nothing to do with human interests. The universe is as it is for no reason other than that there might be "manyness in things." For Aquinas, *the ultimate purpose of the universe is nothing other than its own diversity.* The plurality and diversity of species -- what contemporary ecologists call "biodiversity" -- is ranked second only to God's goodness in the hierarchy of the universe's *raisons d'être.*

Ecocritics routinely claim that Aquinas (and medieval thinkers as a whole), denying the *intrinsic value* of all non-human created beings, taught that the things of the universe do not exist for their own sake but for the sake of humankind. The well-known deep ecologist Paul Shepard, for instance, attributes to Aquinas the assertion that "nothing in nature has inherent merit" (cited above). Such a presentation of Aquinas's position is at best incomplete, if not entirely erroneous. For Aquinas, in fact, taught that there is a plurality of reasons for the existence of any created being, *the primary reason being that it exists for its own sake:* "Now if we wish to assign an end to any whole, and to the parts of that whole, we shall find, first, that each and every part exists for the

sake of its own proper act and perfection."[34] This notion that all non-human entities have inherent worth is fundamental to current attempts to promote a new environmental ethic.[35]

Aquinas' thinking on environmental ethics at times approaches a degree of sophistication that compares favorably with the best of our contemporary ecocritics. Consider, for instance, Aquinas' stunningly subtle commentary on Moses' writing the creation story in Genesis. The idea that the natural universe is made *solely* for human use and does not itself have inherent value (the very idea attributed to Aquinas by ecocritics) is, says Aquinas, a *rhetorical trick* used by Moses in order to gain the favorable disposition of his followers. Aquinas proposes the fascinating thesis that Moses intentionally overemphasized the utility of non-human beings for human purposes so as to "disenchant" the things of nature and to persuade a polytheistic people that the one true God was supremely benevolent. Remarking that, as the author of Genesis, "Moses describes what is obvious to sense, out of condescension to popular ignorance," Aquinas says that Moses reduced the plurality of reasons for the existence of creatures to a single one (utility for human purposes): "As we have said above, a corporeal creature can be considered as made either for the sake of its proper act, or for other creatures, or for the whole universe, or for the glory of God, of these reasons only that which points out the usefulness of these things to man, is touched upon by Moses, in order to withdraw his people from idolatry."[36] Fearing that his people, who in the beginning were still prone to worship natural things and creatures, would never embrace a transcendental monotheism, Moses stripped things of all intrinsic worth. This is not so much because Moses thought that things really were devoid of intrinsic worth, but rather because he thought that such a doctrine would further his aims. Suggesting that the Hebrew scriptures do not give an absolutely correct picture of "reality," Aquinas indicates that Genesis presents a skewed vision of nature. The

creation story in Genesis is an intentional distortion (or, at least a reduction) of reality that is justified by the importance of Moses' world-historical mission. If the early chapters of Genesis appear to indicate that the universe was made for humans, this is because in writing Genesis Moses was catering to "popular ignorance," hoping to entice people with the idea that all other things were meant to serve them. The great Jewish thinker Moses Maimonides, whose *Guide of the Perplexed* served as a basic foundation of Christian scholastic philosophy, offers the most remarkable evidence that there is a mainstream medieval Judeo-Christian understanding of nature diametrically opposed to the one attributed to the Middle Ages by the prevailing ecocritical narrative. Maimonides denies that Genesis commands humans to exercise dominion over nature. Genesis does not tell humans how they should act toward nature; rather, it tells them something about the relative *quality* of their own nature:

> Be not misled by its saying with regard to the stars, *To give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night*, so that you think it means: in order that they should do this. It is merely information about their nature, which He willed to create thus -- I mean, giving light and ruling. Similarly, it says of man, *And have dominion over the fish of the sea and so on,* which dictum does not mean that man was created for the sake of this, but merely gives information about man's nature with which He, may He be exalted, has stamped him.[37]

For Maimonides, Genesis does not present humans with an *imperative*; it does not assert that "they should do this" (i.e., dominate nature). It says nothing about how we ought to comport ourselves with respect to non-human entities. Maimonides reads "dominion" not as a description of how humans ought to act toward other beings but as a description of humankind's relative position in a hierarchy of beings. Genesis 1:28b does not

tell us what to do, it tells us something of what we are (we are "above" some other creatures when measured on a vertical scale of rationality--for better or worse an apparent truth that even the most committed contemporary ecocritic would be hard pressed to deny). But though Genesis may tell us how we stand in relation to other creatures on a scale of rationality, it does not translate this standing into any counsel concerning how we ought to comport ourselves with respect to those creatures. To say that humans are more rational than other creatures does not entail an ethic of active domination.

It was Maimonides who more than anyone else established the position, later echoed by Aquinas and Christian scholasticism,[38] that all created beings have intrinsic value and are not primarily intended to serve human interests:

> The correct view according to the beliefs of the Law...is as follows: *It should not be believed that all the beings exist for the sake of the existence of man* [emphasis added]. On the contrary, all the other beings too have been intended for their own sakes and not for the sake of something else.[39]

Concerning those things (heavens, earth, seas, plants, animals, etc.) about whose creation Genesis tells, Maimonides forcefully denies that they were created for the sake of humankind: "with reference to none of them is the statement made in any way that it exists for the sake of some other thing."[40]

It would be hard to imagine a more stark and forceful contradiction to the ecocritical representation of medieval environmental ethics. For Maimonides, like present-day deep ecologists, teaches that all created entities have their own inherent worth and their own purposes. Maimonides crowns this doctrine with his rendering of Proverbs 16:4, which is sometimes translated so as to mean that everything is created not for its own sake but for the sake of God: "The Lord has made all for Himself"

(New King James Version [1982]). Maimonides, calling our attention to the fact the Hebrew phrase is ambiguous (the possessive pronoun may be read either as "His" or as "its"), reads the verse as evidence that all things have their own autonomous value; "The Lord hath made everything for *its* sake."[41] The difference between the New King James rendering and the one given primacy by Maimonides entails the difference between treating the things of nature as if they were made for the sake of some other, intelligent being (the Lord or, by extension, "Lord Man" -- to use John Muir's felicitous phrase) or as if their reason for being were simply autonomous, independent from the intentions or designs of any such other.

Elsewhere in the *Guide of the Perplexed*, Maimonides takes pains to "decenter" humankind's position in the universe. That is, he insists in a variety of ways that humanity ought not see itself as the be-all and end-all of the cosmos. We cannot provide a correct explanation for the universe, other than to say that it was assuredly not created for us:

> If, however, it is believed that all this [i.e., the cosmos] came about in virtue of the purpose of one who purposed who made this thus, that opinion would not be accompanied by a feeling of astonishment and would not be at all unlikely. And there would remain no other point to be investigated except if you were to say; What is the cause for this having been purposed? What is known may be epitomized as follows: *All this has been produced for an object that we do not know* and is not an aimless and fortuitous act.[42]

> All that exists was intended by Him, may He be exalted, according to His volition. And we shall seek for it no cause or final end whatever...Hence be not misled in your soul to think that the spheres and the angels have been brought into existence for our sake. For it has

explained to us what we are worth: *Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket* [Isaiah 40:l5].[43]

If it is true that Darwinism shook up (and still shakes up) modern humans by questioning their centrality and privilege, it can only be because modern humans have forgotten this medieval tradition that recognized that we are "as a drop of a bucket."

Far from being the era in which were planted the seeds of today's overblown human arrogance, the medieval period was marked by the sort of humility that may prove fundamental in the formulation of a positive environmental ethic for the next millennium.

NOTES:

1. There are, of course, notable exceptions: Neil Evernden, in *The Social Construction of Nature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1992), presents the Middle Ages in a favorable light, urging a retrieval of a medieval attitude toward the natural world. And Christopher Manes calling our attention to the Ecostery Project, an effort by some deep ecologists to reinstitute the medieval monastery as a social reality, recognizes that "medieval discourse...at times revealed a refined sense of human limitation and respect for otherness" ("Nature and Silence," in *The Ecocriticism Reader,* ed, C. Glotfelty and H. Fromm [Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1996], pp. 25-26).

2. J. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 15.

3. Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," in *The Ecocriticism Reader*, p. 9; originally published in *Science* 155 (10 March 1967): 1203-7.

4. Ibid., p. 12, p. 14.

5. As Callicott *(Earth's Insight's*, p. 237) has noted, White's thesis has provoked a "veritable flood of apologetic literature too vast to cite in its entirety;" Callicott nonetheless provides a good bibliography of those who have asserted, *contra* White, that the Judeo-Christian tradition ought to be seen not as the problem but rather as part of the solution to the current ecological crisis.

6. Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 19.

7. Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology* (New Have: Yale University Press, 1991). p. 72.

8. Ibid., p. 73.

9. Among the countless further examples that could be invoked, I will here cite just one. David Macauley lists "the Judaic and Christian religious traditions" along with overpopulation and pollution as one of the "roots, forms, and manifestations of ecological and social problems." *Minding Nature: The Philosophers of Ecology*, ed. David Macauley (New York: Guilford, 1996), p. 3.

10. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, 4.1, 8.3. Trans. William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson, *Select Writings and Letters of Gregory Bishop of Nyssa.* Text taken from the lnternet site "Christian Classics Ethereal Library" (http://ccel.wheaton.edu).

11. Cited in Jeremy Cohen, *"Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It": The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 227.

12. The citation is from "David Guzik's Study Guide to Genesis I," found on the "Blue Letter Bible Project Website" (www.khouse.org/blueletter).

13. Cited in Cohen, p. 225; emphasis added.

14. Cohen, p. 229.

15. Ibid., p. 228. See also Callicott's forceful pro-environmental reading of Genesis in his *Earth's Insights*, pp. 17-21.

16. It is certainly true that medieval humans altered their environment through agricultural and technological practices, as several of the articles in *L'homme at la nature au moyen âge* (Paris: Errance, 1996) make clear. But whether such alteration can rightly be called (or was considered) "domination" is another question.

17. Harold Fromm, "From Transcendence to Obsolescence," in *The Ecocriticism Reader*, pp. 30-31.

18. Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, 13.23. Trans. F. J. Sheed, *Confessions* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), p. 278.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Saint Augustine, *Against the Manichees* 1.20. Trans. Roland J. Teske, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, Vol. 84 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), p. 79.

22. Robert Grosseteste, *Hexameron* 6.12.1; cited in Cohen, p. 264.

23. Cohen, p. 268.

24. Nash, *Wilderness,* p. 31.

25. Meister Eckhart, *Expositio libri genesis,* in Meister Eckhart, *Die lateinischen Werke* 1.2 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), p. 163. Trans. mine.

26. Ibid.

27. Paul Shepard, "Ecology and Man -- A Viewpoint," in *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), p.136.

28. George Sessions, "Ecocentrism and the Anthropocentric Detour," in *Deep Ecology*, p. 160.

29. Nash, *Wilderness*, p. 193.

30. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia* 3.17. Trans. from Aquinas, *Selected Philosophical Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 266.

31. Evernden *(Social Construction,* p. 119), citing the following passage from naturalist Richard Jeffries, proposes that this sort of recognition of the

universe's *lack of order* is fundamental in the formulation of a pro-environmental ethic: "When at last I had disabused my mind of the enormous imposture of a design, an object, and an end, a purpose or system, I began to see dimly how much more grandeur, beauty and hope there is in divine chaos -- not chaos in the sense of disorder or confusion but simply the absence of order -- than there is in a universe made by pattern." Richard Jeffries, *Landscape with Figures* (Hammondsworth: *Penguin,* 1983), p. 244.

32. Aquinas, *Selected,* p. 266.

33. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.97. Trans. from Aquinas, *Selected.* pp. 272-73.

34. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1.65.2. Trans. from *Summa Theologica,* Vol. 1 (New York: Beringer Brothers, 1947), p. 326.

35. One might note that the words of the nineteenth-century nature writer, John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, echo the scholastic insistence that all beings are primarily created for their own sake: "It never seems to occur to these far-seeing teachers that Nature's object in making animals and plants might possibly be first of all the happiness of each one of them, not the creation of all for the happiness of one." John Muir, A *Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf.* ed. William Frederic Badè (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1916). pp.138-39.

36. *Summa Theologica* 1.70.2. Trans. *Summa Theologica,* vol. l, p. 347.

37. Moses Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3.13.26a. Trans. Shlomo Pines, *The Guide of the Perplexed* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), vol. 2, p. 454.

38. In his "Ecocentrism and the Anthropocentric Detour," Sessions represents Maimonides and Aquinas as polar opposites, the former signaling the pro-environmental "road not taken" by subsequent Western thought. But this is a superficial

falsification of the real relation between the great Jewish and Christian thinkers of the late Middle Ages. In fact, Aquinas is everywhere indebted to Maimonides, citing him on innumerable occasions, including in some of the very passages that I have treated above.

39. *Guide* 3.13.24b. Trans. Pines, p. 457.

40. Later in the same passage, Maimonides contradicts this, saying plants were made for the sake of animals. Yet one must note that this does not mark a fall into anthropocentrism, since he does *not* say that plants were made for humans; rather, Maimonides groups together "the Adamites [i.e., humans] and the other animals" as those for whose sake plants were created.

41. *Guide* 3.13.24b. Trans. Pines, p. 452. The New American Standard Bible Update (1995) translates the verse in a way that is in accord with Maimonides' interpretation: "the Lord has made everything for its own purpose."

42. *Guide* 2.19.44a. Trans. Pines, p. 310; emphasis added.

43. *Guide* 3.13.26b. Trans. Pines, p. 454-55.

Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess and the Limits of Narrative

Tiffany Rašović

Chaucer's Book of the Duchess has puzzled scholars because of its many gaps and silences: the Ovid story is incomplete, the Boethian dialogue between dreamer and Black Knight is inconclusive, and the ending is abrupt and unreflective. Critics search for the nature of consolation in the work, but are thwarted because the woman whom it memorializes and the audience to whom it is read are never directly addressed, and neither are the themes of eternal life and the consolations of faith elucidated. Rather, Chaucer chooses to stay silent on these themes, preferring to use language to illustrate the natural and tactile world and the confused thoughts and speech, the experience, of ordinary men faced with life's complications. So too does he manipulate the wisdom of other writers, the auctoritees, in order to both lead the audience to certain concepts and to exemplify the shortcomings of such writings. The reason for this, I believe, stems from a tendency in the Middle Ages for language to be treated with a guarded enthusiasm. That is, despite the power of the written word in theology, philosophy, science and literature, such authorities, who have achieved the heights of human reason, are still secondary to a higher way of knowing, one that supercedes what can be uttered with the tongue or conceived by mere reason. In this way, Chaucer's gaps and silences seem to reveal a degree of skepticism toward language: that somehow his tools are both liberating and limiting. The narrative challenges to experience and authority in *The Book of the Duchess* leave many areas for the readers to fill in for themselves; they are directed toward the meaning of the poem even though its themes lie outside its allegorical structure.

A reading such as my own that pays special attention to what is omitted from the text, and the ways the supremacy of language might be subverted by the author,

is no doubt influenced by my post-modern literary education. I read with my own confident disillusionment in the reliability of our experience and the written word, and as such, perhaps I am actually closer to Chaucer, and the literary and theological debates of his age, than readers from earlier centuries and the concerns that they brought to the text. Indeed, since the 1960s, the Medieval discourse over realism and nominalism have received increasing attention, especially in the area of language and interpretation. This too corresponds with the larger shift in scholarship and literary theory, influenced by linguistics and culture, in which we read signs as system of correspondences with little outside referent to truth or reality. It has been suggested that the emergence of nominalism in the Middle ages mirrors this shift as the Medieval world view moved from symbolism (and the Platonic realism) to a sign system, or "desymbolization" (Utz, 206). I make this point to both suggest a sympathy in world-view, but at the same time to apologize for the pitfalls of such a way of reading, for we are treading on dangerous ground when we seek to establish such links across the gulf of 600 years. Even Richard J. Utz, a prime proponent of literary nominalism, acknowledges the way in which critics' desire to find a correlation in the Middle Ages with current post-modern linguistics might make their case too strongly. He gives the example of Stephen Knight whose "notion of Chaucer as a 'modern' writer is somewhat anachronistic and shows that the literary nominalism paradigm, like other paradigms, has also produced its share of venturesome applications" (210). Another example of "venturesome applications:"

> The lure for twentieth-century critical readers of late-medieval English texts to detect within the maze of alterity something attuned to their own perceptions of art, language, and the world was most recently demonstrated when J. Stephen Russell was taken to task for attributing to both Occam and Chaucer a "linguistic relativism" and

for styling them as post-Suassurian linguists (ibid.).

Clearly, Utz offers these cases as extreme, but I would say that this serves to remind us that we must ever be wary of solipsism in Medieval studies.

So, the fact remains to be established whether or not Chaucer was actively a nominalist, or anything else, after all, he was a poet not a theologian or a philosopher. Certainly we can find just as much evidence to link him to the writers he admired and their views on language such as Dante and Petrarch. We can be certain, based upon evidence in his texts, that this debate did touch him in significant ways and my reading certainly places Chaucer's relationship to language somewhere between the realists and the nominalists. That is, although I find his work to point to such essentials as virtue, religious consolation, and resurrection of the eternal soul through allegory, yet I do suggest that Chaucer's manipulation of the authoritative works of Ovid and Boethius, the misguided experience of the Black Knight, and the narrator's obstinate unreflectiveness, all add up to a deep sense of the inadequacy of language to address the topic of the death of Duchess Blanche from plague some eight years before the composition of the poem. Whatever Chaucer's true sympathies were, my reading is certainly a product of my time and situation, but it might serve, after 600 years, to my advantage, rather than distancing me from the spirit of the age in which Chaucer composed this poem.

