Aspects of the Performative in Medieval Culture

Manuele Gragnolati, Almut Suerbaum

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Mireille Schnyder

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Preface

The current volume is the result of close collaboration between a group of colleagues who discovered in the course of college lunches that we shared more than day-to-day responsibility for undergraduate teaching. Indeed, once we started discussing our research interests in a series of informal and more structured workshops and colloquia, it became evident that notions of performance had a bearing on what at first sight seemed quite diverse subjects and disciplines. Somerville College provided the framework in which these discussions took shape, and we are grateful for many different forms of support: the Rosalind Countess of Carlisle and Constance Ann Lee fund provided a travel grant which allowed us to invite those who had moved abroad back for a colloquium; Anne Wheatley and Dave Simpson made sure we had a congenial meeting room and sandwiches which fuelled the discussions; the college library provided all-day access to books and materials. We are grateful to Professor Heiko Hartmann and the editors of the series for accepting the volume, and for their encouragement. The volume would not have been possible without the support of friends and colleagues, in particular Christoph Holzhey and Peter West. Finally, we owe a debt of gratitude to our predecessors in Somerville College: Barbara Harvey, Christina Roaf, Olive Sayce. Their distinguished scholarly record has set us high standards to emulate, their wise counsel has helped us along, and this volume is dedicated to them.

Manuele Gragnolati   Almut Suerbaum

Content

III. Embodied voice:
Reading and re-reading

Almut Suerbaum
in collaboration with Manuele Gragnolati

Medieval Culture 'betwixt and between': An introduction

> Uns ist in alten maeren   wunders vil geseit
> von helden lobebaeren   von großer arebeit
> von fröden, hôchgezîten   von weinen und von klagen,
> von küener recken strîten   muget ir nû wunder hoeren sagen.
>
> We have been told in ancient tales many marvels of famous heroes, of great toil, of joy and festivities, of weeping and lament, and of the fighting of brave warriors—of these, you may now hear marvellous things.

What the anonymous poet of the German *Nibelungenlied* offers in these opening lines, written around 1200, is a complex form of fictional orality —the creation of a spoken, collective voice evoking poetic presence, but doing so by means of a consciously literate and literary written text.[1] The lines illustrate the way in which poetic endeavour appears to be seen as mediating between oral presence and written remembrance, in a culture that was as aware of the central importance of signs and signification as of their inherent fragility. Programmatically, these opening lines negotiate the contrast between two quite distinct spheres: bookish representation and embodied voice. These are often articulated as alternatives within medieval works, yet they also define the two poles around which recent scholarship has focussed in analysing medieval culture. On the one hand, medieval culture is seen as dominated by the transition from orality to

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1   'Vocality' is the term coined by Paul Zumthor to describe this state of textuality; see Paul Zumthor, *Introduction à la poésie orale*, Paris 1983, and *La lettre et la voix: De la "littérature médiévale*, Paris 1987. Cf. also Ursula Schulze, 'Hearing from Books: The Rise of Fictionality if Old English Poetry', in *Vox intertexta: Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages,* ed. by A. N. Douane and Carol Braun Pasternak, Madison 1991, pp. 117-136, and 'Zum Problem der Mündlichkeit', in *Modernes Mittelalter. Neue Bilder einer populären Epoche,* ed. by Joachim Heinzle, Frankfurt 1994, pp. 357-375. On vocality in the German *Nibelungenlied*, see Jan-Dirk Müller, *Rules for the Endgame. The World of the Nibelungenlied*, trans. by William T. Whobrey, Baltimore 2007, here pp. 22-27.

literacy, by a focus on writing, signs, signification, and hermeneutics.[2] On the other hand, aspects of ritual, gesture, and process are at the forefront of current interest.[3] Often, therefore, studies construct a dichotomy of contrasts between 'static' hermeneutics and a 'process-oriented' focus on presence. Yet the question arises whether such polar oppositions really capture the characteristics of a culture which so often favoured tripartite rather than bipartite structuring,[4] and whether in fact medieval culture is best understood as inhabiting the liminal space, in other words, whether it should, in the title of a recent study, be seen as situated 'between body and writing'.[5]

1 Performance and performativity

At first glance, the so-called 'performative turn' of cultural anthropology may seem to privilege an interpretation of the middle ages as a culture of 'presence'.[6] Yet the contention of this volume is that a focus on performative acts offers a means of seeing central phenomena of medieval culture in a way that transcends the rigid dichotomies of other models. Study of the performative aspects of medieval culture allows a focus on

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2   The term 'bookishness' to describe medieval concern with the written word was first used by Carl Lofmark, *The Authority of the Source in Middle High German Narrative Poetry*, London 1981 (Bithell Series of Dissertations 5), p. 10-17, in summarizing the position of C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image. An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, Cambridge 1964, p. 5. Both studies highlight the paradox of a culture in which literacy was not widespread, yet books and reading take on a central role as sources of truth. On the shift in reading practices and its significance for the status of manuscript transmission see Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words. The Origins of Silent Reading*, Stanford 1997. Dennis H. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading. The primary reception of German literature 800-1300*, Cambridge 1994, offers a case study of the interaction between different modes of receptions which leave their traces in the literary works themselves.

3   Cf. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence—What Meaning Cannot Convey*, Stanford 2004, p. 39, who contrasts 'modern' hermeneutic culture ('Sinnkultur') and its focus on the mind and on time, with a medieval culture of presence ('Präsenzkultur') in which the body and space are the focal criteria.

4   Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Why all the fuss about the body? A Medievalists' Perspective', in *Critical Inquiry* 22 (1995), pp. 1-33, esp. pp. 13-15.

5   Cf. Christian Kiening, *Zwischen Körper und Schrift. Texte vor dem Zeitalter der Literatur*, Frankfurt a. M. 2003, esp. pp. 7-31.

6   William Egginton, 'Performance and Presence. Analysis of a Modern Aporia', in *Journal of Literary Theory* 1 (2007), pp. 3-18, highlights the shifting use of the term 'presence'; originating in the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger, it was used to describe 'the ultimate and pre-existing reference to material practices of various sorts' (p. 6), so that presence and performance could be seen as binary opposites. Under the influence of Derrida's critique of Heidegger, Gumbrecht (n. 3), p. 6, re-positions the term and uses it to designate 'the very materiality of those practices'.

the ways in which medieval texts, but also medieval forms of recording human behaviour and action, manage to convey both presence and absence simultaneously, thereby creating a space which is open to interpretation. In other words, medieval culture could be thought of as a culture in which the written text is endowed with potential to create presence, or indeed as a culture of presence that is at the same time aware of the fact that it is liable to be given meaning through interpretation.

What the essays of this volume aim to demonstrate is that John Austin's original concept of performatives may be particularly useful for a study of medieval culture, in that it allows to move beyond seeing words and actions as polar opposites. In particular, Austin's notion of performatives challenges the view that words are always secondary, recording and stating actions which have preceded the utterance. Instead, Austin offers a model which sees speech, or at least certain speech acts, as forms of actions - or, in the famous title of his lecture, as an investigation of 'how to do things with words'.[7] In this sense, Austin's concept of a speech act may be particularly helpful in enabling us to think of presence as created through language in the performative act.

Some definition of terms may be required here, because the term 'performance' has been used in a variety of quite different ways in recent scholarship. Thus, it may refer to a specific form of a speech act as well as to a form of staging; sometimes, these two senses are differentiated in that such staging is referred to as 'performance' while the term 'performativity' is reserved for the speech act.[8] Austin himself concentrated his analysis of speech-acts on specific, highly ritualized processes such as naming, or swearing an oath, though he himself formulated this as restricting himself to speech-acts which he considered as drawing on 'ordinary language', but also, more contentiously, as 'serious', in contrast to fictional utterances which he explicitly wished to exclude:

> A performative utterance will, for example, be *in a peculiar way* hollow or void if said by an actor on a stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy. This applies in any and every utterance - a sea-change in special circumstances. Language in such circumstances is used not seriously, but in ways *parasitic* upon its normal use - ways which fall under the doctrine of the *etiolation* of language.[9]

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7   John L. Austin, How to do things with words, ed. by J. Urmeson and Marina Sbia, 2nd edn, Oxford 1975.

8   For a differentiation of the terms, see *Performance and Performativity*, ed. Andrew Parker, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, New York, London 1995.