Chaucer, plausibly a man of some religious scruples, encodes, in *The Book of the Duchess*, the notion that faith is the real crux of consolation and happiness and that language can only bring people nearer to comprehending that faith, but it can never represent it adequately. Chaucer's poem emphasizes the deficiencies of text and speech and privileges non-verbal imagery, such as light, song, nature and virtue, in order to suggest to the audience, by conjuring up associations rather than employing explication, that they hold within themselves

a knowledge of Blanche's true virtue, and, by extension, the understanding that she lives after death and so can be remembered with joy. Grief and pain are, like language itself, a means of achieving a higher state of understanding but are not to be dwelt upon. This is the poem's true consolation: a rescue from despair.

Readings which latch onto the Boethian motif in the poem, such as those of the older Kittredge, Robertson and Huppé, and extended by the more recent works of Grudin, Rambuss, and Thundy, are persuasive, yet they must be qualified by two important ideas: first, that Chaucer's allusions and allegorical structure might in fact be subverting or challenging, rather than following or supporting, the philosophy of the "auctors" from whom he borrows inspiration. Second, the indeterminacy of the poem on the topic of consolation cannot be neatly put aside. Chaucer's narrator's avoidance of interpretation and the reluctance to name the ultimate source of consolation, except by euphemism, is significant and indicates Chaucer's reflexive sense of the limits of verbal communication. Although Huppé and Robertson acknowledge the way the poem invites the reader/auditor to fill in the silences when they write: "The implications which arise from the poem are more powerful than any direct statement of them could be," (Huppé, Robertson 100), they do not grapple with the potential hermeneutics of such a way of writing. In short, they fail to examine the way in which Chaucer himself might be making a novel statement about the act of reading, telling, and writing and their power to offer, not total consolation, but only a potential means by which to achieve it.

Interestingly, the criticism of the last twenty years, despite the influences of such "pro-subversion" schools as Deconstruction and New Historicism, and the nominalist debate, have remained supportive of the consolatory impulse of the text, and they too find the nature of that consolation sufficiently manifested in the language of the work itself. These readings do not contradict my own conclusions about the insufficiency of

the Boethian dialogue between the Black Knight and the dreamer/narrator, I do believe that Chaucer implies consolation, but none of them focuses upon the issue of narrative itself. Some of the works recognize the narrative gaps and silences in the poem, but none of them considers the possibility that this is a conscious device employed by Chaucer in order to avoid a sort of artistic hubris. Of course, part of their problem is that they search too hard for consolation and fail to take a step back and try to see what other philosophical forces are working upon Chaucer's sense of his own task. Although he is offering this poem at a memorial service for the Duchess Blanche, he still is, as they probably are, aware that the poet, a dealer in words, is limited by the very tools of his trade. It is perhaps a gentler version of Plato's Republic: the poet is tolerated, but his powers, as everybody knows, do not sufficiently attain the "forms" of the Middle Ages, which would be knowledge of the divine through faith, nor does he supersede the Medieval "philosopher king," Christ himself. Nominalist readings clearly embrace the subversion of narrative, but again, I would resist their readings if they posit that *The Book of the Duchess* does not, at its core, indicate a correspondence to some essential truths.

    The most useful of contemporary readings appear to be those which aim to view the text deconstructively and/or psychoanalytically. Typically, they read with respect to Medieval contexts, albeit with the infusion of more modern notions of the mind and language. The contemporary pieces I will engage in my argument are generally concerned with the function of discourse in the poem. Michaela Paasche Grudin's chapter on dream visions highlights the uses of different types of discourse in the text, book, testimony, and dream, and the way they function reciprocally. My ideas about the active role of the audience, as well as the interplay of different acts of telling and listening, are inspired by this essay. Richard Rambuss considers the connection between the Medieval definition of "apocalypse" as "revelation" and the

psychological function of that revelation on the part of both dreamer/narrator and Black Knight, this, and his discussion of Medieval theosophy, have served very well as a springboard for my arguments. Each of these works, plus earlier authorities from Augustine to C. S. Lewis to Huppé and Robertson, have fashioned my interpretation of the limitations of language implied by the poem because they are all inherently skeptical about the effectiveness of language in consolation, albeit in a somewhat theoretically conservative vein. Of the literary nominalists, Kathryn Lynch and Hugo Keiper's writings on Chaucer's dream poetry have also been very illuminating.

    Throughout the poem, Chaucer relies upon his audience's knowledge of certain texts (as will be explored below) and their ability to glimpse something beyond the mere words he is saying. This notion of the higher faculties of the auditor, as Rambuss suggests, is influenced by Boethius' Lady Philosophy and her discourse on "intelligence."   The definition of "intelligence" is adapted by Chaucer directly out of Boethius: it is the faculty of humans that supercedes reason, imagination and emotion, it is the faculty that brings one nearest to comprehending the divine. So, although Chaucer seems to ultimately reject the Boethian dialectical method here, that is, the ability of a philosophical dialogue to assuage deep grief, he does owe some of his motivation to Lady Philosophy's ideas about intelligence. Rambuss looks to Chaucer's own translation of Boethius to show how Chaucer himself not only understood this term, but also to show how he literally imported his own conception of it into his translation of Boethius' Consolation:

    …but intelligence, that looketh al aboven…useth nat nor of resoun ne of ymaginacioun ne of wit withoute-forth; but it beholdeth alle thingis, so I schal seie, by strook of thought formerly withoute discours or collacioun (677, Rambuss' italics).

Rambuss identifies the italicized "withoute discours or collacioun" as being Chaucer's own addition: it is not in Boethius. I do not agree with Rambuss that this necessarily equals "subversion" (I rather think that that is abusing Chaucer with our 20th Century point of view), but nonetheless, it certainly indicates and supports what I have begun to hint at: that Chaucer has a keen sense of the boundary of his own art of poetry as well as of the written or spoken word in general. Rambuss continues: "It [the above passage] raises the question, even as Lady Philosophy speaks, whether intelligentia can be communicated through her words or through any text at all…[it] is not only non-material, but extra-linguistic as well (677)." So, the highest form of consolation must be beyond what even Boethius could explain. Truth or faith exists, but it is beyond the scope of ordinary comprehension. Herein lie some of the errors of past scholarship in supposing that Chaucer's allusion to Boethius can be easily paralleled in terms of consolation. Just because Boethius' narrator could be consoled by the language of philosophy doesn't mean that Chaucer expects the same results from his writings. Indeed, the Narrator is unlike the lecturing Lady Philosophy, he merely listens whereas she corrects and explains. Furthermore, since the writings of Ovid and the other classical writers are being reconfigured in the Middle Ages to reflect the light of Christian revelation, so too might Chaucer be imbuing Boethius with a higher wisdom. It is important to stress that Boethius was much admired by Medieval thinkers, and popular through the Renaissance, but it was inconclusive if he was indeed a Christian. Chaucer, given the occasion of the poem's reading and its heavily Christian context and imagery, posits a religious consolation, not a philosophical one. As C. S. Lewis writes in Boethius' voice: "*I wrote philosophically, not religiously, because I had chosen the consolations of philosophy, not those of religion, as my subject*" (78, my italics). Thus, the heavy reliance upon language and rational argument is

appropriate for Boethius and his concerns with the nature of justice and fortune in this world, but Chaucer wants to guide the reader, and the Black Knight, beyond the cares of the temporal world into the contemplation of eternity and heaven, and hence, mere language is insufficient.

The poem asks the audience to look outside itself: beyond its loss and grief or the turnings of fortune into another realm and to a "phisicien" other than mere philosophy. In this way, the Black Knight is every mourner who must eventually pass from grief, by remembering the virtues of Blanche, into a consolation based upon faith. But this consolation lies always outside of the text. That is perhaps why Chaucer chooses the dream-allegory form: both are, by definition, a step removed from waking reality and perception and, thus, supersede the normal constraints of language and reason which prevent intuition of the divine nature of things. Keiper writes: "Chaucer's dream poems confront us with teasingly iridescent, scintillating images of a reality that is basically seen as refracted and always at a remove from the authenticity or unmediated experience" (226). Ambiguity in the dream's identification and interpretation supports the thesis that Chaucer is deliberately playing with different types of "discours and collacioun" in order to show their limitations. The meaning of the dream can only be understood in the process of dreaming it, or in the very process of his audience's hearing it recounted, just as the metaphorical relationships of allegory cannot always be verbally explained. Chaucer not only emphasizes that discourse, of any kind, requires interaction and reciprocity, dreamer to Black Knight, story to reader, poem to audience, truth to allegory, but designs the narration so that the hearer/reader can only find meaning in terms of what is implicit in the language (Grudin, 27-35). Indeed, most of what is left to the intuitive comprehension of the reader is not even stated, much less glossed, in the language of the text. The dreamer, like the audience, can only recount what he has

seen in the dream and what he did before and after it in plain language, commenting on the novelty and beauty of what he has dreamed and recalling emotional responses to reading the story of Seys and Alcyone, hearing the Knight's story, that is, sense and emotion, but only as a means to a larger end, something outside the act of narration. The dreamer wakes and feels compelled to recall what he has dreamed, but he resists interpreting it.

When one looks at the tradition of English dream poetry, one finds that from the Dream of the Rood, to Piers Plowman, and beyond, dream visions are explicitly tied to religious allegory, signaling an awakening for the dreamer who moves from error to illumination and deepened faith. This is perhaps the only narrative form Chaucer isn't subverting: in other words, although the dreamer is curiously silent, the moral message of the dream experience is still resonant for the audience who move from the error in despair, as does the dreamer, to the illumination of faith in an eternal soul. Chaucer derives much of this from the Old Testament and such sources as Macrobius' Dream of Scipio.

The dreamer, the Black Knight, and the audience are then all drawn through this simple narration so that they can pass from an indulgent, self-centered mourning, close to the sin of despair, like that of the narrator and Knight initially, into a more considered reflection of Blanche herself and the eternal qualities that she was widely understood to possess. In this way, the Boethian parallel works, as we follow the Black Knight from confused grumbling against fate (reminiscent of other Ovidian writings), to a full revelation of "White's" personal worthiness and the sanctity of their love, and, finally, his departure to the proverbial white castle upon the hill. Huppé and Robertson's exegesis is tremendously useful in piecing together the Knight's progress from youthful frustration in love to his mature recognition of Blanche's virtues. The Knight's reliance on imperfect auctoritee is transformed by the experience of sharing the story of his

grief, revealing to him, albeit implicitly, an intelligence about the redemptive qualities of true love. Perhaps the Knight comes to doubt the worth of his own experience as he tells the dreamer about it, that is, he realizes as he speaks that he is describing a woman who assuredly has been granted eternal life for her virtues. And, even if he and the dreamer remain obtuse, the audience who hears the poem is surely not. The Knight's experience of sorrow parallels the audience's expression of sorrow, and both outpourings lead to the recognition of Blanche's virtues -- if she were not good, who would mourn for her? -- and ultimately the celebration of her life after death in heavenly grace. Huppé and Robertson write:

> The loss of Blanche must be seen not as a loss of
> a gift of Fortune but as an inspiration. It is
> important, moreover, not that the dreamer
> specifically be led to see this, but that the
> audience of the poem be led to understand it.
> The subject of the poem is not the poet, but the
> Duchess whom it eulogizes (53).

What needs to be stressed is that the poem, quite self-consciously, resists explicitly making this point. At no moment is the idea of heaven, resurrection, eternal love, or the divine nature of Blanche's immortal virtues directly mentioned. They are only suggested by the continual shortcomings of text and speech, whether it be experience or auctoritee: consolation occurs when the audience, like the dreamer and the Black Knight, can glimpse, by an intuitive understanding of the poem, what is indicated through its imagery and allusions. (Keiper, 222-223)

The playful delineation of discourse in the dream form and the Knight's story-telling can be categorized among those gaps of "experience." Other discourses conjured and transcended by the poem are the "auctoritees:" namely, what is written down in poetry and philosophy. So far, we have looked at Boethius and the boundaries of philosophical authority, the paradoxically extra-linguistic revelations of the audience, and the

Knight and the dreamer/narrator's unreflective experience. As Lewis and Huppé-Robertson have written, the Medieval task of poets and theologians was to infuse the works of the ancients with the revelations of Christianity. The most striking image of this (and I would add one of the most beautifully written passages in Chaucer's poetry) occurs when the dreamer "awakens" into his dream (lines 291-343). As he awakens, he sees stained-glass windows depicting scenes from the Trojan wars and the Romance of the Rose "illumined through Christian understanding" (Huppé, Robertson 47), and that understanding is symbolically the very light which shines into the room. At the same time, the dreamer hears music of birds' singing rising to his ears from outside.

> And sooth to seyen, my chambre was
> Ful wel depyented, and with glas
> Were all the wyndowes wel yglased
> Ful clere, and nat an hoole ycrased,
> For hooly al the story of Troye
> Was in the glasynge ywroght thus,
> Of Ector and of kyng Priamus,
> Of Achilles and of kyng Lamedon,
> And eke of Medea and of Jason,
> Of Paris, Eleyne, and of Lavyne.
> And alle the walles with colours fyne
> Were peynted, bothe text and glose,
> Of al the Romaunce of the Rose.
> My wyndowes were shette echon,
> And throgh the glas the sonne shon
> Upon my bed with bryghte bemes,
> With many glade gilde stremes (lines 321-338)

That Chaucer chooses to embody enlightenment in sunlight and music reinforces the point that the dreamworld is a liminal space where meaning is rarefied by other ways of knowing: it lies beyond the narratives suggested by the antique stories, or any "stories" at all. Music occurs again to illustrate the Knight's over-reliance upon the material world of sense and word, emphasized

by the lay he recites "withoute noote, withoute song" (line 472). The Knight's song is important in relation to Chaucer's use of lyric in the poem. Sections of *The Book of the Duchess* contain borrowed paraphrases of Froissart and Machaud, and, certainly, Ovid was molded by many Medieval writers into a lyric poet of sorts. Here, for the Knight, the lyric form with its narcissism, pathos, and emphasis upon secular love, is exposed as somehow sterile, almost absurdly rendered by the self-indulgent Black Knight. His own story of love and loss has yet to be infused with melody, with the revelatory light like that in the narrator's dream-room. Similarly, the narrator's opening remarks are heavily reliant upon Chaucer's borrowings, indicating how these works tend to indulge feelings of sorrow and despair, as the narrator does in the beginning of the poem, rather than lead the reader to something beyond himself, and hence, to healing.

It is curious that the dreamer awakens to the classics and the light immediately after reading the Seys and Alcyone story. The Seys and Alcyone story is the most central and lengthy of the classical sources evoked, and the manner in which Chaucer alters it and places it is extremely important in terms of his greater position on narrative and language.   The most obvious alteration is the elimination of the transformation of the despairing (and in Chaucer's version, dead), Alcyone and the drowned Seys into a couple of birds. Rambuss says: "By denying them [Seys and Alcyone] their miraculous reunion after death, *The Book of the Duchess* is also denying its readers the solace available in this rare Ovidian exemplum of mutual love's power to overcome even the grave" (670). I disagree with Rambuss' assertion that this alteration makes the whole message of the poem non-consolatory, rather, I see its elimination as both an indication of the narrator's internal state and a sign to the audience who, presumably, know this story and the reunion of the lovers after death. He is correct, however, to point out that this is again an example of "*the inability of verbal means, and of the imaginative faculty, what*

Augustine terms the visio imaginativa, to effect any sort of lasting consolation" (671, italics mine). The ending of the story is merely left for us to fill in, and the imagery of the light streaming through the windows does, in retrospect, cast the Seys and Alcyone ending in its own light and is consoling because the story now signifies a great essential truth: that the couple united in marriage will be resurrected into eternal life.

Just as the stories of antiquity are illumined by the light of divinity, so is the redemptive, celebratory ending of Ovid's tale subtly revealed in the dream vision as the Black Knight comes closer to his own "intelligence." The dreamer's corruption of the text serves as a signal of sorts to the audience, many of whom would have been familiar with the tales of Ovid. That is, Chaucer deliberately over-emphasizes the pathos and tragedy of the story, not only to reflect the dreamer's (and later the Knight's) mental anguish, but to cause mistrust in the act of glossing or retelling stories. Just as we are meant to read beyond the philosophical wisdom of Boethius and beyond the seeming obtuseness of the "experience" of the Knight and the narrator, so too are we lead to read beyond the "auctoritee" of the poets themselves. And so, the Ovid text is carefully paralleled in the dream allegory, and although the resurrection is never made explicit because of Chaucer's cautionary stance toward auctoritee, the process of relating the dream encodes the consolation of the tale.

The parallels between the tales are interesting to note. When the dreamer first sees the Knight he seems, "Ful piteous pale and nothing red" (line 470). This corresponds to the appearance of Seys dead in the waters: "Ful pale and nothing roddy" (line 143). One of Chaucer's omissions from the Ovidian tale as the narrator relates it is Seys' poignant exclamations of love even as he drowns in the waves (Ovid 276-277). The force of Seys' love is reintroduced in the form of the Black Knight who is, as we know, suffering over the loss of his much beloved Duchess.   Interestingly, the dreamer

symbolically aligns himself with Alcyone, for we find them both in bed "al naked": she, before the vision of her husband (line 125), he, as he awakens into the dream world (line 293).

Interestingly, like the music and the sunlight, the major symbol of rebirth and immortality is also without verbal language: birds become the representation of eternal love, as well as life after death. As Huppé and Robertson point out, the Knight's comparison of the Duchess to the phoenix implies rebirth:

> To the Christian the resurrection of the Phoenix was a symbol of hope in the Resurrection. In the same way the death of Blanche should be a source of hope rather than despair to the Knight. The comparison should remind him that his lady has not died, but lives (77).

Birds signify the Duchess' resurrection, and, of course, make the connection with the bird imagery in the Seys and Alcyone story: they are reborn as birds who live together by the sea. Chaucer has inscribed the "actual" text of the story into the dream so that the listeners might be focused upon the idea of Blanche's eternal goodness and the possibility that those persons who truly love her and whom she truly loved can never be separated from her. By placing the images of birds inside the dream rather than in the frame story, Chaucer also emphasizes the Medieval idea of rereading the "auctors" of the past through the light of Christian revelation. Indeed, one can envision the whole dream saturated with the same sunlight that streams in through the dreamer's window. This light must be perceived by the audience by their intelligence and in their ability to reconstruct the narratives in their own minds, because the message of eternity and resurrection are never explicitly articulated in the poem. Again, I want to point out that this departs from readings which might suggest that the whole Seys and Alcyone story deconstructs here. Rather, I find that Chaucer's "skepticism" is limited to the ultimate communicative power of language, but not necessarily to

the power of what is implied by allegory and by conjuring up this tale in the minds of the listeners. The privileging of images of nature and light at the very least must be seen as an attempt to indicate the power of extra-linguistic symbols or signs, however implicitly the message is conveyed, these are the means to comprehending it.