9   Austin (n. 7), p. 22.

This rejection of the theatre may in itself be a form of conscious staging,[10] and interpretations of quite what was meant by a speech act outside the realm of ordinary language, especially in fictional texts, became the subject of a subsequent heated debate between John Searle and Jacques Derrida.[11] For Searle, literary fiction was a prime example of 'parasitic discourse',[12] while Derrida highlights that so-called 'normal', substantial performatives, by nature of their conventionality, rely on the same process of citation or 'iteration' which Searle claims as a hall-mark of fictional speech-acts.[13]

In the context of this volume, three areas in particular will be explored: the central role of ritual speech acts, especially where they exist as spoken words transmitted in writing; secondly the way in which authorship, the category often declared to be dead by critics focussing on the materiality of literary communication, is reintroduced as a performative element, no longer described as a given, but created through the performance of the text; finally, questions surrounding the phenomenon of citation and repetition, especially in forms which appropriate and transform literary and aesthetic traditions in constituting poetic 'voice'. While the three parts of the volume explore different aspects of medieval performativity, they also demonstrate that these aspects are all interrelated.

Performance, according to Victor Turner, is not a 'pale imitation of a real life lived elsewhere',[14] but an essential aspect of humanity: 'If man is a sapient animal, a toolmaking animal, a self-making animal, a symbol-using animal, he is, no less, a performing animal, *Homo performans*.'[15] As is apparent from Austin's own examples, rituals such as naming, baptizing, or swearing an oath, take on a special significance if human beings are defined not in terms of ontological propositions, but through their actions. Ritual performance, which transforms its participants while allowing them to enter a liminal space 'betwixt and between'[16], thus

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10   On this aspect, see Sybille Krämer, 'Sprache - Stimme - Schrift: Sieben Gedanken über Performativität als Medialität, in *Performanz. Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. by Uwe Wirth, Frankfurt a. M. 2002, pp. 323-346, esp. p. 325; cf. Monika Otter in this volume, on Austin's 'playfully diabolical performance' (p.101).

11   John Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay on the Philosophy of Language,* Cambridge 1969; Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass, London 1978; John Searle, 'Reiterating the Difference: A Reply to Derrida', in *Glyph* 1 (1977), pp. 198-208.

12   Searle, 'Reiterating the Difference' (n. 11), p. 205.

13   Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc*, trans. by S. Weber, Chicago 1988, 17f. Cf Jonathan Culler, 'Philosophy and Literature: The Fortunes of the Performative, in *Poetics Today* 21 (2001), pp. 503-519, and James Loxley, *Performativity*, Abingdon, New York 2007, pp. 74f.

14   Loxley (n. 13), p. 154.

15   Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, New York 1987, p. 81.

16   Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, London 1969, p. 95.

permits 'an instant of pure potentiality' with special resonance for the creative and innovative.[17] Hence, ritual can be seen as a normative processes, shaping and controlling everyday social reality,[18] while at the same time it can be used productively to set free creative energies.[19]

The 'performative turn' of the last decades is largely animated by an anti-hermeneutic impetus which is suspicious of the assumption that meaning, authorial intention, identity, substance, or essence could be pre-existing in works of art or literature, or even theatre performances and everyday actions. The focus instead lies on how that which was once believed to have pre-existed its expression is actually constituted through an articulation considered to be less as a form of description than an act of creation, a performative act. In this respect, Austin's analysis of utterances which cannot be accommodated in a model of descriptive statements that are either true or false may be linked to Barthes' death of the author as a guarantor or the coherence, identity, and meaning of texts;[20] to the emergence of performance art in the 1960s and 70s producing events to be experienced in their corporeal presence rather than to be interpreted and understood as representation;[21] and to an interest in practices showing that personal identity is constituted through

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17 Victor Turner, 'Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual. An Essay in Comparative Symbology', in Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre*, New York 1982, pp. 20-60, here p. 44.

18 Cf. Victor Turner, 'Dramatic Ritual—Ritual Drama. Performative and Reflexive Anthropology', in *From Ritual to Theatre* (n. 17), pp. 89-101. Turner, 'Liminal to Liminoid' (n. 17), pp. 44 f , notes that in tribal societies, the liminal is almost immediately contained by 'taboos', checks and balances, and 'put into the service of normativeness almost as soon as it appears.' This view of ritual as inextricably linked with the sphere of the normative is most prominently explored by Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth Of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan, Harmondsworth 1979, pp. 79 f., who describes pre-modern punishment as a ritual of marking that 'is intended, either by the scar it leaves on the body, or by the spectacle that accompanies it, to brand the victim with infamy.' Cf. Seth Lerer, '"Repesentyd now in yower sight": The Culture of Spectatorship in Late-Fifteenth-Century England', in *Aufführung und Schrift in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit. DFG-Symposion 1994*, ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller, Stuttgart, Weimar 1996, pp. 356-380, esp. pp. 357 f.

19 This link between the performative and specific aesthetic qualities has become the focus of recent philosophical studies, especially where, in the wake of a dialogue with Heidegger, aesthetic objects are defined not as essence ('So-sein'), but as bringing something into being ('Erscheinen'); cf. Martin Seel, *Ästhetik des Erscheinens*, Munich 2000, Dieter Mersch, *Ereignis und Aura. Untersuchungen zu einer Ästhetik des Performativen* Frankfurt a. M. 2002, and, for a first attempt at analysing the specific conditions of aesthetic perception and production in medieval texts, Manuel Braun, 'Kristallworte, Würfelworte. Probleme und Perspektiven eines Projekts "Ästhetik mittelalterlicher Literatur"', in *Das fremde Schöne. Dimensionen des Ästhetischen in der Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. by Manuel Braun, Christopher Young, Berlin, New York 2007, pp. 1-40, here pp. 27-29.

20 Roland Barthes, 'La mort de l'auteur', in *Essais Critiques*, vol. IV: Le Bruissement de la Langue, Paris 1984, pp. 61-67.

21 Cf. Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Ästhetik des Performativen*, Frankfurt a. M. 2004 (stw 2373).

continuously repeated performance rather than following on from essential substance.[22]

The relationship between textuality and voice takes on a specific significance for many medieval genres. As Paul Zumthor insisted, in a medieval text, 'written' and even bookish as it may come down to us, its voice, the sense that it is or could be vocalized, is never far below the surface.[23] This 'vocality' yields a textuality that is somewhat different from the modern, but this is a difference of degree rather than category. Medieval textuality, by being more transparent in respect to voicing, to performance, can help to clarify other forms of textuality, including what we take for granted in modern texts. As the essays in this volume demonstrate, the term 'performance' covers pragmatic questions (how was this text received, used, experienced) as well as theoretical issues of text linguistics (how does this text suggest a voice, posit an 'I', how does it achieve coherence as 'a text' from those operations), and often attempts to enter into the psychological or anthropological implications of these questions as well. It may even serve to highlight what the consequences of those textual operations and social interactions that involve texts can be, what we can infer from them about subjectivity, the experience of interiority, even 'individuality'.

2 'Präsenzeffekte': creating a performative presence in ritual acts

The first group of essays in this volume explore aspects of what medieval texts and authors mean when they use verbs such as Middle English 'parfourmen' in its sense of 'bring something to completion'. Turner summarized the semantic transformation of the term as follows:

> 'performance' as we have seen, is derived from the Middle English 'parfournen' later 'parfourmen', which is itself from the Old French 'parfounir' ('to furnish') - hence 'performance' does not necessarily have the structuralist implications of manifesting 'form', but rather the procedural sense of "bringing to completion" or "accomplishing". To 'perform' is to complete a more or less involved process rather than to do a single deed or act.[24]

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22 Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', in *Writing on the body: Female embodiment and Feminist Theory*, ed. by Katie Conboy, New York 1997, pp. 401-417; *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York, London 1990.

23 Paul Zumthor, *La lettre et la voix. De la littérature médiévale*, Paris 1987, argues forcefully that a medieval text, however strongly it may be determined by features of writing, retains a 'voice', a sense that it is, or could be, vocalized, even if that voice may not be visible at the surface of its textuality.