The Black Knight's memory of his bliss on earth with the Duchess is another instance where the immortality of love is evoked. Although the image of the mated birds in Ovid is not directly alluded to here, when one reads the two passages side by side, one can hardly fail to see their similarities. The Knight says:

Therewyth she was alway so trewe
Our joye was ever ylyche newe;
Oure hertes wern so evene a payre
That never nas that oon contrayre
To that other for no woo
Al was us oon, withoute were.
And thus we lived ful many a yere
So wel I kan nat tell how (lines 1288-1299).

He describes a perfect coupling of hearts that he ultimately cannot even express fully in words. The ending of Ovid's tale where Alcyone and Seys are transformed evokes the same feeling of the power of love:

No one could say
Whether Ceyx felt those kisses and responded,
Or whether it was the lift of the waves alone
That made him rise his face. But he felt them,
And through the pity of the gods, the husband
Became a bird, and joined his wife. Together
They suffered, and together loved; no parting
Followed them in their new-found form as birds
(line 282) .

In our poem, the main difference is that the love experienced during life on earth as human beings is the only thing that can be linguistically expressed. Ovid's union clearly describes a mystical rebirth, but Chaucer chooses not to explicitly represent this through language.

Ovid writes from the authorial, editorial third person, but Chaucer's parallel not only remains earthbound but is told from the point of view of an unreliable first person account. The Knight "kan nat tell how," and the poet must communicate "as I kan best," but no human being can actually verbalize or communicate in writing what happens to the lovers in the afterlife, hence Ovid is truncated and reworked: used, like Boethius, but not granted full authority.

Chaucer then was resisting the urge to become himself an "auctoritee" or to bring even his own experience to bear upon the poem. The editorial voice is silent in most of the frame story, he describes his initial mental state, but reiterates that he is recounting the dream without any real reason why. The first section of the frame makes a reference to Blanche dead "this eight year" (line 37), and here he makes mention of the "phisicien" who might heal him, "but that is don" (line 40). God, as Huppé and Robertson point out, is frequently called a phisicien of souls, but it is unclear whether or not Chaucer refers to God or to the implied lost love whom we imagine is causing his insomnia. Whatever the case, our narrator avoids details and merely shows us the scene and the dream, leaving "glose" and consolation beyond the narrative.

Chaucer's poem has changed for readers who have begun to challenge the tendency of older critics such as C. S. Lewis and the like who have maintained that there is such a thing as the "Medieval Mind," and that it is characterized by a rigid, hierarchical symbolic structure which has specific essential referents and strict social roles, usually informed by religion. That Chaucer would choose to diminish his role as author or interpreter might signal humility in the face of divine truths if it were not for the fact that he seems to challenge both auctoritee and experience while still keeping silent on the very truths he is subtly leading the hearer towards, privileging the natural world, but not glossing its revelations. Perhaps, in the end, it is both a sort of humble approach

to the task of the memorial poet and a glimmer of Chaucer's life long preoccupation with the nature of the written word and the idiosyncratic nature of experience. The new attention critics are paying to the late Medieval debate over language and representation has certainly opened up our conception of just what exactly makes up the Medieval Mind and has given our theoretical ideas about semiotics and essentialism a particular relevance in Chaucer criticism. It is, of course, important that we resist titling Chaucer a nominalist or anything else, but the possibility that he was actively using his poetry to grapple with such questions as we are wrestling with has opened up a whole new avenue in Chaucer criticism. We have found, as it were, a Chaucer in the margins of the paradigmatic world view of his age, a poet who has survived because the liminal has always existed and now as we embrace it as the final frontier in cultural and literary studies, we find that it is perhaps the genesis of literary expression itself. To quote Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry*: "I know not whether to marvel more, either that he [Chaucer] in that misty time could see so clearly, or that we in this clear age walk so stumblingly after him."

Notes

    Indeed, nominalists do write about Chaucer's poetry, but seem to avoid this poem. Perhaps for the reasons that I suggest, it is incompatible with strict nominalism.
    I must thank Gregory B. Stone for pointing out the relevance of the issue of lyric to my argument. He is the author of *The Death of the Troubadour* which contains a chapter on *The Book of the Duchess* and deals with lyric and narrative.

Works Cited

Chaucer, Geoffrey. The Book of the Duchess. The Riverside Chaucer. Ed. Larry Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987. 329-346.

Grudin, Michaela Paasche. Chaucer and the Politics of Discourse. South Carolina: U of South Carolina P, 1996.

Huppé, Bernard F., and D.W. Robertson, Jr. Fruyt and Chaf: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1963.

Keiper, Hugo. "'I wot myself best how y stonde:' Literary Nominalism, Open Textual Format and the Enfranchisement of Individual Perspective in Chaucer's Dream Visions," in Literary Nominalism and the Theory of Reading Late Medieval Texts. ed Richard J. Utz, 205-235. Lewiston, Quenston, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995.

Kittredge, George Lyman. Chaucer and His Poetry. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1951.

Lewis, C.S.   The Discarded Image. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1964.

Ovid.   Metamorphoses.   Rolfe   Humphries,   trans. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1983.

Rambuss, Richard. "'Process of Tyme':   History, Consolation, and Apocalypse in the Book of the Duchess." Exemplaria 2 (1990): 659-683.

Robertson, D.W. Jr. Essays in Medieval Culture. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980.

Stone, Gregory B. The Death of the Troubadour. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1994, 143-198.

Thundy, Zacharias P. "The Dreame of Chaucer: Boethian Consolation or Political Celebration?"   Carmina Philosopiae 4 (1995): 91-109.

Utz, Richard J.   "Literary Nominalism in Chaucer's Late-Medieval England: Toward a Preliminary Paradigm." European Legacy 2:2 (1997): 206-211.

------- .   Ed. Literary Nominalism and the Theory of Reading Late Medieval Texts. Mediaeval Studies, v.

5,   Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995.

Excess and Defect: Spenser and Medieval Cosmology in *A Thousand Acres*

James R. Keller

Most of the critical attention given to Jane Smiley's Pulitzer Prize winning novel *A Thousand Acres* has been devoted to tracing the obvious parallels with and the more subtle deviations from its Shakespearean paradigm. Scholars agree that Smiley's novel is an effort to develop the point-of-view of King Lear's two wayward daughters--Goneril and Regan. Within the canon of Shakespearean characters, Lear's oldest daughters are among the most two dimensional, the author clearly settling for virtual abstractions of unredeemed wickedness, ambition, and disobedience, which is a problem when one considers the weight of responsibility placed on them for the subsequent tragedy (Keppel 105).   Thus, when Jane Smiley began *A Thousand Acres,* she may have looked away from the Shakespearean text for details with which to develop her principal characters--Ginny and Rose.

This paper will trace the influence of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene, Book II: The Legend of Temperance* on the character development in *A Thousand Acres.* Although *Book II,* Canto x contains a brief account of King Lear and his daughters, the preponderance of relevant material will be drawn from the story of Medina's Castle in Canto ii, where Medma (the mean) and her two sisters Perissa (excess) and Elissa (defect) combat for a dwelling left to them by their father. The three allegorical qualities represented by the daughters are evocative of Ginny, Rose, and Caroline in Smiley's novel.   The constant combat between Perissa and Elissa and their mutual hostility toward Medina is illustrated in Smiley's novel with the ill-will created by the inheritance, the lawsuit, and the romantic rivalry over Jess. However, as with her Shakespearean appropriations, Smiley is not a slave to the precedent text. She makes deliberate and meaningful alterations in her Spenserian acquisitions for the benefit of her narrative.   There is no exact

correspondence between characters in *The Legend of the Temperance* and *A Thousand Acres.* Instead, Smiley has appropriated structuring devices for characterization and setting and has borrowed personality traits for the development of her Iowa farmers.

The episode of Medina's Castle in the second book of *The Faerie Queene* constitutes the initial opportunity for Guyon, the knight of temperance, to defame his nature through opposition. In Spenser's epic, "temperance" is the balancing and moderating of oppositions, the synthesizing of the thesis and the antithesis. This dialectical structure is what Guyon encounters when he visits Medina's castle. The three sisters are the daughters of one man and three separate mothers. The dwelling has been left to them upon their father's death. However, their natures are so contrary that they cannot peacefully abide within a single residence. The eldest and youngest sisters, Elissa and Perissa, are constantly at war with each other, pausing in their struggle only to contend with the middle child Medina.

Elissa, whose name means "defect" and who signifies moral deficiency or inadequacy, is the traditional melancholic who does not partake of merriment or any "base entertainment." She is perpetually discontent, frowning upon, threatening, and scolding her suitor Huddibras, who is her fit companion. Huddibras, whose name means "foolhardiness," is a "malcontent," a conservative temperament tormented by the immodesty and excess of others, particularly of Perissa and her paramour Sans-Loy. Perissa represents the excessive indulgence in worldly pleasures. She is immodest in her attire, in her consumption of food and drink, and particularly in her amorous pursuits. Perissa's lover is "lawlessness"--Sans-Loy, who encourages in her looseness and who is himself inclined toward immodesty. Medina is the mean between the two extreme temperaments of her sisters, remaining "sober," gracious, and moderate. The latter sister has no lover but is

championed appropriately by Guyon when he visits the castle *(II.ii. 35-37).*

The above abbreviated description of the second canto of *Book II* reveals some obvious parallels to the structure and content of Smiley's novel. First, the personality traits of the central characters can be detected in the qualities of Smiley's Cook family; second, the matching of sister with a spouse who mirrors and facilitates her nature is also one of Smiley's techniques; and third, the dialectical structure of the morality play, of the "psychomachia," organizes both poem and novel.

Ginny Cook, from whose point-of-view the novel is narrated, reveals qualities indicative of Spenser's Elissa. While Ginny can hardly be characterized a melancholiac, there is a reserve and sobriety about her that sets her apart from her sisters. She, by her nature, remains unruffled in the face of difficulties, slow to anger, and genuinely understanding of others' point-of-view. When her father divides his farm and begins behaving erratically, she refuses to become alarmed, offering explanations for his behavior that are indulgent and dismissive. When Caroline expresses alarm at her father's unexpected visit to the city, Ginny explains that he is a "grown man with a driver's license." The same even temper is revealed in her relationship with her husband. She and Ty always had the ability to disagree without fighting. Even in the moments preceding their separation, they were calmly discussing their future.

Her brief affair with Jess eliminates any association between Ginny and Elissa's prudishness and disdain for pleasure, although she does admit that she has never slept with any man besides Ty and Jess, which by contemporary standards may constitute restraint. Instead of a contempt for sexual pleasure, Ginny's defect is far more subtle. Her life is characterized by absence and emptiness, particularly an absence of passion. The narrative can even be understood as Ginny's progressive irritation and hardening. At the beginning of the novel, she seems virtually incapable of anger. The first time

that she speaks harshly to her father, she admits to feeling exhilarated. The most dramatic manifestation of this apathy is revealed in her method of coping with her molestation by her father. She has repressed the painful childhood memory, and even when reminded of the incident by her sister, she is initially incredulous. Ginny's defect of passion has its symbolic manifestation in her inability to carry a pregnancy to term. Her spartan lifestyle following her move to Des Moines aligns her more clearly with Elissa's defects. She rents a small apartment, works as a waitress and even swears off the company of men:

> Solitude is part of my inheritance, too. Men are
> friendly to me at the restaurant, and sometimes
> they ask me to a movie.... The men who ask me
> out are simple and strange, defeated by their
> own solitude. It is easier, and more seductive, to
> leave those doors closed. (369)

Ginny is aptly matched with Ty who is equally passionless. Like Spenser's Huddibras, Ty is reproachful of any show of excess. He disapproves when Ginny chastises her father for driving drunk and wrecking his truck. Ty explains that the way to handle Larry is "to sort of hunker down and let it blow over. In one ear and out the other" (143). In his view, the daughters should not "take issue with their father," but should "let a lot of things slide" (104). He quietly acquiesces when Larry calls Ginny a "barren whore" (181), and then patiently searches for the old man when he wanders off into the storm. When Ginny faces her ex-husband at the conclusion of the novel, she asks if he knew what Larry would say to her in the midst of the storm and if he silently agreed. The question, in effect, explores whether Ty knew about her affair with Jess. Ty hints at some knowledge of her transgression when he tells her, "I think you've shown off plenty this summer, frankly" (329). Whereas one cannot blame an individual for objecting to her spouse's infidelity, Ty's response seems to have less to do with jealousy than with a natural distaste for

extravagance. After all, the remark is ostensibly a response to Ginny's suggestion that they occupy a house too large for them. When the estranged couple face off at the conclusion of the novel, Ty admits that he "hated all that mess" (341), and he repudiates Rose for her new affluence and arrogance. In his opinion, she is going "around like some queen" (340). His formal repudiation of passion and excess is revealed in his dubious response to the incest and molestation story. Rather than expressing outrage, he prefers to keep "private things private" (340). Ty's foolhardiness is evident in his decision to side with the plaintiffs in the Larry and Caroline's lawsuit to win back the farm. The decision was illogical, particularly since the suit was financially detrimental to the farm that he professed to defend.

The placidity and simplemindedness of Ty and Ginny is foiled by the complexity of Rose and her husband Pete, who share a volatile relationship characterized by an "excess." Ginny describes them as "generally more stirred up and dissatisfied" (12). Like Spenser's Perissa who is unchecked in her extravagance, Rose is unyielding in her resentment and irritation, and she is self-assured in her judgement (unlike Ginny who is tortured by doubt). Following the storm incident, Rose complains that Ginny is too slow to judge, adding "you sound so mild. Aren't you furious?" (187). Ginny, on the other hand, is in awe of her sister's resolution; even in monopoly, Rose plays without "fear or caution" 140-41). The novel is very clear that Rose's obstinate anger stems from her molestation by her father. Unlike Ginny whose efforts to cope with the experience involved sublimation of her injuries, Rose is obsessed with the violation, vowing to be angry until she dies (354). She is proud that she never forgave her father and considers that resolution her only accomplishment in life:

> So all I have is the knowledge that I saw! That I
> saw without being afraid and without turning
> away, and that I didn't forgive the unforgivable.
> (155-56).

Rose's obstinance is realized in her ability to seize what she wants without fear of harming others. Her mother once remarked that Rose was the "most jealous child she ever knew" (303). Rose embarks on an affair with Jess, knowing that her sister is already involved with him. She even informs Ginny of the relationship without apology or guilt. Pete's death is a consequence of her having told him about the affair: his response was to get drunk and drive his truck into a ditch. Following the resolution of the lawsuit, Rose is still so angry at Larry that she gloats loudly in the hallway despite the fact that the man is deranged and incapable of understanding his predicament.

Rose conforms to Perissa's excess in more rigorous ways. Perissa's luxury is realized in Rose's demeanor. Following Ginny's departure for the city, Ty reports that Rose moved into the big house, the same that was too large for Ty and his wife, and adds, she thinks "she's going to be a land baroness" (341). The association of Rose with fertility further reinforces the resemblance, since Perissa's excesses include carnality. Rose's fecundity, represented by her children, is set off against Ginny's barrenness and is the source of tension between the sisters, just as Elissa's sexual reservations are differentiated from Perissa's liberality. Rose's unrepentant carnality may also be manifest in her admission that she was not raped by her father, but seduced, that she was flattered by his attention and surrendered to his advances willingly.

Pete is the appropriate spouse for Rose since he shares many of the same qualities. He is an easy analogue to lawlessness. Spenser describes San-by as

> The most unruly, and the boldest boy, That ever warlike weapons managed, And to all lawless lust encouraged. (ll.ii. 18)

Although he is the most irascible character in the novel, Pete can, nevertheless, be very charming and entertaining. His face is a constant presence in the novel, and much of his anger is directed at his father-in-law

whom he blames for virtually every problem in his marriage. He had periodically beaten his wife until he accidentally broke her arm, at which time he ceased his abuse of her and directed his anger at Larry. When Rose told him of her molestation at her father's hands, Pete vowed to kill Larry, a vow that was merely bravado, but when she informs him of her affair with Jess, he uses a gun to terrorize the Clarke household where Larry is staying. Once again, his fury is mostly bluster; he leaves when the blinded Harold Clarke identifies him by name and threatens to call the police. Pete is capable of actual violence against people besides his wife, however. He is responsible for the farm accident that results in Harold Clarke's blindness. He loosens the hose on the fertilizer and empties the water container so that when Harold is sprayed in the face with toxic chemicals, there is no water to flush the poison from his eyes. Even Pete's own death may be self-inflicted violence. The novel leaves open the possibility that he drove into the ditch intentionally, but, regardless, he is certainly recklessly driving while intoxicated. The same boyish wantonness and abandon that composes Pete's negative qualities, also contributes to his more charming traits. A former rock musician, he entertains the others with stories of his satimialian escapades on the road, telling with pride how he was picked up by a hippie couple who made him high, tied him up, and then molested him. His narrative boarders on insensitive toward his wife when he talks explicitly of oral sex; however, as we have seen, Rose can be equally insensitive. Pete's volatile temperament contrasts sharply with Ty's quiet sobriety. Pete is dangerous, irrational, and exciting, while Ty is safe, reasonable, and dull.

The Medieval/Renaissance appreciation of the mean between extremes does not find a place in *A Thousand Acres*. While Caroline does share personality traits with both her sisters, her middle place is not idealized by the author. The text suggests that her moderation results from an ignorance of the circumstances of Rose and Ginny's adolescence--namely the incestuous molestation.

Like Rose, Caroline is fearless, confident and angry, yet like Ginny she is reserved. Both of the older sisters marvel at her ability to stand up to their father without fear *(125),* and yet they also observe how patient and solicitous she can be when she is caring for him. Caroline's attitude toward Larry has always been a "strange alternation between loyalty and scheming" (117). Her moderation is governed by a rationality that results from her training as a lawyer. She looks "for the rights and wrongs of every argument" (33). When Caroline angers Larry for balking at his offer of the farm, Ginny summarizes her behavior, stating that she had "spoken as a lawyer when she should have spoken as a daughter" (21). Her natural reticence identifies her with moderation and separates her from her sisters. Spenser's Medina governs and moderates the excess of her sisters:

> Between them both the faire Medina sate
> With sober grace, and goodly carriage:
> With equal measures she did moderate
> The strong extremities of their outrage;
> That forward paire she ever would assuage,
> When they would strive dew reason to exceed;
> But that same froward twaine would accourage,
> And of her plenty adde unto their need:
> So kept she them in order, and her selfe in need.
> (II.ii.38)

Like Medina, Caroline's behavior frequently balances and counters that of her sisters:

> She just can't stand to be one of us, that's the key. Haven't you ever noticed? When we go along, she balks. When we resist, she's sweet as pie (60).

The animosity between Perissa and Elissa is only assuaged when they pause to gang up on Medina; similarly, prior to the court date, Ginny and Rose have already turned on each other. Rose has betrayed Ginny with Jess, and Ginny has nurtured a plot to kill Rose, yet they are united briefly in their opposition to Caroline's lawsuit.   The   narrative   suggests   that   Caroline's

moderation is the result of ignorance. Larry Cook's violation of his eldest daughters is not an event about which one can be reasonable and non-committal. The youngest daughter can only support her father while completely ignorant of his past. When Ginny and Caroline meet at the dissolution of the farm, Caroline fights to maintain her naive view of Cook family relations:

> You're going to tell me something terrible about
> Daddy, or Mommy, or Grandpa Cook or
> somebody. You're going to wreck my childhood
> for me. I can see it in your face. You're dying to
> do it, just like Rose was. She used to call me,
> but I wouldn't talk to her! (362)

Curiously, Caroline senses that there is some terrible secret in her family's past, but unlike Rose who saw and did not turn away and Ginny who relegated the memory to the unconscious, Caroline willfully chooses not to examine the past in order to preserve her own balance.

Jess Clarke's sexual exploits with both of the elder Cook sisters might at first seem to eliminate him as any representation of Guyon's temperance, and yet he is in many ways associated with moderation. He balances the extremities of Pete and Ty, thus creating an idealized romantic object that rehabilitates Cook sisters' dissatisfaction with their husbands. Jess demonstrates Pete's fury by his willingness to defend the Cook sisters against Harold's insults. However, like Ty, he seems to be even-tempered, slow to anger and frustration most of the time. Jess shares Pete's proneness to sexual exploration, yet like Ty, he treats women with courtesy and deference. Jess' temperance is more easily observed in his lifestyle. He refused to fight in the Vietnam War, a resolution for which his father never forgave him.   He has a commitment to organic farming because he objects to the reckless use of pesticides, which he believes are poisoning the population. Moreover, he never drinks and is a vegetarian because he does not like the way meat is produced in this country. He has studied Buddhism, and while he knows that he cannot achieve the Eastern

serenity through simple living, he can, nevertheless, strive for "inner peace" (37). Like Guyon, who seeks to impose his own moderation on others, Jess' philosophy influences those around him. He boasts that he has almost talked Harold into farming organically. He has convinced Ginny that she must stop drying up the well water if she ever wants to have a child, and he transforms Rose and her children into vegetarians. Rose, however, tries to break her sister's continued fascination with Jess at the end of the novel by telling her that his rituals and ideas became tedious very quickly:

> There were all these routines. No more than three eggs a week, always poached and served on browned but never burned wheat toast. Steel-cut oatmeal from some organic store in San Francisco. Ginsing tea three times a day. Meditation at sunrise. (351)

Perhaps her most complete repudiation of Jess' lifestyle is her instructions that Ginny should make fried chicken for the children when she gets home. Reinforcing the comparison between the men in the novel, Rose counters Ginny's assertion that he was a "kind man" by stating, "Ty was a kinder. You couldn't stand that' (351). The assertion that Jess was kind would certainly set him apart from Pete who beat his wife and, after her radical mastectomy, would not allow her to go shirtless in his presence.

The dialectical structure of the characterizations within the novel is reminiscent of the Morality play with its dramatization of antithetical influences on a central figure. Most prominent is the opposing perspectives on Larry Cook's behavior offered by his two eldest daughters, one who gluts herself on anger and resentment over her father's abuse and the other who has repressed the memory and strives for understanding and reconciliation. Early in the novel, Rose and Ginny could be characterized respectively as punishment and compassion, as hatred and love. Curiously, neither hatred nor love win out at the conclusion of the narrative: Rose vows to be angry

until she dies, but she never makes her father acknowledge his crimes nor convinces those who respect him that he is a child molester, and Ginny reflects upon the failure of her love --"My love, which I always had believed could transcend the physical, had failed too..." (307) -- but she is equally incapable of remaining angry at those who have injured her. The same dialectic is mirrored in the husbands' attitudes toward their father-in-law. Pete knows of the abuse and wants to kill Larry, while Ty is ignorant of the family's past and is incredulous after he is informed. Just as the morality play is concerned with the salvation of the central figure (i.e. Everyman or Mankind), *A Thousand Acres* addresses the judgement of Larry Cook by his daughters. However, the father who had committed an unforgivable crime against his two eldest daughters escapes even from the knowledge of judgment by lapsing in to madness. Not only is he never able to recognize the injuries he inflicted upon his daughters, he believes that Caroline is Rose and that they still love each other.

In her address to the 1992 National Book Critics Circle, Smiley indicated that the true subject of *A Thousand Acres* is the indictment of the farming practices adopted by the Cook family and their neighbors, which, in her view, are "leading us toward environmental disaster" (Bakerman 129). These methods include the use of pesticides and other toxic chemicals to increase production of the crop. While the farm should be a representation of nature and health, it is instead a toxic wasteland that destroys those who work it. This imagery is common to the medieval morality tradition, where the world is portrayed as a wasteland filled with temptations, a place where virtues and vices war for the soul of humanity. This motif is particularly apparent in *The Castle of Perserverence,* where Humanum Genus, fortified inside a tower, is assaulted by the seven deadly sins. Spenser also appropriates this tradition in *Book II*, Cantos ix-xi, where the temperate human body is represented as a castle besieged by the sin and disease. In Spenser's

narrative, the body's only defense against these destructive forces is temperance and grace, embodied in Guyon and Arthur's brief residence in the castle. Thus, it is luxury and over-indulgence that bring temptation and destruction. The use of noxious fertilizers and pesticides to increase the farm's output signifies the Cook family's ambition, and cancer, madness and barrenness are the price of their immodest ventures. Larry Cook's unprincipled pursuit of a thousand acres involved sacrifices exceeding the mere expenditure of time and energy. The family body is literally under assault by carcinogens. Thus the decay and destruction of the family can be traced directly to Larry's poisonous aspirations (Bakerman *135).* The mother died young of breast cancer, probably resulting from exposure to pernicious chemicals, and her early death paved the way for Larry's sexual abuse of his own daughters. Rose too has been treated for breast cancer at the beginning of the novel and succumbs to it by the end. Her radical mastectomy has contributed to her alienation from her husband, the same that results in her affair with Jess Clark and estrangement from her sister. Ginny's barrenness is attributed to her drinking polluted well water, and disappointment over her multiple miscarriages probably drives her too into the arms of Jess and concludes with her own separation and divorce. Larry's madness may be the consequence of his own exposure to chemicals, and his ill-advised plan to divide his farm is attributed to the same mental decay that is accelerated once he retires. Ginny fears that the poisons have even infiltrated the Cooks' DNA (369). The poison earth motif is extended to include the entire community. Ginny remarks that there is not a family in the area unaffected by toxic chemicals, and Harold's blinding by the virulent fertilizer Anhydrous Ammonia is an appropriate example. The novel offers an alternative to the painful farming practices. Jess Clark's organic farming points the way out of the chemical wasteland, but it is also inefficient and impractical, contributing to the farm's insolvency.

Moreover, Jess himself does not have the resolution to see the project through. He abandons Rose and her children when he perceives impending domestic conflict.

The geocentric world view popularly associated with the Middle Ages and the Early Modern era is represented in Smiley's novel. Ginny remembers her childhood perceptions of the farm:

> From that bump, the earth was unquestionably flat, the sky unquestionably domed, and it seemed to me when I was a child in school, learning about Columbus, that in spite of what my teacher said, ancient cultures might have been on to something. No globe or map fully convinced me that Zebulon County was not the center of the universe. (3)

The centrality of Zebulon County in the childhood impression of the universe is related to the monarchical structure of farm and family. Indeed, Zebulon County resembles feudalism with Larry Cook as principal ruler. He attained his thousand acres through hostile appropriations of his neighbors' farms. Moreover, Ginny observes the fealty of the local farmers who will not attempt any new agricultural techniques without first consulting Larry. The fate of the farm at the conclusion of the novel resembles the decline of monarchy and the rise of the nation state in the early modern period: the farm is swallowed up and the buildings bulldozed by the gigantic Heartland Corporation.

The monarchical trope is extended into the interaction of the characters. The father's kingly stature in the children's perceptions contributes to the family's tragedy. Ginny regrets that her mother died before she implanted in her children a sense of their father's failing, before she had humanized him sufficiently in the children's eyes that they could understand him, and indeed a great deal of the narrative is consumed by their efforts to decipher their erratic father's behavior. Even after the family's dissolution is complete, Ginny still

cannot adequately account her father: "Daddy, who is what he is and cannot be labeled" (369).

Smiley's appropriation of the Early Modern and Medieval philosophical and aesthetic traditions, nevertheless, produces some very contemporary conclusions. Smiley identifies the origin of *A Thousand Acres* as her response to Akira Kurosawa's *Ran,* a transformation of the Shakespearean narrative into a Medieval Japanese epic. Smiley was particularly moved by the suggestion that Kurosawa's Hidetora made his children what they are (Bakerman 133). From here, she extrapolated the story of abuse that redirects the audiences' sympathy from Lear to his daughters. The narrative signals the shift from a world view that regarded the father as the center of domestic authority to the post-Freudian milieu in which the parent is the origin of all the child's psycho-pathologies. The presence of Medieval and Early Modern motifs within the text acts as a foil for the expression of contemporary values. Larry, unlike Mankind of the Morality tradition, cannot obtain grace or even knowledge of his crimes. Sexual restraint and fidelity are not necessarily the principal virtues by which a person's character or even her moderation is assessed, and the mean between two extremes is not always the desirable position. Moderation can sometimes resemble a failure of will and commitment, and compassion can entice one to condone or forget the unforgivable.

Works Cited

Bakerman, Jane S. "The Gleaming Obsidian Shard: Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres.*" *Midamerica* 19 (1992): 127-137.

Bevington, David ed. *Medieval Drama.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, *1975.*

Carden, Mary Paniccia. "Remembering engendering the Heartland: Sexed Language, Embodied Space, and America's Foundational Fictions in Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres.*" *Frontiers* 18 (1997): 181-202.

Keppel, Tim. "Goneril's Version: *A Thousand Acres* and *King Lear." South Dakota Review 33(1995): 105-117.*

Smiley, Jane. *A Thousand Acres.* New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1991.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene.* Ed. A.C. Hamilton. New York: Longman. 1977.

The Goddess and the Critics: addressing a problem in the construction of feminist knowledge

Tammy Anderson

Noam Chomsky, in *Rules and Representations*, asserts that the act of naming a thing determines the particular manner in which that thing is expected to behave. Therefore, the act of "defining" a thing is, in a sense, an act of "confining" it (Davidson 27). This is particularly so for "woman," in Jung's archetypal naming of her, as in his discussion of the anima/animus component of the human psyche. He defines the anima as the invisible feminine "weakness" in the male psyche but asserts that the animus, the corresponding male archetype of the female psyche, represents the capacity for reflection and deliberation as well as qualities of creativity, procreativity, assertiveness and initiative. By defining these qualities as specifically male, Woman is reduced to representing no more than self-knowledge for man. Moreover, Jung equates the worship of the soul to the worship of Woman, thus severely restricting the ways in which Woman is expected to behave. This is evident in his discussion of the significance of the Virgin Mother image: "she is a vessel of devotion, a source of wisdom and renewal" (Jung 7). In patriarchal, Christian terms, she is an empty vessel filled by the seed of the Holy Ghost so she might bear Christ, who embodies salvation through spiritual wisdom and resurrection. In effect, Jung has denied her the ability to possess knowledge as a being in her own right and reduced her to an object with only the capacity to represent the attainment of knowledge. She cannot "be;" she can only "be had."

The representations of women in medieval literature reflect this "lack of being," even in the works of Chaucer, who has long been a source of feminist debate. In fact, according to feminist theory, it is this very "lack" embodied in women by which the patriarchy defines its own masculinity: man has and Woman has not. He has

strength, a voice, and the light of knowledge and truth, while she is weak, silent, and the darkness of mystery and deception. Man exists in the spiritual realm and Woman in the physical. He is the active subject while she is the passive object. Woman is continually portrayed as powerless, intellectually inferior, and wicked, a vision evident in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, despite dissenting celebration of his supposed feminist stance.

In the "Knight's Tale," Emelye, a young uncomplicated maiden, does not "exist" until she becomes objectified as the desire of Palamon and Arcite. She doesn't own her voice or the capacity to make decisions regarding her future. At the tale's close, Theseus lectures Emelye on the importance of recognizing Palamon's desire and denying her own: "for gentil mercy oghte to passen right" (Chaucer 144). Also, Emelye is compared, as all women are, to inconstant Fortune because "she agayn him caste a freendlich yë" upon Arcite's victory at the tournament (Chaucer 124).

The Prioress is similarly unable to act, pitifully trapped as she is between two extremes, and thus ridiculously unable to fulfill either role. Chaucer's depiction of the Prioress as a somewhat misguided courtly mistress is unmistakable in the "General Prologue," beginning with: "that of hir smyling was ful simple and coy" (Chaucer 6). She cannot be a nun because she cannot distinguish between spiritual love and physical love, as is indicated by her brooch reading "Amor vincit omnia" (Chaucer 8). Her vocation, on the other hand, prevents her from being a mother, so she "mothers" small dogs.

The Wife of Bath, although she has been married five times, has no children. Hence, she has failed in what was patriarchally considered the most important role of Woman, that of mother. Instead, she is a physical creature, justifying her voracious sexual appetite as fulfillment of the divine instruction to increase and multiply. In addition, she is quite immodest about her promiscuous behavior, openly proclaiming her lust,

lecherousness, and lack of discrimination in following her appetite for young, virile lovers. Indeed, the wife seems to ascribe to the medieval patriarchal view of women: "Deceite...God hath yive to wommen kindely," (Chaucer 200) she says, as she takes great pride in having "got the better" of her husbands. In fact, the Wife of Bath epitomizes the negative aspect of Woman: she is wicked, deceitful, inconstant, and a slave to physical appetites.

Chaucer, personifying the dark and mutable mystery of the moon in the women of *The Canterbury Tales*, vividly expresses the medieval link between the macrocosm (the moon) and the microcosm (woman). In order to examine this link, let us first consider how the moon represents the "Goddess" and Woman.

Erich Neumann tells us the moon is the spiritual symbol of the feminine mysteries because it is the "Great Mother of the Night Sky." Similarly, Tillyard identifies the moon as a celestial depiction of Woman: "the moon was set to duplicate the queen in the heavens" (90). Taking the connection a step further, Laurie Cabot identifies woman and the moon as

> parallel aspects of the same phenomenon - an indication that the Goddess who manifested in the moon each month also manifested in [women's] own bodies (37).

This manifestation, evident in the use of lunar time to track menstrual cycles and pregnancies, and to predict births, illustrates a powerful link between the macrocosmic moon and the microcosmic woman. Yet it is a logical link, since both ancient and modern practitioners of Mother/Goddess religions assert "all women are [the] Goddess Incarnate" (Weinstein 71). Thus, if the Goddess is the moon and all women are the Goddess, then women are also the moon.

Among its myriad of associations, the moon symbolizes mystery, illusion, and the darkness of ignorance which, by its very nature, must give birth to the light of wisdom, as well as other apparently opposing characteristics (Hall LXXII). Most of all, the moon is the

very aspect of duality. As in the Goddess, whom it represents, there exist both light and dark, positive and negative, consciousness and illusion. Her mutability is inherent in the cycles of birth, death, and rebirth.

As Robert Graves puts it,

> The New Moon is the White Goddess of birth and growth; the Full Moon, the red goddess of love and battle; the Old Moon, the black goddess of death and divination (69).

Despite the questioning of his definition of the tripartite Goddess, this representation appears frequently in nearly all discussions of the Goddess and Her manifestation in the moon and women. The faces of the Goddess are reflected in the three phases of the Moon (Cabot 26). The crescent (new) moon is the young, presumably innocent, maiden. She matures into the matron/mother figure, the face of the full moon, who wanes into old age and finally death (the dark moon). Then, as the dark moon disappears and is reborn, so too the Crone dies and experiences rebirth as the maiden. She is the Threefold Moon Goddess.

Chaucer's references to the Moon Goddess from the Classical epics, particularly Greek and Roman mythology, generally take the form of Diana, who is defined by virtue of the three forms she possesses (Chaucer 109). However, she may be known by a variety of names representing the three personae of the moon. First is Diana as Athena, Battle Goddess, or Artemis, Maiden Goddess of Wild Things. Second, she may take the form of Artemis, Protector of Youth, or Lucina, Goddess of Childbirth. Finally, she may be Hecate, Goddess of the Underworld or the Dark Moon Goddess. No matter what she is called, she is always the Goddess of the Three Forms and subject to lunar influences.