24 Turner, 'Dramatic Ritual—Ritual Drama' (n. 17), p. 91; cf. Annie Sutherland, in this

Such performative practice can manifest itself in a variety of ways: liturgy, courtly lyric, and parliamentary practice are singled out here as three of the most important areas of performative practice within medieval culture. All of them show a double interest in mediality, in that all three examples discussed in this volume allow us to glimpse speech acts being performed, but these speech acts are in all cases mediated through the transformation into a written record. What the essays demonstrate is, however, that these records are not simple descriptions, or, in Austin's terms, declarative acts, but are instead characterized by complex relationships between ritual practice and written record.

The study of two late medieval English paraphrases of the penitential psalms allows Annie Sutherland to argue that the recitation of the psalms is performative in Austin's sense, because it constitutes an effective performance of penance. She highlights how the metrical paraphrases respond to a theological interpretation of the psalms which sees them as concerned with living the good life, linking them to an exegetical tradition which sees them not as human-authored or divinely inspired poetry, but as a form of doing in words. While Maidstone offers a form of Davidic interiority in his explicit use of general pronouns, constructing a textual 'I' which is inhabitable by the individual reciting as part of a collective, Bampton highlights performance as an act of creation, both in the fictionalized process of the poem's creation, and in the insistence that recitation of the psalms in turn completes the psalms and, if successful, helps to complete the self in the act of penance.

Liturgical practice in the Easter Church differs considerably from that of the West, yet the example chosen by M. C. MacRobert highlights that use of the psalter as part of liturgical commemoration of the dead has to negotiate comparable difficulties of mediating between an inherently collective practice and the desire for individuals to be remembered. MacRobert presents evidence of a fourteenth century Church Slavonic psalter manuscript, in which the scribe Ivan unusually inserts his own name in eighteen of the twenty-one interpolated prayers. This rare departure from the normal practice by which the place for the reader's name was indicated in the text by a standard formula ('saying the name') means that anyone reading the text would at the same time be commemorating the scribe. The textual 'I' of the psalms contained in the manuscript is nevertheless constructed as one inhabitable by everybody even when the space is actually filled by the named scribe; here, the focus on the exemplarity of the 'I' appears strong even in the face of concern for an individual to be remembered.

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volume, on Bampton's use of 'to performe' as a translation for Latin 'facere' in Ps 142:10.

The relationship between text and performance is an issue for political as well as religious and artistic practice of the Middle Ages, as is apparent from Benjamin Thompson's assessment of late-medieval English rolls of parliament, which vacillate between narrative report and formal record: they describe the events of parliament in a narrative manner comparable to that of chronicles, yet they also record in more formal and non-chronological terms the decisions taken in parliament. Concern for the accuracy of these texts is another facet of the interaction between ritual action of parliament and its governmental acts: the work of government was performed by the king, with the counsel and aid of his subjects, both through publicly-attested ritual actions, and through texts on whose precise wording much depended, and which could themselves be performed. Thompson demonstrates that the ambiguity of register in the rolls thus attests the interaction in the political system between divine executive power of the king in person, and the developed framework of law and counsel through which governance was mediated.

3 Performing the self: constructions of poetic identity

Whereas for questions of ritual, the collective aspect of performative practice is of central importance, if only as a foil against which to rub and express an individual 'I', such processes become more strictly individualized once they concern an 'I' which is no longer predominantly the penitent, or aristocratic singer, or politician, as part of a larger collective, but instead, in an act of self-reflection, is presented as the author of the text. In this section, a group of four essays focuses more specifically on the question of how performative practice can help to shape aspects of an authorial 'I', and how this textual 'I' may relate to expressions of subjectivity or even individuality.

Where Austin was concerned primarily with the felicity of speech acts, focussing on successful acts of communication, Monika Otter presents an interpretation of Anselm of Besate's *Rhetorimachia* as a playfully 'diabolical' performance, in which the author stages his own 'I' as an exemplum, embracing and acting out his own 'scurrilitas' while creating an equally fictional 'you' in the figure of Rutiland with whom he engages in combat. Part of the aggression of the textual construction lies in the way in which Rutiland's position is reduced to 'nothingness', turning the opponent into a fiction. Otter sees the *Rhetorimachia* as thus displaying a whole range of possible performances, from the self-staging of the author as 'Anselmus' to others inhabiting that role, yet unlike the psalms, where others in their

reading or recitation perform the named subject, there is no act of identification or indeed impersonation.

Like the school-room debate, courtly love lyric, traditionally associated with actual performance, is characterised by the tension inherent in using a medium embodying social practice and representative norms, a textual 'we', as the means of articulating poetic individuality or a textual 'I' . While in Italian lyric poetry the performance of a social 'I' had lost its importance much earlier than in Romance or German lyric traditions, Manuele Gragnolati demonstrates how Dante's *Vita nova* is nevertheless imbued with performance in two ways: both in staging the author's past according to an ideal spiritual and poetic development that is presented as a model for the other poets forming the public to which the text is addressed, and in creating a new identity for its author through language. Indeed, by studying the double life of the *rime* as an autobiographical workshop, Gragnolati shows that the *Vita nova* is performative, not constative, in that it is not an author's representation or description of his own past, as the *Vita nova* itself claims, but a new creation which successfully replaces the old texts and creates a new identity. Thus, the significant change in which Dante's *Vita nova* breaks with traditions of the courtly love lyric entails not the disappearance of performance, but rather, its move from the court into the textual space created by the emerging dialogues between poets.

Almut Suerbaum presents two late-medieval poets whose oeuvre incorporates autobiographical references, yet reveals complex strategies of negotiating a textual 'I'. Where Hugo of Montfort uses conventional form to articulate a shift in perspective, Oswald of Wolkenstein stages the paradox of conflicting roles. Both poets are shown to situate their own work within a context of ritualized performance; what marks their aesthetic interest is the way in which their reference is paradoxically both a means of inclusion in which the 'I' is part of a courtly audience and participates in performance as a courtly activity, and of exclusion, presenting the 'I' as set apart from this public by its experience of isolation, and by its ability to reflect on its own isolation.

A concept of performativity which sees subjectivity as staged in language is central to the Italian poet Vittorio Sereni. As Francesca Southerden is able to demonstrate, Sereni relates to Dante's *Purgatorio* as well as Petrarch's *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* 126 in dealing with themes such as the role of memory, the reversibility of time and loss, and the ability of poetry to redeem the past. For each of the three poets, poetry does not reproduce a predetermined version of selfhood, but rather constructs and literally 'performs' the coming into being of a subject whose existence depends upon the accomplishment of a poetic speech

act. Two main dimensions of performativity are discussed and elucidated, both in the context of key theories drawn from the philosophy of language (Austin, de Man, Beneveniste): the first aspect considers the relationship between autobiography and the speech act, showing how the 'I' is constructed in dialogue with an absent other who may conceivably return, but is fully recuperated in the case of Dante. The second deals more particularly with the discourse of desire at the heart on this conception of subjectivity, and considers at Petrarch and Sereni's reworking of the Dantean narrative of conversion.

4 Embodied voice: reading and re-reading

The third section of this volume brings together essays which address the phenomenon of interpretation, either in the form of musical performance, as a communication between composer and performer, or as re-reading and adaptation. Whereas poetry by Dante and Oswald constructs an implied audience as a function of the literary text, late medieval musical notation allows more concrete glimpses of the relationship between the composer and the singers. Traditionally, singing of polyphony requires quasi-grammatical analysis of the piece, with decisions about the melodic line, the consonance with other part, and the cadences to be taken as the singers progress through the piece. The period after 1500 however sees a gradual shift in how singers approach the task of performing polyphonic music, gradually moving away in some respects from a relationship in which, according to Margaret Bent, singers were 'collaborators with the composer in making the music happen — realising it — within the limits of his intention.'[25]   Owen Rees argues that in Josquin's setting of the Marian sequence 'Inviolata, integra et casta est virgo Maria', the composer asserts his authority over the presence of the actual performance even while physically absent. The paper offers a close reading of how Josquin 'plays this game' in the manipulation of singers' choices when they perform the motet: for example, by leading them into an initially discordant rendition of the phrase 'dulcisona' ('sweet-sounding') and obliging them to work hard to achieve a harmonious solution. By thus challenging and directing the singers performing his composition, Josquin encourages reflection not just on the practice of performance, but on the harmonic structure of the work, and the creative presence of the absent composer. In an area of notation which to modern eyes appears so much less composer-defined than the marking-laden scores of later periods,

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25   Margaret Bent , 'Diatonic *ficta',* in *Early Music History* 4 (1984), pp. 1-48, here p. 13.