Chaucer presents the maiden as the new moon to us as Emelye. She is identified as a maiden of Diana, Virgin Huntress, and she is therefore an earthly reflection of Diana. Physically, Emelye first appears as Diana is frequently represented: golden-haired, youthful, royal,

virginal and beautiful (Boyd 5). Indeed, to Palamon, she is a "goddess," wearing the crown of flowers, another Dianic maiden symbol. Later, we see Emelye as Diana in human form as she rides out - "all dressed in green"- to the hunt. Diana, whose color was green, was the huntress and guardian of forests. Emelye hunts deer, an animal sacred to Diana, and signifying beauty, grace, agility, and regeneration, in the stag's antlers (Gimbutas 89).

Yet, Emelye must inevitably move into the phase of the wife/mother, just as the crescent moon must become the full moon, when she becomes Palamon's wife at the end of the tale. She must develop that "secret knowledge" that comes through the mystery of motherhood (woman's physical uniqueness) and its emotional, spiritual, and psychological connotations (Morgan 5). But the reverberations of the dark moon phase exist in Emelye as well. Arcite suffers bitter pain and death in her honor and so she is the "endere of [his] lyf" (Chaucer 130). She sits at his deathbed and performs the burial rituals guiding him into the afterlife. Even as the maiden, Emelye has already worn the three faces of the Great Moon Goddess.

The Prioress, despite her vocation as nun, represents the second persona of the Moon Goddess. She embodies both the negative and positive aspects of the seductress and the wife/mother, emphasizing her attractiveness and her desire for physical love while remaining very conscious of her position in the Church. Her depiction as not quite nun and not quite courtly mistress aptly reflects the moon as the embodiment of duality and illusion. And so the Prioress is trapped between the polarities represented by the full moon phase, inherent in the roles of nun and courtly mistress.

Just as one would expect to find the full moon, the Prioress appears as the "goddess of voluptuousness" (Neumann 182) with her large figure and notably broad forehead. As such, she represents the fullness of life and fertility of the world. She is the source of nourishment

and protection, as tender and full of pity as Artemis, the Great Mother, signified by the moon's full face. The Prioress keeps about her small dogs, which she nourishes and protects. As the principle animal of the Moon Goddess, the dog worshipped Her by howling at the night moon (Gimbutas 116). The dog was also the companion of the dead and the symbol of Hecate, Mistress of the Underworld (Neumann 170). In the Prioress' pampered pets, we see her connection to the Goddess, containing the knowledge of life and death, made clear.

Her tale is a devotional to the Virgin, with an emphasis on her role as Mother, through divine conception. As the full moon, "Woman experiences her power to bring forth light and spirit, to generate a luminous spirit that...is enduring and immortal," (Neumann 320) just as the Virgin Mary did. Here, the Prioress may be simply worshipping the "Great Mother," however Christianized, as her tale raises no issues that her contemporaries would consider controversial. Yet she not only worships the Virgin but identifies with her as the "help of souls," a role she fulfills by her vocation as nun. Furthermore, hers is a tale of sacrifice; although Christian in nature, it exemplifies a central theme for the Great Goddess, wherein sacrifice is necessary for perpetual renewal. Also in her tale, there appears a widow (the old moon), and the Prioress praises Mary's miraculous sustaining of the slain child until she could guide him to heaven. These details provide echoes of the moon's final phases where the Goddess functions in both death and rebirth. Although her stage in the moon's cycle seems static, the waning moon is a period of growth from which the Prioress will move from her position of balance between the maiden and the matron. She will become fully the matron figure, whether or not it includes motherhood, and eventually the crone or wise woman.

The third persona of the moon is illustrated in "dame Alis," the Wife of Bath. She has survived five husbands and acknowledged that "age...hath [her] biraft [her]

beautee and [her] pitch" (Chaucer 202). Physically, she is the crone. She represents the moon in other aspects as well. Diana, as Artemis, is the guardian of handicrafts and Dame Alice was known for her skill in weaving. And, like Diana, the Battle Goddess, the Wife of Bath was an accomplished horsewoman. Although she offers a detailed description of her maiden phase, Dame Alice now stands at the edge of duality between the matron and crone phases of the moon.

The Wife of Bath employs her knowledge and experience to emphasize the physical aspect of human existence, a particularly interesting characteristic she shares with her symbolic moon.

> The Wife's assertion of bodily fact - of the various functions of the genitals, for instance - is an appeal to the half of human experience that cannot be disallowed by official doctrines on the greater importance of the spirit over the flesh (Cooper 151).

Dame Alice reclaims the physical organs from the spiritual realm by saying that, unless men and women live as saints, virginity is a perfection not for humans. Similarly, the moon is empowered as the symbol of the physical nature of humanity because the body, like the moon, shines only with reflected light. In short, the moon, like men and women, is considered beneath the stable heavens, and deceptive in nature.

The Wife of Bath has come full circle through the maiden and matron phases and is now the widow/crone, the Goddess of Wisdom, the culmination of all feminine knowledge. Dame Alice represents the Dark Moon Goddess, Hecate, who leads souls to the underworld. The underworld is the womb of the earth through which the dead must pass either to doom or to salvation and a higher existence (Neumann 157). Already she has led five husbands through the "hell" of marriage by becoming their purgatory on earth (Chaucer 205). Her final movement into rebirth is not borne out in her life but occurs in her tale. As a mortal human, she cannot

experience any sort of "real" death and rebirth. But, the hag in the Wife of Bath's Tale represents the voice of Dame Alice and "offers fulfillment of [the Wife's] conscious desires for mastery and a young and virile husband" (Cooper 156-7). The hag is, very simply, "the Wife's alter ego" (Cooper 164). The restoration of her youth and beauty can only be expressed as the regret of an unattainable desire, but is clearly the final phase of the moon's cycle.

Chaucer utilizes an impressive synthesis of the moon's influences within the *Tales* to personify the Goddess in his female characters, in the cyclic growth from birth to maturity to death. Through the individual women discussed here, the maiden/matron-mother/widow theme is powerfully effective. Each woman represents not only a particular face of the Goddess, but also her entire lunar cycle. The *Tales* allow a complete, though layered, vision of the three faces of the Goddess in the women of Chaucer's imagination.

Establishing "woman" as the Goddess Incarnate does not remove her from the patriarchal construct. However, the tripartite Goddess concept itself arises from the much older traditions of matriarchy explored by anthropologists the like of Marija Gimbutas, Margaret Mead, and Merlin Stone. And Neumann asserts that although

> this Western development, in which the patriarchal element nearly always overlays and quite often submerges the matriarchal, the fundamental matriarchal structure has proved so strong...that in the course of time the patriarchal stratum overlaying it has...been annulled (332).

All creation shares a symbolic birth from darkness. Matriarchy is, therefore, the "darkness" from which the patriarchy has sprung, in spite of its eager attempts to deny its origins. And, whether intentionally or not, it is the matriarchal tradition upon which Chaucer draws to empower his female characters with a knowledge of their own. For Emelye, the Prioress, and the Wife of Bath can

also be understood to occupy subjective positions representing "beings having knowledge," in spite of their patriarchal restrictions.

Although Emelye has no voice of her own, even the Knight's voice cannot diminish her power to know, her power of "being." Emelye, we are told, descends from the Amazons, "warlike, beautiful mankillers" (Boyd 4). According to the legend, Queen Hippolyta was taken in marriage only because she was defeated in battle. Her defeat was also Emelye's; however, Emelye remained unmarried, not belonging to a husband as the patriarchy would have her. She roamed about, apparently unchaperoned, and "took her amusement" (Chaucer 51, my emphasis) where and when she chose.

Emelye's true knowledge surfaces in her ritual prayer to Diana prior to the tournament. Her desire is to remain a maiden, "not wol I knowe companye of man" (Chaucer 108) and, in fact, to be removed from the objective position of men's desire. She asks for deliverance from the passions of her suitors and, if not that, to be given to the one who most desires her. In short, Emelye is a captive and, as such, can only submit to her captor's will. Although she gives voice to her true desire, there is no choice for her but admitting defeat and accepting marriage. Emelye is not simply torn between the two choices because she is an innocent played as a pawn, but intuitively recognizes the futility of denying the shaping force of destiny. In the tradition of the Goddess, she must submit to the "mystery of the marriage of death" to express her transformation in growing from girlhood to womanhood (Neumann 319).

Jung states "all manifestations of the Earth Mother are described as powerful...she is a divine being" (147). The Prioress in particular appears worthy of such reverence. She is the earthly manifestation of the divine Goddess, who is worshipped in the patriarchal system as the Virgin Mary. That the Prioress appears more as courtly mistress than nun is not contradictory when one considers that in the earlier Goddess tradition, feminine

sexuality was divine, sexual customs were an aspect of a woman's religious worship, and she dressed "in all her finery to do so" (Stone 161). Without the patriarchal condemnation, the Prioress would be fulfilling perfectly her role as "holy woman" in the female religion of the "Divine Ancestress" (Stone 157). But she struggles against her imposed, patriarchal role. The spiritual aspect for the Prioress is in her imagination, the starting point of all inner emotion and in her erotic feeling to which, "under the protection of religion, [she] gives an expression that surpasses all barriers" (Neumann 294). Her religion, and the expression of it, become a sensual experience, rooted in physical, feminine knowledge.

It would appear from the manner in which the Prioress presents herself that her position in the priory was not the result of any desire to serve Christ. Instead, the nunneries of the Middle Ages represented opportunities women could not find elsewhere, such as education, organization, and responsibility. As head of the nunnery, the Prioress is responsible, in part, for teaching the initiates the worship of the Virgin Mary through song and prayer. The importance of this charge is reflected in her tale. The Prioress equates herself with the widow teaching her son always to worship Christ's mother. For it is She and the singing of Her praises by the innocents that ensures salvation. The nunneries also "provided women with openings to a profession and a career" (Power 90). In fact, many of the functions of women in nunneries made them as much a housewife as any Dame Alice.

The Wife of Bath is the most highly-developed female character of *The Canterbury Tales* and her voice is clearly heard. She embodies the realization of female wisdom through a primarily physical experience; she is one of the "wyse wyves," thus establishing herself an authority. In truth, she violently overturns her position of an "object of knowledge-as-control" (Code 32) in her confrontation with her fifth husband. She exercises her real authority by forcing him to destroy his "knowledge" and accept hers by

his burning of the book of wicked wives. Hence, she occupies the position of knowledge-as-control. She claims his knowledge false by rightly insisting the tales would be different had they been written by women.

The Wife of Bath repeatedly questions the evil men think of women who, in her considered opinion, have as much right to sexual pleasure as men: "man shal yelde to his wyf hir dette" (Chaucer 188). But Dame Alice adamantly refuses the confines of patriarchy: "After thy text, ne after thy rubriche, I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat." (Chaucer 199). There is no doubt she knows the texts of men for not only does she quote them but knows them well enough to interpret them to suit her own purposes. For example, she uses the proverbs of Ptolemy's *Almagest* to justify her marital discretions; she chastises her husbands who will not share her abundant "goods." But for all her twisting and intentional misuse of written knowledge, in the end, she discards it as useless because, in the search for knowledge, there is no substitute for experience. And that the Wife of Bath has in abundance. She speaks in a voice of knowledge and power.

Although Chaucer and his patriarchal system seek to denigrate the power of Woman, within each success germinates the very seed of failure. The underlying power of the ancient matriarchal tradition inevitably finds its expression, even through the language of the patriarchy. Emelye, the young innocent maiden, is empowered with a knowledge which she may not even recognize. Nonetheless, it is a powerful intuition about the transformation she must undertake. In Jungian terms, she has a "knowledge about things for which men have no eyes" (Jung 77). The Prioress finds her power in the worship of the divine, a worship not limited to the soul but encompassing the body as well. She longs for motherhood, for identifying with the Great Mother from whose power the wisdom of the Father was conceived (Chaucer 371). The Wife of Bath is the sum of all feminine knowledge. Just as is the hag in her tale, she is

the one with the answers, the one who knows life's secrets. She can exist in all worlds, mental and physical. She knows how to "be had" and yet how "to be."

Recognizing this, we now see the Virgin Mother image not as an empty vessel but as the Goddess of the Whole with her all-sheltering body who gives birth, nourishes, and transforms through rebirth all of life. She is the force that "hears the cries of the world," performs the sacrifice, offers redemption, and frees the suffering. She is not simply a source of wisdom and renewal but the "perfection of all knowledge," transforming the animal principle into the highest spiritual illumination (Neumann 332). Thus, all archetypes of the Eternal Feminine (Woman) are reunited in the loving Sophia and modern man may discover that

> in the generating and nourishing, protective and transformative feminine power of the unconscious, a wisdom is at work that is infinitely superior to the wisdom of man's waking consciousness (330).

LITERATURE CITED:

Boyd, Beverly. "Chaucer's Moon-Maiden, Emelye." Paper presented at General Medievalism Conference, Kalamazoo, Michigan. 1990.

Cabot, Laurie. *Power of the Witch: The Earth, The Moon, and The Magical Path to Enlightenment.* New York: Delacorte Press, 1989.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Power of Myth.* Ed. Betty Sue Flowers. New York: Doubleday, 1988.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales.* Eds. A. Kent Hieatt and Constance Hieatt. New York: Bantam Books, 1990.

Chomsky, Noam. *Rules and Representations.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.

Code, Lorraine. "Taking Subjectivity into Account." *Feminist Epistemologies.* Ed. Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter. London: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, Inc., 1993. 15-48.

Cooper, Helen. *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Davidson, Lale. "Daughters of Eurydice in Absentia: The Feminine Heroic Quest for Presence in Housekeeping." *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 4.4 (1991): 19-36.

Gimbutas, Marija. *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe: Myths and Cult Images.* 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

Graves, Robert. *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth.* London: Faber and Faber, 1952.

Hall, Manley P. *An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic, and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy, Being an Interpretation of the Secret Teachings Concealed Within the Rituals, Allegories and Mysteries of All Ages.* Diamond Jubilee Edition. California: The Philosophical Research Society, Inc., 1988.

Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1942.

Jung, C.G. *Aspects of the Feminine.* Trans. R.F.C. Hull. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982.

Mann, Jill. *Feminist Readings: Geoffrey Chaucer.* New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1991.

Morgan, Gwendolyn, ed. "In Search of the Not-One." *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 4.4 (1991): 3-8.

Neumann, Erich. *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype.* Trans. Ralph Manhelm. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955.

Power, Eileen. *Medieval Woman.* Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Robinson, F.N. ed. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961.

Schwab, Gustav. *Gods and Heroes: Myths and Epics of Ancient Greece.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1946.

Stone, Merlin. *When God Was a Woman.* New York: Dorset Press, 1976.

Tillyard, E.M.W. *The Elizabethan World Picture.* New York: Vintage Books, 1944.

Weinstein, Marion. *Positive Magic.* Washington: Phoenix Publishing, Inc., 1981.

Modern Medieval Pilgrimages: The Nineteenth-Century Struggle for the Soul of Lourdes

Elizabeth Emery

Voyages to pilgrimage sites, particularly those dedicated to the Virgin Mary, increased dramatically in the last decades of the nineteenth century in France.[1] From retracing the path of medieval pilgrims to Chartres to visiting more recently consecrated shrines that sprang up after contemporary Marian apparitions in La Salette, Lourdes, and Paris, the French rushed to these sites to worship.[2] An improved economy, the increased accessibility of train travel, and the growth of modern marketing techniques attracted pilgrims and tourists, who visited religious sites in increasing numbers throughout the century.[3] The most popular of these was Lourdes. By 1900 more than half a million people a year came to visit the miraculous spring the Virgin Mary had revealed in 1858. The amount of attention devoted to the miracles of Lourdes was such that even well-known novelists Emile Zola and J.-K. Huysmans published works about the phenomenon. *Lourdes* (1894) and *The Crowds of Lourdes* (1906), respectively, became best-sellers.[4]

But as pilgrims, tourists, and curiosity-seekers flocked to Lourdes, many of them were disillusioned by their experience. They complained -- to the Church, in letters to the press, and in their correspondence -- about the rampant harassment of pilgrims by street vendors and beggars; the overabundance of tacky stores and restaurants selling cheap religious trinkets; and about the sheer number of people packed into the small town at the height of the August pilgrimage.[5] The brunt of the pilgrims' dissatisfaction fell upon the missionaries of Notre-Dame de Garaison, better known as the Grotto Fathers, the order that had singlehandedly created the site in the 1860s. Republican writer Emile Zola so despised them that in his novel they became diabolical croupiers who exploited others to fill the Lourdes coffers and to build their own, exclusive empire. As his protagonist looks at their residence, he hears the sound of "a giant rake, scraping through the valley, gathering pilgrims, gold, and the blood of the crowds."[6]

But why would ostensibly peaceful visits to a miraculous shrine elicit such negative reactions? Discourse surrounding Lourdes suggests that visitors were troubled by the clash between modern and medieval: this sanctuary was created entirely in the nineteenth century, yet devoted itself to resurrecting the medieval cult of Mary. Pierre Froment, the protagonist of Zola, attributes his sense of unhappiness with Lourdes to this "discrepancy between the extremely modern milieu and the faith of centuries past, whose resurrection was being attempted."[7] This comment indicates a personal disappointment with Lourdes, while it reveals the contemporary belief that the Church Fathers were trying to renew or rebuild the faith of the past through the experience of Lourdes. This essay explores the nineteenth-century French expectations, beliefs, and attitudes toward Lourdes expressed in newspaper articles, Church documents, publicity material, and the writings of Zola and Huysmans in order to better understand how stereotypes about the Middle Ages were often responsible for disappointment about the Lourdes experience.