Josquin's practice highlights the composer's 'direction' of the piece despite being superficially absent in the notation.

A textualized authorial voice is prominent in a different way in twelfth century Arthurian romance, the genre developed and quickly brought to fame in France by Chrestien de Troyes and adapted for a German audience, within the space of about twenty years, by Hartmann von Aue. Melanie Florence highlights how the process of adaptation visible in Hartmann's *Erec* draws on concepts of performance on more than one way. Like its original, Hartmann's text was intended for recitation and employs a very prominent narrator persona. More importantly, in adapting the instances of extended description, Hartmann re-presents the romance for a new audience, situating it in a different linguistic, geographical, socio-cultural and literary space. Here, elements of the visual are clearly not restricted to the purely ornamental, but serve to articulate central concerns of the story overall.

Where Florence analyses a case of textual adaptation, a process involving the transformation of one text into another, late medieval literature is characterized by the way in which it draws on less specifically text-based knowledge of cultural contexts. Alastair Matthews highlights a specific case of such appropriation: classical authors are re-invented as figures within a narrative. Whereas the best-known of these is perhaps figure of Virgil in Dante's *Commedia*, Matthews chooses Artistole as his example and highlights how he is developed as a character in his own right, at times retaining his status as a source of erudite authority, as in the Alexander romances, at others, as in the short verse narrative *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, turning into the object of bawdy comedy. Late medieval plays incorporating the figure of Aristotle illustrate this vividly: Aristotle often takes on a dual role, offering instruction to those within the pay, but at the same time, serving as an example of the heathen expert who fails in the world of Christianity, especially when dealing with women. The figure thus serves to articulate both a sense of distance, seeing Aristotle as the author of texts - especially texts of moral instruction - within texts, and of presence, where moral lessons about proper behaviour are no longer texts written by Aristotle, but enacted by, or better, through him. In this sense, they are performative not because they are written records of actual performances, but because they articulate through the figure of Aristotle that instruction requires the transposition of declarative rules into human behaviour.

Whereas medieval appropriation of classical writers presupposes a notion of proximity, modern reception of Dante is dominated by a sense of distance. Fabian Lampart in his analysis of nineteenth and twentieth century German adaptations highlights that it is the way in which Dante

designs strategies of textual performance which stimulates modern authors in their re-reading of Dante's text. In terms of performance, Dante's text is—as Teodolinda Barolini has put it—characterised by complex truth claims; by poetic means Dante attempts to create a vision of the world which he believed to be true. It is this quality which modern writers try to integrate into their texts. Meyer's novella, incorporating Dante as the fictional narrator, Borchardt's translation of Dante into a medievalizing, fictive form of German, and Peter Weiss's post-war drama reviving the performative structure of Dante's *Commedia* in an ironic and contrafactual way each illustrate facets about how this truth claim can be creatively transformed into modern poetics.

5 Interdisciplinary approach

The present volume has its origins in the specific form of scholarship at an Oxford college, in which colleagues from a range of disciplines are thrown together by the task of undergraduate teaching. As so often, organisational frame-works can generate opportunities as well as constraints, and in time, it became obvious that there were links which went beyond the needs of day-to-day teaching, so that a dialogue about ways in which various disciplines engage with the concepts of performance and performativity ensued. The result is a volume which, in its obvious gaps, betrays its origins in a particular dialogue, yet hopes to offer a contribution towards a multi-disciplinary discussion of an area which so far has mostly only been approached from within individual disciplines.

I. 'Präsenzeffekte':

Performative presence in ritual acts of remembrance

Annie Sutherland

Performing the Penitential Psalms in the Middle Ages

In his early fifteenth-century paraphrase of the Seven Penitential Psalms, commenting on Psalm 142: 10 'Doce me facere voluntatem tuam, Quia Deus meus tu es' ('Teach me to do your will, because you are my God'), the Franciscan friar Thomas Brampton remarks 'Teche me to performe thy wylle'.[1] 'To performe' functions here as a translation of the Vulgate's 'facere'; an alternative translation would be, of course, 'teach me to do thy will'. But 'to performe' is a perfectly valid rendition of 'facere'; indeed, evidence that this word was used to denote a range of actions is provided by the Middle English Dictionary, which, among its definitions of 'performen', offers the following:

> **2.** (a) To act; accomplish (a deed, task, service, etc.), carry out from beginning to end, achieve, perform (a duty, an office, a crime, penance, etc.); make (a pilgrimage); **~ up, ~ out**; (b) to carry out (a promise, agreement, command, threat, law, etc.), fulfill, comply with; satisfy (desire, lust); put into effect or into practice (a plan, purpose); follow (advice); of a dream: come true; **~ wille**, carry out the request or desire (of sb.), act under the sway (of sb. or sth.) [2]

Of these possible sub-definitions, 'to carry out, fulfil, comply with' is most obviously relevant to Brampton.[3] The simple act of *doing* is clearly what

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the friar is talking about; having meditated on and prayed using the psalms, his expressed desire is that he might put into practice that which he has been considering.

This sense that any profitable reading of the psalms should result in a performance of their penitential precepts is commonplace; Augustinian exegesis, for example, is insistent in its emphasis on authentic psalmody as consisting not only in reading and reciting songs of praise and penitence, but also in an active living out of godly principles.[4] And that such emphasis found its way into conventions of medieval reading is demonstrated not only by Brampton, but also by that most prolific of Middle English psalm commentators, the Yorkshire hermit Richard Rolle, whose *English Psalter* is shot through with the awareness that 'doing' the psalms is the most meaningful way of reading the psalms.[5]

It is the goal of this essay to investigate notions of 'doing' or 'peforming' as relevant to readings of the psalms in the English Middle Ages and to ask what it meant to 'do' the psalms in a medieval context. Particular attention will be given to Thomas Brampton's paraphrase of the Seven Penitential Psalms, although other contemporary texts will be alluded to as relevant. This investigation will consider the notion that an ideal reading of the psalms is one which results in the performance of a godly life of penitence and praise. However, I will also focus on the ways in which the very act of devotional reading and recitation is itself a performance before God; actively engaged upon, it contributes to the reconciliation of the penitential self with God and in itself constitutes part of that devout life towards which ideal psalm reading leads. To initiate this investigation, I would like to set psalm reading and, in particular, Penitential Psalm reading, in something of its medieval context.

It is a commonplace that the medieval liturgy, both ecclesiastical and monastic, was centred on the Latin Psalter; we know that the entire

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performed, of dishes, walls, etc.: ?decorated. **4.** To cause (love, woe, peace, etc.), produce, bring about; **~ to enducen**, succeed in inducing (sb. to a state).

4   For example, see Augustine's comment on Psalm 119: 104 in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (*PL* 37, 1566): 'Sed quid est quod ait, *A mandatis tuis intellexi?* Aliud enim est, Mandata tua intellexi; aliud est, *A mandatis tuis intellexi*. Nescio quid ergo aliud se significat intellexisse a mandatis Dei: hoc est, quantum mihi videtur, **faciendo mandata Dei** pervenisse se dicit ad earum rerum intelligentiam, quas concupiverat scire.' ('But what do these words mean, "Through thy commandments I get understanding?" The expressions "I have understood thy commandments" and "I get understanding through thy commandments" are different. Something else then he signifies that he has understood from the commands of God: that is, as far as I can see, he says that *by doing the commandments of God* he has arrived at the understanding of those things which he had longed to know.') (Bold and italics mine).

5   For further evidence and exploration of this awareness in Richard Rolle's *English Psalter*, see Annie Sutherland, 'Biblical Text and Spiritual Experience in the English Epistles of Richard Rolle', in *The Review of English Studies* 56 (2005), pp. 695-711.

Psalter would have been read through on a very regular basis, and that the average monk would have known the text of all the psalms by heart.[6] Less investigated has been the significant role that vernacular versions of the psalms played in the devotional life of the English Middle Ages. Surviving in four complete late Middle English translations, and in several paraphrased and abbreviated versions, the Psalter occupied a unique position in the meditative and intercessory life of the period.[7] Indeed, it was, according to Richard Rolle, a 'shynand boke', 'a chosen sange byfor god, als laumpe lyghtnand oure lyf' ('a shining book', 'a chosen song before God, as a lamp lighting our life.')[8] But what afforded the psalms their liturgical and devotional preeminence?[9] What did they possess that other biblical texts did not?