Explicit links to resurrecting the past -- especially a medieval Catholic past -- became increasingly prominent in the 1870s, with the establishment of an annual "National Pilgrimage." These organized pilgrimages began in 1872, immediately following the humiliating French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war and the bloody civil unrest of the Commune. They offered discounts of 20-30% on train travel, printed guidebooks to accompany the trip, and housing options for the sick.[8] The Lourdes fathers advertized the national pilgrimage as a way of making amends for the sins of post-Revolutionary France and as a way of returning to the "good" religious values of the Ancien Régime. *L'Univers*, a Catholic newspaper,

applauded the Church's goal of linking the modern phenomenon to the faith of the past: "The pilgrimages [...] *remake* a Christian France, the France of our ancestors, the true, unique French fatherland. The effects are evident, an abundance of graces are diffused; there is hope in the air" (October 24, 1872. Cited in Kselman 120–my emphasis).

Explicit links to the Middle Ages became even stronger in the 1870s. Where earlier Church articles and documents described simple "processions" to the Grotto, after 1875, the Church insisted upon using the world "pèlerinage" -- pilgrimage -- which it applied with insistence to its voyagers.[9] The journey itself was highly ceremonial and orchestrated to link the pilgrims to their ancestors. Before the departure, pilgrims received manuals, many of which were published by the Church as advertizing promotions for Lourdes.[10] Such guidebooks generally defined the word pilgrimage and linked it to the travelers' forefathers:

> [...] a pious process performed through a public procession to a privileged sanctuary in order to enter into more intimate communication with God [...] we go on pilgrimages to do as did our fathers *sicut fecerun patres nostri*; because pilgrimages have always been in the morals of humanity as well as in Church tradition.[11]

After the introduction, the manuals give a brief history of pilgrimages and present daily prayers, prayers for specific places during each day of the pilgrimage, and the texts and music for songs. Each guidebook generally closes with a brief section describing the tourist sights of Lourdes and its surrounding area and provides a list of hotels. As Régine Pernoud points out in her introduction to a 1496 pilgrimage manual, medieval and modern versions of such manuals follow roughly the same format of giving the pilgrim historical and geographical information as well as doctrinal guidance (18-19).

The nineteenth-century Church's use of pilgrimage manuals to insist upon "resurrecting," "recreating," and

allowing modern worshipers to "relive" the traditions of the past firmly anchored the experience of Lourdes to the public's imagination of medieval pilgrimages, and especially the Crusades. Another way of doing this came through the Pope. Pius IX renewed the tradition of marking pilgrims -- specifically those to Lourdes -- with the red cross, as Church Fathers had in the First Crusade. Such insignia thus distinguished pilgrims from mere pleasure seekers while insisting upon the holy mission–the crusade--of their bearers.[12] The red cross emblazoned on chests or on banners is ubiquitous in nineteenth-century paintings dedicated to the Crusades.[13] The sight of pilgrims wearing the red cross, brandishing banners,[14] and pushing or carrying the sick is an image that calls to mind this artistic *topos*.

The ceremonies surrounding the red crosses were elaborate. Before their departure, pilgrims would gather in their churches to receive their crosses–small pins or badges bearing the red cross–which would be blessed with the pilgrims.[15] The manuals describe such ceremonies in detail and place great emphasis upon the need for spirituality during the voyage: "Pilgrimages to the Grotto of Lourdes would deviate from their goal, they would lose all merit if, by our fault, they were to be transformed into simple tourist excursions [...] A pilgrimage is an act of expiation, not a pleasure trip."[16] The religious material prepared pilgrims for entering into a mystical state in which they would forget the material world and their senses: they were to cultivate "the spirit of piety, charity, and penitence."[17] All of these ceremonies and writings explicitly linked the modern journey to the traditions of French forefathers, thus preparing pilgrims for arrival in a mysterious, immaterial, neo-medieval world of prayer and canticle.

Imagine the shock when they arrived in the bustling commercial city of Lourdes! Joseph Demarteau, a Belgian pilgrim who wrote letters home during the 1906 pilgrimage, was taken aback by the crush of the crowds, which constitutes his first description of the city (19).

Another 1906 visitor, the Benedictine oblate J.-K. Huysmans, also remarked upon the seething masses–to such an extent that he changed the title of his exploration from *The Two Faces of Lourdes* to T*he Crowds of Lourdes.* He was disgusted by the abundance of vendors, the cheapness of the religious trinkets, and the difficulty of getting through them to arrive at the Grotto: "it is unbridled competition, boutiques throughout the city waylaying you at every step; you come, go, and swerve, in the middle of all of this hubbub, but you always end up, one way or another, at the grotto."[18]   Pilgrims were shocked by the urbanization of Lourdes, which offered creature comforts for the traveler. They could stay in luxurious hotels, eat in fine restaurants, and enjoy twenty-four hour electricity. Even the miraculous spring was modernized for consumer convenience: the Fathers of the Grotto had rerouted the spring into taps so that visitors could use faucets to pour their fill of water.

It is, in fact, autobiographical and fictional narratives about the city that most clearly reveal the extent to which travelers imagined Lourdes as a neo-medieval fantasy. Pierre Froment, the protagonist of Zola's novel, lingers upon the pious activities of the pilgrims in the train bound for Lourdes. But once they arrive, the town clashes with their medieval expectations:

[Pierre] recalled old cathedrals shivering with the belief of the masses; he saw once again the antique liturgical objects; imagery, silver and gold plate, saints of stone and wood, whose force and beauty of expression was admirable. It was because, in those far off times, workers believed, gave their flesh, gave their soul, in the overwhelming naivete of their emotion [...] and today, architects built churches with the tranquil science they put into building five-story houses, just as religious objects, rosaries, medals, statuettes, were mass produced in populous part of Paris, by fast-living workers [....] All of this, brutally, clashed with the

attempted resurrection, with the legends, ceremonies, and processions of dead ages.[19]

Zola's indignation results from the disparity between modern mass-produced goods and "the attempted resurrection" of medieval traditions. He feels tricked by the marketing that brought him to Lourdes to experience a faith like that of the Middle Ages, when, in reality, the town wanted to enrich itself.

Both authors lament not only the commercial frenzy that reigns at Lourdes, but also the ugliness of its infrastructure, which was built by the Church for administrative and practical purposes, and not to encourage worship. They were, perhaps, correct, since government reports reveal that throughout the building process the Grotto fathers placed a great deal of emphasis upon impressing pilgrims with sweeping vistas and good views.[20] Although today Lourdes is one of the premier shrines in the world, a sophisticated tourist destination served by highways, rail, and plane and visited by nearly six million pilgrims per year, the place where the Virgin appeared to Bernadette Soubirous 141 years ago belonged to the remote and difficultly accessible countryside of the Pyrenees mountains. It was only in 1862, at the pressure of local crowds who began worshiping without Church approval, that the Church built a shrine (Baumont 85-96 and Kaufman 102).

The entire Domain was thus built from scratch in the late nineteenth century. Church Fathers chose a spot outside of the city in order to free up the town's avenues and to provide an impressive effect.[21] Within the space they constructed a complex that would eventually grow–as an increasing number of visitors required more space--to include three churches, a processional staircase, bathing pools, the miraculous cave itself, stations of the cross, and a park. Today the Domain comprises nearly 125 acres. Once the shrine was established, in the 1860s, everything possible was done to bring people to Lourdes. The Fathers of the Grotto carefully bought land, cooperated with government

officials to build the pilgrimage center and police it; they changed the course of a river, subsidized railroad lines, highways, and finally electricity; and they regulated the commerce of religious trinkets, relics, and votive candles. The Grotto had its own electrical plant, a candle factory, and a printing press, which published two magazines devoted to the pilgrimage. It was also during this decade that they began the systematic marketing of the miraculous water of Lourdes (Kselman 163).

Both Zola and Huysmans portray this monopolistic planning of Lourdes and its churches as barely religious, and practically sacrilegious. Huysmans lambasts the aesthetics of the basilica, especially in contrast to its medieval counterparts:

> Thin, narrow, without an ornament of value [...the Basilica] demonstrates the aesthetics of a cork merchant: the smallest village chapel, built in the Middle Ages, seems, in comparison to this contraband Gothic, a masterpiece of finesse and force [...] in the Middle Ages were cathedrals not constructed for [the people]; were statues, tapestries, retables, all of the magnificent works that now adorn our museums [...] not created to enhance, in their eyes, the prestige of the Church and to help them pray?[22]

Mundane, technologically advanced, and commercial planning clashed, for pilgrims, with the medieval atmosphere they expected to discover at Lourdes. Pierre Froment dreams of the city as it must have been before all of this construction.

> And this olden day Lourdes, this city of peace and belief, the only possible cradle in which the legend [of Bernadette] could have been born [...] another age was recalled, a small city, with its narrow streets paved with stones, its black houses with their frames and marble, its antique church [...] peopled with golden visions and flesh tones."[23]

Pierre's dreams of the Middle Ages reflect his nostalgia for an alternative to the modern city.

Both authors chastize the town of Lourdes for corrupting an idyllic setting and unique religious experience in order to get rich, yet they differ in attributing blame for the creation of the Lourdes Empire. Zola, a staunch Republican, clearly identifies the Grotto Fathers for shutting out all competition, for running operations in the town, and for killing the peoples' inherent purity and faith:

> [...] the Grotto fathers minted coins, financed inns and votive candle boutiques, sold water from the spring, despite the fact that they were forbidden from engaging in any kind of commerce, according to a formal clause in their contract with the village. The entire country rotted, the triumph of the Grotto had brought such a rage for lucre, such a burning fever to possess and to delight oneself, that, under the driving rain of millions, an extraordinary perversion worsened every day, changed the Bethlehem of Bernadette into Gomorrah and Sodom [...] [...The Fathers] are singing victory, they are the only ones left. This is what they wanted, to be the absolute masters, to keep for themselves all the power, all the money...[...] their terror of competition motivated them to push away religious orders that tried to come here [...] And the city belongs to them, and they hold their shop here; here they sell God, wholesale and retail.[24]

Huysmans, too, insists that Lourdes is a Sodom and Gomorrah, but he blames the greed of the villagers–who want to "bleed" the pilgrims (213)–and whom the Church tries to keep in check. Despite their differences, both authors agree that the town has sold out by building a modern empire. For them it is unconscionable to make money from a religious site. Their concerns about money and religion reflect one of the great fears of believers in

the late nineteenth-century: that mass production and commercialism would cheapen the authenticity and uniqueness of religious experience (Kaufman 11).

Lourdes does not live up to these authors' dreams of discovering a primitive faith or communing in Gothic cathedrals full of gorgeous donated art, largely because of their pre-conceived notions about the pilgrimage experience. Nearly every one of their condemnations of Lourdes has its root in the city's inability to conform to their nostalgia for the Middle Ages. The words that occur over and over again to describe "good" religion–that of the Middle Ages–are "purity," "naivete," "faith," "simplicity," "belief," and "primitive." Their recurring images are cathedrals, banners, original, hand-made art, gold and silver, and kneeling worshippers.

Such ideal attitudes toward medieval pilgrimages derive primarily from wishful thinking and artistic representations of the past. The Middle Ages had their share of sin and commercialism–even in the fourth century Jerome called Jerusalem "worse than Sodom" (Jacques 34-35)--and the commerce of pious objects, traffic in relics, and the buying of posthumous pilgrimages was common (Jacques 34-36). Chaucer gives us a good idea of the morals of some of his pilgrim contemporaries in the *Canterbury Tales*. The late nineteenth-century embrace of so-called medieval values of humility, simplicity, and charity evolved largely from accepted ideas inherited from Romantics like Chateaubriand, who, in *Le Génie du Christianisme*, had portrayed medieval worshipers as simple believers communing in nature. Zola's vision of the past clearly relies on such images: "There weren't any non-believers, they were the people of primitive faith; on mornings of celebrations each corporation marched under the banner of its saint, brotherhoods of all sorts reunited the whole city into a single Christian family."[25]

Zola and Huysmans were not alone in idealizing the faith of the Middle Ages. As Richard Griffiths has shown in *The Reactionary Revolution*, a study of the Catholic

Revival of the late nineteenth century, the Church eagerly embraced idealized images of a simple, pious, generous Middle Ages in order to provide their followers with an alternative to the increasing materialism and anticlericalism of society.[26] France foundered morally in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Second Empire as it tried to establish itself as a secular Republic (this did not occur until 1905, with the separation of Church and State). Church leaders, increasingly pushed out of political spheres, hoped that renewing the spiritual traditions of the Middle Ages could attract more voters while restoring solid moral ground in a time when mass production, greed, and interest in all things material had taken root among the bourgeoisie. Could publicizing mass pilgrimages in which people returned to the faith of their forefathers bring France back to a time of moral stability and support of the Catholic Church?

Both Huysmans and Zola's conclusions about Lourdes attempt to answer this question. Despite his many complaints, Huysmans admits that the crowds are probably not much worse than those of the Middle Ages and that the spirituality of Lourdes is probably similar: "To summarize, at Lourdes, we witness a revival of the Gospels; we are in a lazaretto of souls and we disinfect ourselves with the antiseptic of charity"[27] He feels that the spirit that reigns at Lourdes is socially productive, one that would have potential for fraternity among social classes if the sentiment could last beyond the pilgrimage itself:

> There is, in this city of Our Lady, a return to the first ages of Christianity, a flowering of tenderness that will last, as long as we stay under pressure, in this haven of the Virgin. We have the impression of a people composed of various fragments and nonetheless united as never a people has been [...] it is the temporary fusion of castes; here society ladies bandage and wipe workers and peasants, gentlemen and bourgeois become the oxen of artisans and boors

and turn themselves into bath boys, to serve them.[28]

For Huysmans, returning to the faith of the past could potentially improve society. Zola, however, contests Catholicism as a social model because it rejects independent thought and action:

> The naive faith of the child who kneels and prays, the primitive faith of young nations, bent under the sacred terror of their ignorance, was dead [...] the attempt of this resurrection of total faith, devoid of revolt and examination, the faith of dead centuries, was doomed to failure. [...] Never again would the entire nation prostrate itself, as the old believing nation had, in cathedrals of the twelfth century, exactly like a docile herd in the hands of the Master"[29]

Both authors comment upon Lourdes as a neo-medieval revival and reflect their nostalgia for living in a simple, pre-determined, and ordered society. They accept the Church's attempt to use Lourdes to resurrect the "true faith" and the traditions of the past.

It is thus ironic that the Church's creation of Lourdes reproduces just the material temptations it was trying to thwart. While pilgrimage manuals instruct pilgrims to avoid concupiscence, curiosity, and greed (1898 8-9), pilgrims were easily distracted by the commercial offerings of the city. Their letters and accounts of Lourdes do not dwell upon the spirituality, but on materiality--their activities, the sites they visit, and the miraculous healings they witness–they describe Lourdes as a cash-producing theme park, a private empire run by the Grotto Fathers. The Church's use of rhetoric linking modern pilgrimages to those of the Middle Ages thus produced an interesting contradiction: it dampened--with the words and images of its neo-medieval publicity--the commercial attraction it was creating at Lourdes. By inventing an appealing image of medieval piety to attract the faithful, it ended up "selling" the very pilgrimages it was trying to purify of commercial content. Such

contradictions suggest that the Fathers of Lourdes were, perhaps, less interested in renewing the links between modern and medieval pilgrimages, than by using the Middle Ages as a marketing device, a way of attracting more people to the miracles of Catholicism. It may also have served as an ideal behind which they could hide their guilt about profiting economically from religious travel.

The contradictions surrounding Lourdes–modern and medieval, economic and spiritual, political and altruistic--reflect the complex relationship late nineteenth-century France maintained with the Middle Ages and its traditions. Despite the fact that many people understood that their dream of the Middle Ages was based on stereotypes, they longed to hold up such an ideal model for their contemporaries. At a time in which commerce, monopolies, and private empires continued to exert their power over modern life, the Middle Ages became a positive spiritual model from which modern society could take solace, if only in dream.

Notes

1   See Sandra Zimdars-Wartz, *Encountering Mary from La Salette to Medjugorje* (Princeton, 1991) for more about Marian apparitions of the nineteenth century. For a history of belief in the Immaculate Conception and its resurgence in the nineteenth century see Edwin O'Connor, *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception: Its History and Significance* (South Bend, 1958).   Jean-Emmanuel Drochon gives a comprehensive idea of the number of pilgrimage sites and their value for late nineteenth-century believers in *Histoire illustrée des pèlerinages* (Paris: Plon, 1890).

2   See the graph by Georges Bertrin of pilgrimages to Lourdes (reproduced in Kselman 165).

3   See Weber 22, 67.   Other reasons for increased interest in religion stem from the humiliating defeat of the Franco-Prussian war and the sense that this event was punishing France for the years of sacrilege following the French Revolution. As Kselman has pointed out, both Marian apparitions and pilgrimages jumped sharply in 1872 and 1873, the years immediately following the Franco-Prussian war as pilgrims attempted to atone for the sins of their contemporaries (113-116). René Rémond has argued that the Assumptionist Fathers, responsible for establishing the national pilgrimage at Lourdes in the wake of the Franco-Prussian loss, used this event to mobilize believers in the late part of the century. See *The Right Wing in France from 1815 to de Gaulle*, Trans. James M. Laux (Philadelphia, 1966): 184-188.

4   The Charpentier-Pasquelle press published 88,000 copies of *Lourdes* in its first printing. This is at least 10,000 more copies than any other first printing of Zola's work (From the table in Colette Becker, "Zola," 2548). *Les Foules de Lourdes* sold 17,000 copies in its first month of sales alone (See Baldick 344).

5   See Kaufman, pp. 114-130. She prints extracts from believers, the Catholic press, and the anticlerical press.

6   "Tout sortait de là pourtant, et tout y aboutissait. Et le jeune prêtre croyait entendre le muet et formidable coup de râteau qui s'étendait sur la vallée entière, ramassant le peuple accouru, ramenant chez les pères l'or et le sang des foules" (191).   Unless otherwise indicated all translations are mine.

7   "[...] désaccord entre le milieu tout moderne et la foi des siècles passés, dont on essayait la résurrection" (345).

8   See Kaufman, pp. 99-104 for the history of the development of the national pilgrimage.

9   This difference in terminology in the weekly publication, *Le Pèlerin*, is noted by Baumont in *Histoire de Lourdes* (Toulouse, Privat, 1993), p. 230.