In the context of their role in prayer and devotion, the answer is relatively straightforward; they are deeply felt and wide-ranging first person utterances, whose nature as uniquely intimate intercessions is

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6   For in-depth analysis of the ways in which the memory could be trained to recall the psalms (and other texts) in detail and in a manner more flexible than rote learning would suggest, see Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge 1990. For a fascinating recent account of the role of the Psalter in the life of the medieval monk, see Susan Boynton 'Prayer as Liturgical Performance in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Monastic Psalters', in *Speculum* 82 (October 2007), pp. 896-931. Boynton's article contains other observations to which my essay will return.

7   For editions of these four complete Psalters, see *Anglo-Saxon and Early English Psalter*, ed. by Joseph Stevenson, 2 volumes, London 1843-1844 (Surtees Society); *The Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter* ed. by Karl D. Bulbring, 2 volumes, London 1891 (EETS os 97). *The Psalter or Psalms of David and Certain Canticles with a Translation and Exposition in English by Richard Rolle of Hampole*, ed. by Henry Ramsden Bramley, Oxford 1884. The fourth is that found in the Wycliffite Bible; see *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, with the Apocryphal Books, in the Earliest English Versions Made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and his Followers*, ed. by Josiah Forshall, Frederic Madden, 4 volumes, Oxford 1850. For an index of abbreviated and paraphrased Psalters, see *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500*, gen. ed. by Jonathan Burke-Severs, New Haven 1967-, volume 2, 1970.

8   Bramley, *Psalter*, p. 3.

9   Conventionally, 'liturgy' has been understood to refer to 'all the prescribed services of the Church, as contrasted with private devotion' (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. by Elizabeth A. Livingstone, 2nd edn, Oxford 1977, p. 306), while 'devotion' has been taken to denote rather more personal, informal intercessory practice (For an invigorating investigation of such definitions, see Clifford C. Flanigan, Kathleen Ashley, Pamela Sheingorn, 'Liturgy as Social Performance: Expanding the Definitions', in *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, ed. by Thomas J. Heffernan, Ann E. Matter, Kalamazoo 2001, pp. 695-714). However, recent years have witnessed some debate regarding such delineated use of the terms 'liturgy' and 'devotion', as scholars have begun to argue that private devotion can allude to and involve devices conventionally associated with the liturgy, and vice versa (for further exploration of this area, see Boynton, 'Prayer as Liturgical Performance'). As the penitential paraphrases examined in this essay will demonstrate, much late Middle English devotional writing deliberately invokes and associates itself with the liturgy, for reasons which I will explore.

highlighted thus by the eighth-century ecclesiastic Alcuin of York in his *De Usu Psalmorum*:

> In psalmis invenies tam intimam orationem, si intenta mente perscruteris, quantum non potes per teipsum ullatenus excogitare.[10]

> In the psalms, if you study them with an attentive mind, you will find prayer so intimate that you would not yourself be able to devise any greater.

As such, their first-person narrative offers itself up for appropriation by the individual (or community) who prays using them.[11] As one reads them, one adopts their voice as one's own, assuming the persona of the Psalmist as it were.[12] Indeed, the psalms are insistent in drawing attention to themselves as personal utterances, as performances before the divine, and frequently seem caught between anxiety lest God will not hear:

> Hear, O Lord, my prayer: and let my cry come to thee. Turn not away thy face from me: in the day when I am in trouble, incline thy ear to me. In what day soever I shall call upon thee, hear me speedily.[13] (Psalm 101: 2-3)

and certainty that He is able to hear:

> for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication: the Lord hath received my prayer.[14] (Psalm 6: 9-10)

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10   Alcuin of York, *De Usu Psalmorum*, PL 101: 465D. This phrase is quoted in Rachel Fulton, 'Praying with Anselm at Admont: A Meditation on Practice', in *Speculum* 81 (July 2006), pp. 700-733, p. 712.

11   Of course, drawing on patristic traditions, medieval exegetes understood different psalms to be spoken in different voices (for example, the voice of David, of Christ, of God, of the Church etc). However, the paraphrases on which this essay focuses are interested in the psalms primarily as straightforward models for the penitent utterance of the reading individual. For brief discussion of the 'shifting grammatical voices' that one hears in the psalms, see *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. by Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, London 1987, p. 253. For a more comprehensive investigation of the voicing of the psalms, see Alistair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, London 1984, esp. pp. 85-94, 103-112.

12   The performative implications of this manner of reading the psalms will be explored later in the essay. For a fascinating recent discussion of performativity and devotional usage of the psalms, see Monika Otter, 'Entrances and Exits: Performing the Psalms in Goscelin's *Liber confortatorius*', in *Speculum* 83 (April 2008), pp. 283-302.

13   All vernacular psalm quotations in this essay are taken from *The Holy Bible: Douay Version Translated from the Latin Vulgate*. For specifically Penitential Psalms exhibiting a similar anxiety, see, for example, Psalm 129: 1-2 'Out of the depths I have cried to thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. Let thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication'; Psalm 142: 1 'Hear, O Lord, my prayer: give ear to my supplication in thy truth: hear me in thy justice'; Psalm 142: 7 'Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit hath fainted away'.

14   For other such declarations, see for example, Psalm 37: 10 'Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hidden from thee'; Psalm 37: 15 'For in thee, O Lord, have I hoped: thou wilt hear me, O Lord my God.' Robert Alter makes a similar point about the psalms' preoccupation with themselves as utterances; see Alter and Kermode, *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, p. 260.

In the context of this latter quotation, what is particularly noteworthy about the psalms is their oft-expressed confidence in the efficacy of speech that is heard by God. When one speaks the psalms in a true penitential spirit, it seems that the act has the potential to effect change in one's relationship with God, to afford one the opportunity of achieving individual reconciliation with the divine:

> *I have acknowledged* my sin to thee, and my injustice I have not concealed. I said *I will confess* against myself my injustice to the Lord: and *thou hast forgiven* the wickedness of my sin. (Psalm 31: 5) Italics mine

There is, in fact, as Sandra Boynton puts it, a 'redemptive instrumentality' inherent in 'the act of psalmody' as 'one of its salvific effects'; to return to a point made above, the very recitation of the psalms is an effective performance of penance.[15] Viewed thus, the speaking of the psalms might be placed within John L. Austin's category of 'performative utterances' (utterances that 'do' something) as distinct from 'constative utterances' (utterances that simply describe something). For as in Austin's description of performatives, so in the penitential recitation of the psalms, 'the issuing of the utterance *is* the performing of an action – it is not normally thought of as just saying something.'[16]

However, to revert to the aforementioned sense of performing as doing ('carry[ing] out, fulfil[ling], comply[ing] with') as distinct from saying, it is important to note that preoccupied as they are with the efficacy of penitential recitation itself, the psalms are equally preoccupied with the living of a good life. Psalm 1: 1 is, indeed, a case in point; the blessed man is he who has lived well:

> Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence.

An effective performer of the psalms is one who not only prays with true penitential intent, but who also enacts the godly life upon which the psalmist elaborates.

Turning specifically to the Seven Penitential Psalms (6, 31, 37, 50, 129 and 142 in the Vulgate numbering), it is arguable that the notion of performance is of particular relevance to them in both of the senses outlined above; for not only was their recitation believed to have the potential to actively restore one to a right relationship with the divine, but they are also closely focused on the performance of God's will ('Make the

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15   Boynton, 'Prayer as Liturgical Performance', p. 906.

16   John L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words*, Oxford 1962, pp. 6-7. Italics mine. While employing Austin's performative/constative distinction, I am aware of the fact that this is not a rigid categorisation which he maintains throughout *How to Do Things with Words*.

way known to me, wherein I should walk').[17] That the ideal reading of the Penitential Psalms entails performance in both of these senses is emphasised by Richard Rolle in his *English Psalter*'s comments on Psalm 37: 19 ('For I will declare my inequity: and I will think for my sin'). There are, says Rolle in response to this verse, 'twa maners' of 'perfite penaunce' ('two kinds' of 'perfect penance'), and while one involves recitation ('prayere and teris') ('prayer and tears'), the other involves activity ('almusdede' and 'be[ing] besy to clens [...] syn') ('almsdeeds' and 'being intent upon the cleansing of sin').[18]

First isolated as a distinct group by Cassiodorus in his sixth-century *Expositio Psalmorum*, the Seven Penitential Psalms have always played their part in the western monastic office, and were also adopted into medieval ecclesiastical liturgy.[19] In fact, the dominant role of the psalms in the liturgy draws our attention to them as dramatic texts, as texts whose liturgical recitation inevitably requires the individual to perform the part of the Psalmist as he or she reads.[20] When imagined as the personal utterances of David, the psalms voice a personal biblical drama that is only highlighted by their deployment in the quasi-theatrical context of the

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17 Psalm 142: 8.

18 Bramley, *Psalter*, p. 141. See also Dame Eleanor Hull's fifteenth-century translation of the Penitential Psalms, in which she comments 'But wenyth not that by þe symple seyynge of þe wordys of þes vij psalmys that dedly synnys mow be for3euyn, but yf ye folow þe doctryne that þey teche you of gode, and that ye for-sake al euel that put you ferre from your hele.' *A Commentary on the Penitential Psalms Translated by Dame Eleanor Hull*, ed. by Alexandra Barratt, Oxford 1995, p. 184/11-14 (EETS os 307) ('But do not think that by the simple saying of the words of these seven psalms, deadly sins may be forgiven, unless you also follow the doctrine of goodness that they teach you, and forsake all wickedness that removes you far from your salvation').

19 For a comprehensive exploration of the background to the Seven Penitential Psalms, see Michael Driscoll, 'The Seven Penitential Psalms: Their Designation and Usage from the Middle Ages Onwards', in *Ecclesia Orans* 17 (2000), pp. 153-201.

20 While the verb 'to perform' had many resonances in Middle English (as listed in footnote 3), it is interesting to note that it does not seem to have carried quite the resonances of *acting* or *representing* that it does now. In fact, according to the OED, it did not accrue such resonances until much later; OED dates the first recorded use of 'perform' in the sense 'to present (a play, ballet, opera, etc.) on stage or to an audience; to play or sing (a piece of music) for an audience' to 1567. Additionally, it dates the first recorded use of 'perform' in the sense 'to act or play (a part or role in a play, ballet, etc.); to represent (a character) on stage or to an audience' to 1598. The closest that the MED comes to associating performance with pretence of some sort is under heading 2(e) '~ **to falsnesse**, to speak deceitfully'; and the closest that it comes to associating it with acting in a theatrical sense is under the same heading, '*ppl*. **performed**, of a text: discoursed or lectured upon'. However, for a subtly articulated argument that, in the late Middle Ages, 'performen' began to accrue something of the modern sense 'play a musical instrument, act, sing', see Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England*, Chicago, London 2007, pp. 16-17.

liturgy.[21] And such intensity is all the more apparent in the case of the Penitential Psalms which, if understood to form a coherent narrative, 'adumbrate a drama that begins in abject self-consciousness and ends in the acceptance of God's merciful sovereignty.'[22] That such an understanding of these seven psalms as a distinct and personal dramatic sequence was quite common in the Middle Ages is once again emphasised by Richard Rolle who, in commenting on Psalm 6: 1, writes:

> The seuen psalmes of the whilk this is the first begynnys all in sorowand gretynge and bitternes of forthynkynge, & thai end in certaynte of pardoun.[23]

> The seven psalms of which this is the first all begin in sorrowing lamentation and in bitterness of repentance, and they end in certainty of pardon.

This being the case, it should come as no surprise that in the medieval period the Penitential Psalms were often detached from their familiar Latinate liturgical context, and came to play a prominent role in vernacular devotion.

Of course, the question of what and how the non-Latinate prayed in the late Middle Ages is notoriously vexed. Although vernacular devotional and instructional manuals abound, the intercessory guidance that they provide is not always as precise or comprehensive as the literary historian might like.[24] Nonetheless, the sheer number of surviving psalm translations, as well as frequent admonitions to pray using the psalms, do

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21 The theatricality or otherwise of the liturgy has been a topic of much debate among medievalists, with Hardison emphasising its nature as 'sacred drama' and Clopper, for example, arguing against this notion (see Osbern B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages: Essays in the Origin and Early History of Modern Drama*, Baltimore 1965, and Lawrence M. Clopper, *Drama, Play and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period*, London 2001). For a convenient summary of this scholarship, see Bruce W. Holsinger 'Medieval Literature and Cultures of Performance', in *New Medieval Literatures*, ed. by David Lawton, Rita Copeland, Wendy Scase, Volume 6, Oxford 2003, pp. 271-312.

22 Lynn Staley, 'The Penitential Psalms: Conversion and the Limits of Lordship', in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37 (Spring 2007), pp. 221-269, p. 230. Staley also (p. 222) alludes to the Penitential Psalms as a voicing of 'the interior drama of conversion'.

23 Bramley, *Psalter*, p. 21. See also Dame Eleanor Hull's comments on the seven psalms as a sequence: '[t]he fyrst begynnyth with drede and with terys […] And the laste endyth in certeinte of ioye […] By this we may wel vndyrstond that tho that begynnyth with Dauid and abydyn with him in wepyng and in penance, that they schal be reioyssyd in the laste ende with him.' Barratt, *Hull's Commentary*, p. 9/266-p. 10/274. ('The first begins with dread and with tears […] And the last ends in the certainty of joy […] By this we may well understand that those who set out with David and remain with him in weeping and in penance, they shall be made glad at the last end with him').

24 For discussion of vernacular devotional and instructional material circulating in the late Middle Ages, see for example Vincent Gillespie 'Vernacular Books of Religion', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain: 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths, Derek Pearsall, Cambridge 1989, pp. 317-344.

tell us that the Psalter, or at least parts of the Psalter, played a central role in devotional practice. And the particular intercessory significance of the Penitential Psalms (most notably Psalm 50) is highlighted by the survival of two distinct late medieval paraphrases of these seven psalms in their entirety.[25] It is to these two paraphrases that attention now turns.[26]

The first is, of course, the aforementioned metrical version dated to the early fifteenth century and attributed to the Franciscan friar Thomas Brampton. As the twentieth-century editor of this psalm paraphrase tells us, very little is known about Brampton; indeed 'except as author of the metrical version of the *Seven Penitential Psalms*, the name of Thomas Brampton does not appear anywhere in the many available accounts of literature and literary figures of the Middle Ages' and although his treatise survives in six manuscripts, only two name him as author.[27] Yet since it is beyond the remit of this essay to investigate further questions of authorship, this version will be referred to as Brampton's throughout.

Brampton's *Seven Penitential Psalms* take the form of one long poem divided into eight-line stanzas, and in general his method is to devote each stanza to paraphrasing and commenting upon each individual verse of the seven psalms. Thus the first stanza (following the prologue, to which I will

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25 The devotional pre-eminence of the Penitential Psalms is also emphasised by their role in contemporary Primers. Although we do not have evidence that vernacular Primers were in use in England before the end of the fourteenth century at the earliest, the Latin texts on which they were modelled would almost invariably have featured the Seven Penitential Psalms as part of their intercessory program. (For background material on the contents of Books of Hours and Primers, see the very useful essay by Bella Millett, '*Ancrene Wisse* and the Book of Hours', in *Writing Religious Women: Female Spiritual and Textual Practices in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Christiania Whitehead, Denis Renevey, Cardiff 2000, pp. 21-40).

26 As referenced in footnote 18, a third Middle English (prose) translation and commentary on the Seven Penitential Psalms survives - that of Dame Eleanor Hull, who actually translated her text from French. However, as Hull's work is more discursive and less straightforwardly devotional than the two paraphrases explored in this essay, it does not play a major part in my current investigations.