10 See Kaufman, pp. 107-108.

11 "C'est une démarche pieuse faite par manière de procession publique vers quelque sanctuaire privilégié, pour s'y trouver en communication plus intime avec Dieu [...] nous allons en pèlerinage pour faire comme ont fait nos pères *sicut fecerun patres nostri*; car les pèleringages ont toujours été dans les moeurs de l'humanité, aussi bien que dans la tradition de l'église" (Manuel 1899 92, 95).

12 An 1899 pilgrimage manual for Lourdes explains that this tradition had recently been "resurrected" by Pope Pius IX (Pope from 1846-78) to identify pilgrims: "N.T.S.P. le Pape Pie IX daigna donner de sa main aux pèlerins, comme emblême de leur croisade pacifique, la croix de laine rouge avec la devise: Christo Domino servire; Servir le Christ, Notre-Seigneur. La croix est donc aussi l'insigne propre aux pèlerins de Notre-Dame de Lourdes" (86).

13 See for example, Larivière, "Bataille d'Ascalon (Musée du Château de Versailles); Victor Schnetz, Procession des croisés conduits par Pierre l'Ermite et Godefroy de Bouillon autour de Jérusalem, la veille de l'attaque de la ville" (Musée du Château de Versailles); or Signol, "Prise de Jérusalem" (Musée du Château de Versailles) in which red and white crosses and banners abound. See also works of painters of the "troubadour genre." *"Le Style Troubadour,"* Musée de l'Ain (Bourg-en-Bresse, 1971).

14 The first national pilgrimage was marked by its abundance of banners: four hundred banners from Marian shrines all over France came together in a giant procession at Lourdes. See Kselman pp. 118-119.

15 This description comes from the 1899 pilgrimage manual (91). In *Lourdes*, Zola's protagonist remarks upon his cross. Government reports considered the red crosses pilgrims wore as subversive symbols: "...exterior signs designed to bring about hostile protests..." Letter from the Minister of the Interior describing problems with pilgrims in the North (AD Hautes-Pyrénées 1m232). Cited in Kaufman 45.

16 "Les Pèlerinages à la Grotte de Lourdes dévieraient de leur but, ils perdraient tout leur mérite si, par notre faute, ils venaient à se transformer en simples excursions de touristes [...] Un pèlerinage n'est pas un voyage de plaisir, mais d'expiation" (1899 8).

17 "l'esprit de piété, de charité et de pénitence" (1899 7).

18 "[...] c'est la concurrence effrénée, le raccrochage sur le pas des boutiques dans toute la ville; et l'on va, l'on vient, l'on vire, au milieu de ce brouhaha, mais toujours pour aboutir par un chemin ou un autre, à la grotte" (80).

19 "Il évoquait les vieilles cathédrales où frissonnait cette foi des peuples, il revoyait les anciens objets du culte, l'imagerie l'orfèvrerie, les saints de pierre et de bois, d'une force, d'une beauté d'expression admirables. C'etait qu'en ces temps lointains, les ouvriers croyaient, donnaient leur chair, donnaient leur âme, dans toute la naïveté de leur émotion [...] Et, aujourd'hui, les architectes bâtissaient les églises avec la science tranquille qu'ils mettaient à bâtir les maisons à cinq étages, de même que les objets religieux, les chapelets, les médailles, les statuettes, étaient fabriqués à la grosse, dans les qurartiers populeux de Paris, par des ouvrier noceurs [...] *Tout cela, brutalement, jurait avec la résurrection tentée, avec les légendes, les cérémonies, les processions des âges morts"* (345–my emphasis).

20 An 1899 government report lists the reason for building a new central avenue as the Church's goal of having: "the pilgrim [...] be sparked at first glance by the spectacle before his eyes" (Cited in Kaufman 103).

21 According to Baumont, they even tore down three houses in the old city to enlarge the perspective as pilgrims walked down the hill from the old part of town (194).

22 "Mince, étriquée, sans un ornement qui vaille, [...] elle (the Basilica) relève d'une esthétique de marchand de bouchons: la moindre des chapelles de village, bâtie au Moyen Age, semble, en comparaison de ce gothique de contrebande, un chef-d'oeuvre de finesse et de force [...]" (77) est-ce qu'au Moyen Age les cathédrales n'ont pas été construites pour lui [le peuple]; est-ce que les statues, les tapisseries, les retables, toutes les oeuvres magnifiques qui parent maintenant nos musées, n'ont pas été créees pour rehausser, à ses yeux, le prestige de l'Eglise et l'aider à prier?" (127)

23 "Ah! cet ancien Lourdes, cette ville de paix et de croyance, le seul berceau possible où la légende pouvait naître [...] Un autre âge s'évoquait, une petite ville, avec ses rues étroites, pavées de cailloux, ses maisons noires, aux encadrements et marbre, son antique église [...] peuplée de visions d'or et de chairs peintes" (338).

24 "[...] les pères de la Grotte battaient monnaie, commanditaient des hôtelleries et des boutiques de cierges, vendaient l'eau de la source, bien qu'il leur fût défendu de se livrer à aucun négoce, d'après une clause formelle de leur contrat avec la commune. Le pays entier se pourrissait, le triomphe de la Grotte avait amené une telle rage de lucre, une fièvre si brûlante de posséder et de jouir, que, sous la pluie battante des millions, une perversion extraordinaire s'aggravait de jour en jour, changeait en Gomorrhe et en Sodome le Bethléem de Bernadette (240). [...] Ils chantent victoire, il n'y a plus qu'eux. C'était ce qu'ils désiraient, être les maîtres absolus, garder pour eux seuls toute la puissance, tout l'argent...[...] leur terreur de la concurrence les a poussés jusqu'à écarter de Lourdes les ordres religieux qui ont tenté d'y venir [...] Et la ville leur appartient, et ils y tiennent boutique, ils y vendent Dieu, en gros et en détail!" (311).

25 "Il n'y avait pas d'incrédules, c'était le peuple de la foi primitive, chaque corporation marchait sous la bannière de son saint, des confréries de toutes sortes réunissaient la cité entière, aux matins de fête, en une seule famille chrétienne" (92).

26 *The Reactionary Revolution* (New York: Frederick Unger Publishing Co., 1965).

27 "En résumé, à Lourdes, on assiste à un renouveau des Evangiles; on est dans un lazaret d'âmes et l'on s'y désinfecte avec les antiseptiques de la charité" (262). "La Vierge a voulu des foules, ainsi qu'au Moyen-Age, Elle les a; sont-ce les mêmes? sans doute, l'âme ingénue et la foi naïve des vieilles paysannes n'a guère changé; l'existence même que ces multitudes mènent ici, couchant dans le Rosaire, mangeant sur les bancs et sur les pelouses, rappelle la vie des cohues d'antan, couchant dans la cathédrale de Chartres–dont le pavé s'inclinait en pente exprès pour qu'on pût le nettoyer à grande eau le matin, –ou campant autour de la Vierge noire, en plein air, dans les plaines de la Beauce; mais tout s'est encanaillé; la magnificence de la cathédrale, l'attrait des costumes, l'ampleur des liturgies tutéliaires ne sont plus. Lourdes, né d'hier, s'est développé dans l'insalubre berceau de notre temps et il expire le fétide relent des industries..." (259)

28 "Il y a dans cette cité de Notre-Dame un retour aux premiers âges du christianisme, une éclosion de tendresse qui durera, tant que l'on restera sous pression, dans ce havre de la Vierge. On a l'idée d'un peuple composé de fragments divers et néanmoins uni comme jamais peuple ne le fut [...] c'est la fusion temporaire des castes; la femme du monde y panse et y torche l'ouvrière et la paysanne; le gentilhomme et le bourgeois deviennent les bêtes de trait des artisans et des rustres et se font garçons de bains, pour les servir" (183).

29 "La foi naïve de l'enfant qui s'agenouille et prie, la primitive foi des peuples jeunes, courbés sous la terreur sacrée de leur ignorance, était morte. [...] la tentative de cette résurrection de la foi totale, de la foi des siècles morts, sans révolte ni examen, devait échouer fatalement. L'histoire ne retourne pas en arrière, l'humanité ne peut revenir à l'enfance, les temps sont trop changé, trop de souffles nouveaux ont semé de nouvelles moissons, pour que les hommes d'aujourd'hui repoussent tels que les hommes d'autrefois. C'était décisif. [...] Jamais plus la nation entière ne se prosternerait, comme l'ancienne nation croyante, dans les cathédrales du XIIe siècle, pareille à un troupeau docile sous les mains du Maître. (394-395).

Works Cited

Manuel des pèlerins du Diocese de Soissons à N.-D. de Lourdes, sous le patronage de Monseigneur Deramecourt. Chauny: G. Nougarède, 1901.

Manuel du pèlerinage Lorrain à Notre-Dame de Lourdes. 12. ed. ed. Saint-Dié: Imp. Humbert, 1899.

Baumont, Stéphane. *Histoire de Lourdes.* Univers de la France et des pays francophones. Toulouse: Editions Privat, 1993.

Griffiths, Richard. *The Reactionary Revolution.* New York: Frederick Unger Publishing, 1965.

Huysmans, J. K.. *Les Foules de Lourdes.* François Angelier, ed. Collection Golgotha. Grenoble: J. Millon, 1993.

Jacques, Antier Jean. *Le Pèlerinage retrouvé.* Paris: Le Centurion, 1979.

Kaufman, Suzanne K.. "Miracles, medicine and the spectacle of Lourdes : popular religion and modernity in fin-de-siècle France." Ph.D. thesis, The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers: 1996.

Kselman, Thomas A. *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth-Century France.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983.

Pernoud, Régine, ed. *Un Guide du pèlerin de terre sainte au xve siècle.* Vol. 1. Mantes: Imprimerie du petit mantais, 1940.

Zola, Emile. *Lourdes. Oeuvres complètes*, vol vii.. Paris: Cercle du livre précieux, 1968.

Cross to Crucifix: Iconography of the Passion at Perrecy-les-Forges and Strasbourg

Kathryn E. Wildgen

The Gothic era -- roughly 1144 to 1500 -- saw a dramatic change in iconography, the manner in which the divine was portrayed. C. Stephen Jaeger describes the situation succinctly: "The move from hieratic stiffness to realism and plasticity that occurs in sculpture in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries poses a problem for the historian of art and of ideas. Whose hieratic rigidity of thought and feeling produced the stiffness of early Gothic? And whose humanism created the supple nuanced humanity of high Gothic? When a certain conception of the human figure is expressed in stone, where does it come from?"[1] The twelfth century was an especially important moment in western man's coming to consciousness, an event in the life of mankind as a whole as well as in the life of each individual according to Carl Jung.[2] Jung saw Christ as "the quintessence of the Self, for Western people at any rate."[3] According to Elaine Pagels, Jung read Valentinus' creation myth as "a mythical account of the origin of human consciousness," symbolized by a longing for light.[4] In the Introduction of William Anderson's *Rise of the Gothic,* the author cites the role of the Jungian collective unconscious in the creation of Gothic art at the time it made its first appearance.[5] Ernst Gombrich found parallels to the "emancipated" characteristic of the Gothic in ancient Greek art, encouraged by similar developments in literature.[6] In his discussion of high Gothic realism, Jaeger concentrates on the Wise and Foolish Virgins of Notre-Dame of Strasbourg, but the same could be said of representations of Mary and of the Passion.

In an article entitled "Veneration of the Cross," Patrick Regan, OSB writes that "Saint John's presentation of the crucifixion [is] the revelation of divine glory" whereas the Synoptics emphasize the suffering and death of Jesus.[7] Neil Forsyth considers the Gospel of John to be a "myth of a cosmic redeemer descending to save the world from the darkness into which it has fallen" and sees the Crucifixion as an ultimately triumphant episode in a cosmic struggle.[8] As a result of Saint Helena's finding of the wood of Christ's cross, veneration of the instrument of his death as a component of the liturgy of Good Friday originated in the eastern Church at Jerusalem and did not become part of the Roman

---

[1]   C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia, 1994), p. 331. Jaeger professes to know of no explanation for this phenomenon other than the one suggested by Willibald Sauerländer, who connects this change chronologically with Nicholas of Verdun (1180). But neither Jaeger nor Sauerländer can pinpoint the origins of, or inspiration for, Nicholas' style.

[2]   C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections.* Trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1989), p. 340.

[3]   Gerhard Wehr, *Jung: A Biography.* Trans. David M. Weeks (Boston, 1988), p. 258.

[4]   Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels.* (New York, 1979), p. 133.

[5]   William Anderson, *The Rise of the Gothic* (New York, 1988), p. 7.

[6]   E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Princeton, 1956), p. 130.

[7]   Patrick Regan, OSB. "Veneration of the Cross," *Worship* 52, 1978, p. 6.

[8]   Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth* (Princeton, 1989), p. 316.

liturgy until the seventh century.[9] In his discussion of the rise of individualism Colin Morris points out that the crucifix underwent a transformation in ca. 1000 changing from an assertion and celebration of the victory Christ won to a depiction of a dying man.[10] The twelfth century also "invented" the elevation of the host at Mass, an image and evocation of Christ on the cross.[11] At Le Paraclet, the abbey founded by Peter Abelard and then turned over to the nuns whose abbess was his wife Heloise, Cistercian-style "spirituality of refusal" was the rule: only silver used for chalices; and on the altar a simple cross of wood on which Abelard allowed, with some misgiving, a painted image of Christ.[12] Abelard was particularly instrumental in bringing Christ's suffering to the attention of Christendom. M. T. Clanchy asserts that Abelard and his colleagues were forced to indulge in psychology because analyzing language and the meanings of words involved the workings of the mind; in this, Clanchy points out, they looked back to Plato and forward to Jung.[13] In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, probably because of Cluny's immense influence, Frankish and Germanic practices were "given fresh expression in the Roman Pontifical of the Twelfth Century."[14] Regan demonstrates that veneration of the *cross* became, for various reasons, veneration of the *crucifix*, which is

---

[9]   Regan, p. 2.

[10]   Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200* (Toronto, 1991), p. 139.

[11]   Ibid., p. 142.

[12]   Raymond Oursel, *Évocation de la chrétienté romane* (La Pierre-qui-vire, 1994), p. 353.

[13]   M. T. Clanchy, *Abelard: A Medieval Life* (Cambridge MA, 1999), p. 105.

[14]   Regan, p. 8.

actually a subversion of the meaning and the spirit of the original ancient rite. The core of his thesis—and a foundation of this text—is as follows:

> This shift in devotion from the wood of the cross itself to a naturalistic representation of the crucified Christ corresponds to the collapse of the symbolic universe of the Middle Ages and the advent of secular, humanistic thought which would eventually issue in the Renaissance.[15]

It is noteworthy that the same dynamic was at work in the transformation of the Romanesque *Sedes Sapientiae* into the Gothic Madonna and Child, an image of mother/child bonding. As Raymond Oursel puts it, during the Romanesque period, the "Queen of Heaven" held her hands away from the body of the child she had borne in her womb as if she dared not caress or even touch him, an attitude which reflects upon the Romanesque appreciation of the virtue of deference.[16] Hans Belting refers to the "stiff and haughty" Romanesque Madonna, replaced by the "emotive, approachable image of the Virgin" and the image of the "tender embrace of Mother and Child" in the thirteenth-century West.[17]

As is true of all "shifts," devotional or otherwise, this one has a complex history, one that is, in the parlance of psychotherapy, overdetermined. It is also the case that any discussion of "change" must be nuanced with a realization that generalizations are usually flawed,

---

[15]   Ibid.

[16]   René Laurentin and Raymond Oursel, *Vierges romanes: les vierges assises* (La Pierre-qui-vire, 1988), p. 100.

[17]   Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art.* Trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, 1994), p. 23.

including, perhaps, this one. To the oft-expressed notion that Gothic art tends towards realism, Jurgis Baltrušaitis would remind us that "the Gothic Middle Ages do not evolve exclusively towards order, realism, the Latin West. The period also has its surreal side, its artificial and exotic aspects. A more tormented era, inhabited by monsters and fabulous creatures, is reconstituted and developed within the evangelical and humanistic Middle Ages."[18] The key word here is "surreal," a term much in vogue in the early twentieth century when the Surrealist movement posited the superiority of dreams over consciousness as a means of finding the super-real, or surreal, truth about one's world and one's self.

The *Didascalicon* of Hugh of Saint-Victor "appeared at a time when centers of education had moved from the predominantly rural monasteries to the cathedral schools of growing cities and communes; when education in the new centers was becoming specialized, hence unbalanced, according to the limited enthusiasms or capacities of particular masters; and when, in response to the flowering of secular life, learning itself was making secularist adaptations."[19] The year 1140 seems of particular importance in this issue; around that time "a page is turned. In the civilization of the book the monastic page is closed and the scholastic page opens."[20] Jerome Taylor suggests 1140 or 1141 as the year of Hugh of St. Victor's death. He furthermore considers significant "Hugh's early contact with the canonical movement,

---

[18]   Jurgis Baltrušaitis, *Le Moyen Âge fantastique: Antiquités et exotismes dans l'art gothique.* (Paris, 1993), p. 293; translation mine.

[19]   Jerome Taylor, trans. and ed., *The* Didascalicon *of Hugh of St. Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts* (New York, 1961), p. 379.