27 Kreuzer, *Brampton's Metrical Paraphrase*, p. 365. For discussion of the six manuscripts, see pp. 360-363. The two manuscripts containing attributions to Brampton are London, British Library, MS Sloane 1853 (in a sixteenth-century hand) and Trinity College, Cambridge MS R.3.20 (in 'a later hand' according to Kreuzer). Three manuscripts (Trinity MS R.3.20, Cambridge University MS Ff 2.38 and Magdalene College, Cambridge MS Pepys 1584) contain what Kreuzer calls 'a variant version of the text' (the B version alluded to in footnote 1). He states that although the two versions 'unquestionably stem from the same original, [t]he variant version [B] differs from the normal version [A] in about 130 lines scattered throughout the poem.' In some places, only a few words are changed, and in others, 'entire stanzas' are altered (p. 359). It has been speculated that A is an anti-Lollard text and that B's alterations are decidedly pro-Lollard. Such speculations are not, however, relevant to this essay, which focuses on B as the more distinctly performative of the two versions.

return), based on Psalm 6: 2 ('O Lord, rebuke me not in thy indignation, nor chastise me in thy wrath'), reads:

> Lord wilt þu not me schame ner schend
> Whan þu schalt be in thy fersenes
> To dredefull dome whan I schall wend
> Hold not thy wrathe on my frelenes
> Thy derworthe childirn whan þu schalt bles
> And bid þem euer to Ioy wt þe
> My wyckid werkis more and les
> * * * Ne reminiscaris et cetera. [28]

> Lord will you neither shame nor condemn me
> When you are at your most severe.
> When I must go to the dreadful judgement
> Do not maintain your anger at my frailty.
> When you shall bless your precious children
> And ask them to rejoice with you eternally,
> My wicked works both great and small
> Do not remember, [Lord].

and although this straightforwardly meditative response to the biblical material is not altogether characteristic of Brampton's poem in its entirety, the stanza does share two key features with the rest of the text. The first is Brampton's assumption of the first person in his paraphrasing comments on the verse, and the second is his conclusion of the stanza with the Latin 'ne reminiscaris domine'. Borrowed from the antiphon that in both Sarum and York Breviaries concludes the recitation of the Seven Penitential Psalms and precedes the Litany, Brampton's inclusion of the phrase seems designed to key his devotional text into the conventions of the liturgy, and to present it as straddling the divide between private intercession and public observance.[29]

The second penitential paraphrase in which this essay is interested is the late fourteenth-century version attributed to Richard Maidstone (d. 1396), known to have been a Carmelite friar and a fierce opponent of John Wyclif. Several works have been attributed to Maidstone, but although relatively few survive, there does not seem to be any reason to

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28 Kreuzer, p. 371.

29 'Ne reminiscaris, domine, delicta nostra, vel parentum nostrorum, neque vindictam sumas de peccatis nostris' ('Lord, do not remember our faults, or the faults of our parents, nor exact vengeance for our sins'), in *The Prymer or Lay Folks' Prayer Book*, ed. by Henry Littlehales, volume 2 London 1895, 1897 (EETS os 105 and 109), p. lx. In her aforementioned 2008 *Speculum* article 'Entrances and Exits', Monika Otter makes a similar observation regarding the psalmic intercessions that Goscelin of St. Bertin prescribes for Eva of Wilton: 'They are intensely, emotionally private but also keyed to communal worship. They give the individual worshipper a way to make the liturgical prayer his or her own, to fill it with personal content' (p. 292).

doubt his authorship of the *Penitential Psalms*; his name appears in two of the surviving twenty-seven manuscripts and the treatise is also recognised as his by Bale.[30]

Like Brampton, Maidstone creates from the Penitential Psalms one long poem of eight-line stanzas, and such are the formal similarities between the two versions that it seems quite possible that Brampton knew of Maidstone's version when he was composing his own.[31] Both, for example, follow the same basic scheme of devoting each stanza to paraphrasing and commenting upon each individual verse of the seven psalms, although the rhyme schemes of each are different.[32] Thus, Maidstone's first stanza, based on Psalm 6: 2 and following the prologue, reads:

> Lord in þin angur vptake me nou3te
> And in þi wrethe blame þou not me,
> For certes synne haþ me þour3e sou3te,
> Þat I were lost, nere helpe of þe.
> Þe wantounnesse þat I haue wrou3te,
> For3ete hit lord, for þi pite,
> Þat I be not fro blisse brou3te
> To place þere þat peynes be.[33]

> Lord do not reprove me in your anger
> And do not blame me in your wrath,
> For surely sin has assaulted me so on all sides,
> That I would be lost, were it not for your help.
> Forget it lord, out of your compassion,
> So that I am not taken from bliss
> There, to that place where pains are.

In its fairly clear delineation between translation (lines 1-2) and commentary (lines 3-8), this stanza is characteristic of the poem as a whole.[34] However, it is noteworthy that even when commenting on the Psalmist's words, Maidstone (like Brampton) remains resolute in his use of the first person 'I' (which, throughout his paraphrase, modulates on

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30 *Richard Maidstone's Penitential Psalms*, ed. by Valerie Edden, Heidelberg 1990, p. 10. Of these twenty-seven manuscripts, five contain only Psalm 50, highlighting this particular psalm's devotional pre-eminence (pp. 16-17). Edden suggests that the manuscripts should be divided into three variational groups (αβγ) and chooses Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson A 389 as her base text. This contains the β version of the text which is, she argues, the earliest version.

31 Staley, 'The Penitential Psalms' also speculates that Brampton might well have read Maidstone's version (p. 224).

32 Maidstone reads abababab and Brampton ababbcbc.

33 Edden, *Maidstone's Psalms*, p. 47/9-16.

34 On occasion, Maidstone's translation (as distinct from his commentary) stretches over four lines.

occasion into the plural 'we'), allowing neither himself nor his reader to retreat from direct devotional appropriation of the penitential voice of the Psalmist. As Valerie Edden states, Maidstone's overall scheme leads him to favour:

> spiritual interpretations in which the penitent reader may become the speaker of the poems. At no point is there any suggestion of the "literal" (historical) reading in which the speaker is David … The speaker in Maidstone's psalms is indeed normally the penitent sinner, i.e the reader.[35]

In thus assuming, with relatively few exceptions, the first-person voice throughout, Maidstone's poem reveals a devotional disposition akin to that which we find in Brampton's later paraphrase; both texts are insistent in demanding an engaged and actively penitent reader.[36]

That the two share a similar devotional disposition is also emphasised by the fact that they both create coherent intercessory monologues from the Seven Penitential Psalms. Prefaced with prologues and concluding in 'Amen', the two poems ask for sustained meditative reading and engagement.[37] Further, both poets seem eager to associate the devotional material provided by their texts with the liturgical and sacramental practices of the church. In Brampton's case, this is achieved by his prologue's introduction of a confessor, a 'brodir ful dere'('a most excellent brother'), to whom the narrator tells us he 'schroue' himself ('made confession') prior to his penitential recitation of the psalms.[38] And it is further reinforced by his aforementioned quotation of the Latin antiphon 'Ne reminiscaris domine' at the end of each eight-line stanza. Indeed, this quotation highlights the fact that the text requires performance of a

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35   Valerie Edden, 'Richard Maidstone's Penitential Psalms', in *Carmel in Britain: Essays on the Medieval English Carmelite Province*, ed. by Patrick Fitzgerald-Lombard, vol. 2, Faversham 1992, pp. 106-124, pp. 108-109.

36   The particularity of their lyrical insistence on the first person is highlighted by comparison with the commentaries of Richard Rolle and Eleanor Hull. In the writings of both of these latter figures, we find recognition of different voices at work in the Penitential Psalms. See, for example, Rolle on Psalm 31 'Here the prophet spekis in his person that does penaunce for his synn' ('Here the prophet speaks in the person of one who does penance for his sin') (Bramley, *Psalter*, p. 111) and Hull on Psalm 142 ('þe tytyl of þe psalme ys , 'Of Dauid, whan Abselon his sone pursuyd hym.'[…] And þer-for þis psalme representyht to ous þe story of þe repentant Dauid' ('The title of the psalm is, 'Of David, when Absalon his son pursued him' […] And therefore this psalm represents to us the story of the repentant David.')(Barratt, *Hull's Commentary*, p. 184/5-6, 19-21).

37   Edden in *Carmel in Britain*, p. 106: 'Maidstone's psalms move beyond psalm paraphrase, using the psalms as the basis for a single, continuous penitential meditation to be used in private devotion […] the psalms are joined together in one meditation with no breaks between individual psalms. Links are made between them, a single theme unites them and they have a coherent structure.' As this essay will suggest, the meditative coherence of Maidstone's version is perhaps greater than that which we find in Brampton.