[20]   Ivan Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text: A Commentary to Hugh's* Didascalicon (Chicago, 1993), p. 81.

which sought to make available to men living in the world the life of primitive Christian perfection...formerly confined to the monasteries" and Hugh's "interest in a view of 'philosophy'...directed to all men..."[21] 1140 is important in the history of European religious architecture as a moment in the dawn of the *opus francigenum,* work in the French style as defined and determined by Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis. It was on 9 June 1140 that the westwork at Saint-Denis was dedicated. In *Évocation de la chrétienté romane* Raymond Oursel writes of the "conflict" of 1140 in terms of the differences that characterize two important edifices whose construction was simultaneous: the aforementioned abbey church of Saint-Denis and the abbey church of Fontenay. He evokes "two vessels, two mindsets, two approaches to God symbolized by their elevations."[22]

Contemporaneous with the opening of the scholastic page of text is the exodus of images from the cloister to the front gates. There was a profound change in the very nature of those images from hermetic, bizarre—and sometimes disturbing—signs to the familiar, friendly, recognizable faces of Mary, the Apostles and various local saints, each with his/her attribute displayed as a name tag, welcoming, urging folks into the sanctuary. Almost overnight, it seems, images moved outdoors and became much easier to behold because they were larger and closer to the viewer, attractive, and more comprehensible. This is a gross generalization because there is, in Gothic art, a profusion of images which are weird; Jurgis Baltrušaitis has catalogued a wealth of them in *Le Moyen Âge fantastique* and affirms the Orient as their point of origin. But, with the exception of scenes of the Last Judgment, the element of vicious attack, of intense physical pain, of punishment is not nearly so prevalent in Gothic religious art as in Romanesque. Romanesque

---

[21]   Taylor, p. 381.

[22]   Oursel, p. 378.

basilicas, with the notable exception of Saint-Lazarus at Autun, are usually abbatial buildings while the major Gothic monuments are cathedrals; the monastic page gave way to the scholastic text in more ways than one. Romanesque art was by and large created for monks; and if the general public worshiping at a monastic church did not understand or appreciate the images hovering at the summits of columns, the monks did, and that was what mattered. People contributed to abbeys for the saints buried or enshrined there and for the miracles worked at their behest, not for aesthetic gratification. But with the growth of towns and of civic pride the faithful desired a beautiful place to call their own and some influence in the decoration. The guild and trade windows at Chartres make that clear. Saint-Lazarus and Saint-Denis are, perhaps, poor examples to choose to illustrate my point; the two churches are virtually of the same generation and are the opposite of the usual case: Saint-Lazarus is a Romanesque basilica-turned-cathedral, never an abbatial building, and Saint-Denis was constructed as an abbey church in the Gothic style. The change from the monastic page of stone to the secular is best illustrated by two churches situated at the architectural extremes of the Middle Ages: the abbey church of Saint Peter and Saint Benedict at Perrecy-les-Forges in Burgundy and the cathedral of Notre Dame of Strasbourg.

The crucifix during the Romanesque period is relatively rare in monumental sculpture; when Jesus' death is depicted, there is a standard set of characteristics present. Foremost is the utter lack of concern on the part of the artist with realistic depiction of a suffering man. The general serenity of Jesus' face, his eyes often open with no trace of suffering, no wounds and no blood even in paintings are standard features of the crucifixes of this era. The crown of thorns is either absent or replaced with a kingly crown. He is frequently fully clothed, his feet splayed in ballet's first position rather than nailed to the beam. His hair is in the traditional "Jesus" style, parted down the middle and tucked behind

his ears. His feet are not crossed one over the other, Saint Helena notwithstanding, and there is generally no "INRI" nailed above his head. His pose is hieratic as befits one supremely confident of his triumph. The Jesus of the "Descent from the Cross" at Silos, for instance, could be asleep so serene and peaceful is his face. In short, the Romanesque crucified Jesus is Johannine, confident of his mission and its ultimate success.

The church at Perrecy-les-Forges is a good place to start for several reasons: portions of the sculpted lintel are relatively well preserved and accessible to the viewer; and the work is among the earliest Romanesque still remaining whose iconographic programme can be discerned. Perrecy belonged to Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire at Fleury, although it was a distant priory.[23] At Fleury the Galilee or narthex/porch played an important "role of symbolic burial" in the liturgy of Holy Week.[24] At Perrecy the Passion is the theme of the lintel, including the capitals on either side of it, from the sleep of the Apostles at Gethsemane to the presentation of Jesus to Pontius Pilate. There is no depiction of Christ's crucifixion or indeed any of his physical suffering: no beating, no scourging, no crown of thorns, no carrying of the cross. The dominant theme is that of Jesus' moral pain occasioned by one apostolic failing after another. One of the titular saints at Perrecy is Saint Peter, whose state of mind during the whole sequence of events surrounding Jesus' death is a principal theme of this iconographic scheme. The programme follows most closely the Gospel of Luke, which alone mentions several aspects of Peter's relationship with Jesus at the end of Christ's life. Peter's first appearance at Perrecy is during the scene at Gethsemane in which he alone of the apostles is turning to look directly at Jesus, who is depicted at the moment

---

[23] Éliane Vergnolle, *Saint Benoît-sur-Loire et la sculpture du XIe siècle* (Paris, 1985), p. 12.

[24] Ibid., p. 36.

of saying: "Could you not watch one hour with me?" Jesus is bracketed by Peter and the Consoling Angel, who is situated around the corner and out of Peter's line of vision. While all three Synoptics mention Peter, Luke alone mentions the presence of the angel. Luke alone relates Jesus' address to Peter at the Last Supper regarding his particular responsibility as leader of the other apostles: "'Simon, Simon! Look, Satan has got his wish to sift you all like wheat; but I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail, and once you have recovered, you in your turn must strengthen your brothers.'"[25] Jesus is the fulcrum of this scene in which the apostles and the angel are depicted at right angles to one another and is an integral part of both portions. Gethsemane and the Consoling Angel are sculpted on a capital or extension which leads directly to the continued narrative of the lintel. We see Peter again, brilliantly imaged in an iconographically charged carving on the lintel. He is placed slightly off-center, to the viewer's right, the arena of the damned in Last Judgment scenes. His body is much larger than those of other personages in this Passion Play, even that of Jesus. But it is the torsion of Peter's body that is so striking. In this one image is presented all of Peter's self-doubt, all of his shame at fulfilling Jesus' prophecy of triple denial, which had followed directly Christ's aforementioned prayers for Simon that his faith not fail. It is the imaged version of the words: "He went out and wept bitterly," mentioned in all three Synoptics, not in John, but especially of the words in Luke alone: "and the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter…"[26] He carries a sword because Jesus, again solely in Luke, had told the apostles to sell their

---

[25]   Luke 22.32.

[26]   Luke 22.61.

cloaks if necessary and buy weapons.[27] Peter's face is turned back in the direction of his previous image so he is essentially gazing at himself in both instances. At Gethsemane he looks in the future to his denial; at the dwelling of the Chief Priests he faces the past as he remembers his oath never to desert his Master, which he has just done three times. Finally Christ is facing Pilate as he was facing Peter in the Garden. In between we see—with some difficulty because of the condition of the stone—the Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus, Christ before the High Priest, Peter's remorse and the movement towards Pilate's palace. And there this brief portion of the gospel story ends.

The difference between the Passion at Perrecy and that at Strasbourg is dramatic, and one may legitimately wonder what caused such a change in style and content of Passion iconography. I believe that the following observations are useful in suggesting a possible response to this query. During the course of the twelfth century more and more emphasis was placed on Jesus' humanity, possibly in reaction to various heresies which denied the human nature of Christ. In the thirteenth century extremely precious relics of the Passion were brought to Paris and placed in the hands of King Louis IX of France,

---

[27]   Luke 22.36. In an unpublished dissertation "The Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture at Perrecy-les-Forges" (Univ. of Michigan, 1994), Masuyo Tokita Darling asserts that Saint Peter is depicted at the moment of cutting off Malchus' ear, a thoroughly plausible suggestion. This event is also related by Luke. Darling also finds problematic the identification of the character most critics of Perrecy identify as Pontius Pilate. Darling identifies the lintel and extensions scenes as follows: the Gethsemane, the Betrayal, the Arrest of Christ, Peter cutting the Ear of Malchus, Christ before an unidentified person on the lintel, and another unidentified scene on the right extension, p. 178.

an event which would have made the laity all the more conscious of the suffering involved in the scheme of salvation. Furthermore, while scholars of scripture may know by heart which evangelist described what, most Christians—even those who read the Bible frequently—conflate the events related in the New Testament into one big story and have no idea in whose gospel certain events are described. Another type of conflation involves Lazarus. There are two people so named in the New Testament: the wretched beggar in the parable of the Wicked Rich Man, a fictional character, and Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, whom Jesus raised from the dead. The historical Lazarus was confused with the beggar, who suffered from a skin disease, and thus the former became the patron saint of lepers. Confusion or blending of the gospels was also the case in the Middle Ages, even more so than in today's generally literate society. This conflation is a rather apt description of the *Diatessaron,* a continuous gospel narrative or harmonization of the four canonical gospels, composed in the second century by the Syrian Tatian, a convert and disciple of Justin Martyr. Tatian's work may be a Syriac translation of a much older work. According to Matthieu Collin, this tradition of harmonization of the four gospels served as catechetical basis for the laity in the Middle Ages.[28] And the spirit of the *Diatessaron* seems to be the guiding principle on the west central tympanum at Notre-Dame de Strasbourg. As much narration as possible is crammed into the space allotted: Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the Betrayal and Arrest including Peter's assault on Malchus' ear and Jesus' healing of same, insults to Jesus at the home of the high priest, the Scourging, the Crowning with Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion in the center, the burial with a suggestion of the Resurrection (the sleeping

---

[28] Dom Angelico Surchamp and Frère Matthieu Collin, *Évangile roman* (La Pierre-qui-vire, 1999), p. 11.

soldier), the hanging of Judas, Jesus' descent into Hell, his appearance to Mary Magdalene, his post-resurrectional appearance to the apostles, and, finally, his Ascension. Moreover events are depicted there which do not show up in any gospel, i.e. Christ's descent into Hell; and legends, that of Christ's cross resting above Adam's grave, are given equal footing with historical fact. In short, the theology of Strasbourg is popular, that of Perrecy, monastic. The emphasis at Perrecy is on the wounds inflicted on Jesus by those who loved him, not by those outside the apostolic circle. At Strasbourg the only apostles depicted as somehow lacking are, of course, Judas (twice) and Thomas. The real villains are the Jews, depicted in crass anti-semitic stereotype. The iconography at Perrecy is sparse and simple, and because of that, intensely moving.

The principal physical difference between the sculpture at Perrecy and that at Strasbourg is the difference between relief images and statues in the round. This process whereby the human figure emerges fully from a chunk of stone is a peculiarly apt visual representation of the process known in Jungian psychology as individuation. Individuation involves becoming fully the person one is meant to be, a process that is life-long and begins at birth. First an infant must realize that s/he is separate from the mother and continue in this discovery until full autonomy is achieved. The movement from scratching an image on stone, to low-relief, then high relief, carving, to sculpture in the round mirrors the individuation process extraordinarily well. Jung's own process of individuation took place in a tower he constructed at Bollingen and surrounded with stone carvings, thus functioning as both architect and stonecarver. His fascination with stone was lifelong and intense; the stone carvings around the tower are intended to be manifestations of his inner being. Jung's distinction between the inner- and outer man may be visually illustrated by comparing a human figure in relief with a fully emancipated statue in the round. An

answer may be suggested to the questions posed by C. Stephen Jaeger and cited in the opening paragraph of this study by recalling that the twelfth century is the century of the discovery of the individual and carving human images more realistically and individualistically is a logical result of this discovery. As Jaeger points out in his discussion of the Wise and Foolish Virgins at Strasbourg, each woman has a unique face and her own style of clothing.

In her dissertation cited above, Masuyo Darling notes the Perrecy lintel sculptor's "forward-looking style and…innovative choice of Passion scenes."[29] She also recognizes the "absence of timidity in his execution" and "suggests that he was not copying a readily usable model for the Passion iconography."[30] Finally she points out that "the iconography was an important requisite which the sculptor must have understood within his capacity and translated into visual form.…the visual perception of the viewer would be a reaction to the expressive power of the forms themselves, even before he or she fully understood the layered meanings of iconographic messages."[31] These remarks describe and explain the irresistible attraction Perrecy holds for me.

The developing psychology of the individual laid down in the twelfth century is the foundation for this change in the manner of imaging the human figure. Why this occurred in the twelfth century and what happened to encourage this interest are questions that will have to be answered elsewhere and by another author.

---

[29]   Darling, p. 150.

[30]   Ibid., p. 179.

[31]   Ibid., p. 152.

FOURTEENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MEDIEVALISM CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Anderson, Tammy M., Montana State University, "The Goddess and the Critics: addressing a problem in the construction of feminist knowledge"

Aronstein, Susan, University of Wyoming, "Once There Was A Spot: Nostalgia, Arthurian Narrative, and the Politics of Consensus in Lerner and Loewe's *Camelot*"

Beggs, Beth, State University of West Georgia, "The Evils of Female Empowerment: Gender Roles in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*"

Betts, Timothy, New Perspective Media, "Tarot and Artificial Memory"

Bormann, Sally, Western Montana College of the University of Montana, "Gold and Skin: Twentieth Century Illuminated Manuscripts of American Poetry"

Burke, Martin J., City University of New York, "American Medievalism and Republican Morality: John Quincy Adams' Dermot MacMorrogh or the Conquest of Ireland"

Callaghan, Michael J., St. John's University, "Julian of Norwich: Thomas Merton's Reason to Hope"

Camacho, Theresa, University of Judaism, "Love, Blood, and Other Matters in 'La Leyendes de los L'ete Infantes de Lara'"

Donavin, Georgiana, Westminster College, "Modern Technology and Medieval Arthur"

Emery, Elizabeth, Montclair State University, "Building a Pilgrimage Empire: The Nineteenth-Century Struggle for the Soul of Lourdes"

Ezzaher, Lahcen E., University of Northern Colorado, "The Audacious Character of the Philosophical Doctrine of Averroes and Its Impact on Scholasticism in Medieval Europe"

Fleiger, Verlyn, University of Maryland, "Tolkien and Arthur's Ghost"

Frisbee, Nicole, Montana State University, "Courtly Love: A presentation modified from its original version and

formatted to fit the needs and desires of the Twentieth Century"

Gasper, Giles, Christ Church, Oxford University, "Castles in the Air: Fantasies of Mediaeval Social Hierarchy" with Sethina Watson

Hubble, Elizabeth, University of Michigan, "Slippery Bodies: Corporal Fluidity in Medieval French Romance"

Hutton, Ronald, University of Bristol, "The New Druids" (plenary address)

Johnson, James D., Humboldt State University, "Two Twentieth-Century Versions of 'The Cook's Tale'"

Keller, James R., Mississippi University for Women, "Excess and Defect: Spenser and Medieval Cosmology in *A Thousand Acres*"

Kirby, John, Purdue University, special address

Knobler, Adam, College of New Jersey, "Crusader as Manly Icon: Holy War, Empire and Masculinity in the 19th Century"

Laskaya, Anne C., University of Oregon, "The Rhetoric of "the medieval" in the Riverside Chaucer"

Lambert, Richard T., Carroll College, "Thomas Aquinas and the Debate over Introspection"

Lee, Brian S., University of Cape Town, South Africa, "Walter Charleton and the Matron of Ephesus: Chaucerian Parody in the Seventeenth Century Anti-feminist Controversy"

McGuire, Thérèse, Chestnut Hill College, "As the Wheel Turns"

Melnarik, Tim, Claremont Graduate University, "The Once and Future King: Walt Disney and the Middle Ages"

Morgan, Gwendolyn A., Montana State University, "Turning the Tables: Courtly Love and Margaret Atwood"

Paces, Cynthia, College of New Jersey, "Medieval feminism?: Jan Hus and the Modern Czech women's movement"

Parker, JoAnne, University of Leeds, "The Minstrel King:" Perceptions of King Alfred from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century"

Paulson, Daryl S., BioScience Laboratories, Inc., Bozeman, Montana, "Near Death Experiences in Medieval and Modern Times"

Petersen, Nils Holger, University of Copenhagen, "Medieval Ritual Drama and Contemporary Music in a Florentine Confraternity around 1600"

Poster, Carol, Montana State University, "The Medieval Ars Dictaminis in the Composition Classroom"

Rašović, Tiffany, Boston College, "There is phisicien but oon": Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* and the Limits of Narrative"

Ratliff, W. Bryan, University of Central Washington, "The English Romantic's Return to Medievalism"

Rigoulet, Robert, University of Illinois at Springfield, "After the Fall: The Medieval Hungarian Kingdom Through French Eyes"

Risden, Edward, St. Norbert College, "W. G. Collingwood's Saga-novels: A Medievalist's Local-color Medievalism"

Schilb, Henry, Indiana University, "Disney's *Notre Dame*"

Shippey, Thomas, St. Louis University, special address

Snyder, Molly, Montana State University, "Celtic Mysticism and Its Influence on the Twentieth Century"

Srebnick, Walter, Pace University, "Re-presenting History: *Ivanhoe* on the Screen"

Stapleton, Jeanne, Catholic University of America, "Royal Marriage Patterns: 'Happily Ever After' in Disney"

Stone, Gregory B., Louisiana State University, "Ecocriticism's Middle Ages"

Stottlemyer, Ronald, Carroll College, "Reinventing the Icelandic Family Saga: The Possibilities of Post-Modern Readings of the Hrafnkels Saga Freysgoða"

Teres, Michael, State University of New York, Geneseo, "Wizards and Magic in Melies: Medievalism in the Origins of Cinema"

Trafford, Simon, University of York, "British Historians and the Scandinavian Settlement of England"

Utz, Richard J., University of Northern Iowa, "The Medieval Myth of Jewish Ritual Murder: Toward a History of Literary Reception"

Verduin, Kathleen, Hope College, "Did Medievalism Matter in the American Renaissance?"

Watson, Sethina, St. Hilda's College, Oxford, "Castles in the Air: Fantasies of Mediaeval Social Hierarchy" with Giles Gasper, Christ Church, University of Oxford

Welsh, Rosemary, Wells College, "Kansas isn't Carcassonne, or is it? Medievalism in the Wizard of Oz" and "Once Upon a Time and Time Again: Medievalism in Disney"

Wildgen, Kathryn, University of New Orleans, "Cross to Crucifix: Iconography of the Passion at Perrecy-les-Forges and Strasbourg"

Williams, Beverly, Loyola Sacred Heart High School, Missoula, Montana, "Pre-Raphaelite Images of Arthurian Women"