38   Kreuzer, pp. 370-371.

liturgical nature; its effectiveness is related directly to its penitential recitation. To borrow from the words of a short monograph on liturgical hermeneutics, as in the case of the liturgy, so in the case of Brampton's paraphrase, the treatise 'must be recognised as simultaneously text and performance'; its true significance is realised only in its recitation and enactment.[39] In the case of Maidstone's paraphrase, liturgical and sacramental affiliations are less obviously foregrounded, but incidental references to 'shrifte' ('confession') suggest that the friar saw his poem as complementing rather than supplanting the formal observances of the church.[40]

Despite such similarities, however, each paraphrase is marked by a distinct character and emphasis. Maidstone, always careful to divide his biblical translation from his interpretative material, and resolutely Christological in his interpretation of the psalms, might be characterised as the more cautious of the two exegetes. Brampton, meanwhile, is less consistent; in his passionate and impulsive text, translation and commentary often merge into each other, and devotional engagement with the psalm on which he is elaborating is, on occasion, replaced by urgently voiced contemporary social criticism.[41] Additionally, where Maidstone's not infrequent references to 'we' as readers and speakers of his psalm paraphrase indicate a consciousness of the text's applicability to an audience beyond himself, Brampton is rather more overtly and dramatically aware of his poem as aiming at listeners in addition to the

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39   Bridget Nichols, *Liturgical Hermeneutics: Interpreting Liturgical Rites in Performance*, Frankfurt a. M. 1996, p. 15.

40   See, for example, Maidstone's comment on Psalm 31: 16: 'þour3e shrifte wol I fro me þrowen / Al my mysdede & mourne among' ('through confession I will throw from myself / All of my wrongdoings, mourning all the while') (Edden, *Maidstone's Psalms*, p. 54/123-124). Staley, 'The Penitential Psalms', suggests that Maidstone's poem 'speak[s] directly to a reader whose desire for spiritual enlightenment finds expression in private reading, but a reader who can expect that reading to be guided by a clerical figure.' (p. 231). A similar point is made by Edden in *Carmel in Britain*, in which she states '[t]hroughout [Maidstone's poem] it is assumed that the penitent sinner will receive the merits of the atonement through the normal channels of the institutional church' (p. 117).

41   Such, for example, is the case with Brampton's remarks on Psalm 101: 17 ('For the Lord hath built up Sion: and he shall be seen in his glory') in which translation is supplanted entirely by social comment: 'Syon that was dauyches toure / Hyt sygnyfyeth þe ordre of knyght / That schulde be hooly chyrches socoure / And mayntene trewþe day and nyght / But now tyrauntrys ys holden ry3t / And sadnesse ys turned to sotelte / Awake wt mercy and mesure þy myght / Wt ne reminiscaris domine' (Syon, which was the tower of David / signifies the order of knighthood / That should be the succour of holy church / And should maintain truth day and night / But now tyrants are regarded as just / And that which is serious is turned to obscurity / Awake with mercy and exert your power / With 'do not remember, Lord.') (Kreuzer, p. 393).

God whom his penitent speaker is addressing.[42] Indeed, his narrator appears to veer between an understanding of what he is doing as sacramental penance before the divine (supervised by a clerical intermediary):

> I syghed and made full Ruthefull chere
> Myne hert for sorowe began to blede
> I sent aftir a brodir ful dere
> Of hym me thought I had grete need…[43]

> I sighed and assumed a very sorrowful expression,
> My heart for sorrow began to bleed.
> I sent for a most excellent brother
> For I thought I had great need of him.

and an awareness of his actions as forming part of a public performance of exemplary value to a wider audience:

> Myne help myne hele it lieth in the
> For euer I cry in town and felde
> Aftir * * * Ne reminiscaris et cetera.[44]

> My help and my salvation rely on you
> For I constantly cry out in town and field
> In the same manner as 'Lord, do not remember etc'.

The respective prologues of the two psalm paraphrases also indicate authors with different understandings of their own role and of the function of their devotional texts. Maidstone's serves as a straightforward and factual introduction to the penitential poem which it precedes:

> To Goddes worshepe þat [dere vs] bouȝte,
> To whom we owen to make oure moon
> Of oure synnes þat we haue wrouȝte
> In ȝouþe and elde, wel many oon;
> Þe seuen salmes are þourȝe souȝte
> In shame of alle oure goostly foon,
> And in Englisshe þei ben brouȝte
> [For synne in man to be fordon] [45]

> To the praise of God who redeemed [us at a high price],
> To whom we ought to make remembrance
> Of our sins that we have committed
> In youth and in old age, very many a one;

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42 Michael P. Kuczynski, *Prophetic Song: The Psalms as Moral Discourse in Late Medieval England*, Pennsylvania 1995, refers to Maidstone's speaker as 'a model of Davidic interiority' (p. 134). This is accurate to an extent, but it does not register the friar's awareness of his text as involving penitent readers beyond himself.

43 Kreuzer, p. 370.

44 Kreuzer, p. 373. This forms part of a comment on Psalm 6: 8: 'My eye is troubled through indignation: I have grown old amongst all my enemies.'

45 Edden, *Maidstone's Psalms*, p. 47/1-8.

> The seven psalms are thoroughly examined
> To the shame of all our spiritual enemies,
> And they have been translated into English
> [In order that sin in man might be defeated]

These 'seuen salmes', the friar tells us, have been translated into English because their recitation combats the effects of sin and brings 'shame' to 'oure goostly foon'. Maidstone makes no mention of his role as translator (he states that 'þei' [have] ben brou3te' (translated) into English, rather than that '*I* have translated them') and nothing is couched in terms of the exclusive first person singular. Instead, the text is very explicit in making itself relevant and available to all penitent readers; every personal pronoun is plural and inclusive. Brampton, by contrast, is not interested in bare facts, but immediately fictionalises his poem's process of creation. Setting a vivid scene from the outset, his narrator tells us that he is bed-ridden and sick but unable to sleep due to a grief stricken heart:

> As I lay in my bed
> And sickenes Revid me of my rest
> What maner life þt I had led
> For to thynke me thoughte it best
> A non my hert began to brest
> I saide lord haue mercy on me
> I cryed knockyng on my brest
> * * * Ne reminiscaris domine.[46]

> As I lay in my bed
> And sickness robbed me of my rest,
> On the sort of life that I had led
> I thought it best to meditate.
> Immediately my heart began to burst
> I said 'Lord, have mercy on me',
> I cried out, beating on my breast,
> 'Lord, do not remember'.

His is a more dramatic prologue than Maidstone's, by which I mean that it is more 'staged'; not only does it insist on the particular experience of a first person singular narrator, but it also invites us, as audience, to eavesdrop on and view an apparently private world. And although it clearly introduces a poem of devotional intent, there is no explicit reference, such as we find in Maidstone's prologue, to its nature as psalm paraphrase.

In fact, Brampton's poem sounds, initially at least, more like a medieval dream vision than a biblical translation. Often opening with an elaborately imagined scene involving a troubled and sleepless narrator, dream poetry was exceptionally popular in the Middle Ages and may well

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46   Kreuzer, p. 370.

have been a conscious influence on Brampton. The opening lines of Chaucer's earliest dream vision, *The Book of the Duchess,* are particularly illuminating in terms of the generic light that they shed on Brampton's later *Penitential Psalms*:

> I have grete wonder, be this lyghte,
> How that I lyve, for day ne nyghte
> I may nat slepe wel nygh noght:
> I have so many an ydel thoght,
> […]
> Defaulte of slepe and hevynesse
> Hath [slain] my spirite of quyknesse,
> That I have loste al lustyhede;
> Suche fantasies ben in myn hede,
> So I not what is best too doo.
> But men myght axe me why soo
> [I may not slepe and what me is.
> But nathelesse, who aske this
> Leseth his askyng trewly.
> Myselven can not tel why
> The soothe, but trewly as I gesse,
> I holde it be a sicknesse
> That I have suffred this eyght yere.[47]

> I have great wonder, by this light,
> At how I continue to live, for by day and night
> I scarcely manage to sleep at all.
> Lack of sleep and slothfulness
> Have destroyed any vigour in my spirit,
> So that I have lost all joyfulness.
> Such fantasies are in my head,
> That I do not know what is best to do.
> But men might ask me why it is
> That I may not sleep and what is the matter with me.
> But nevertheless, whoever asks this
> Truly wastes his question.
> I myself cannot tell why
> In truth, but honestly as I guess,
> I believe it to be a sickness
> That I have suffered from this past eight years.

Chaucer's introduction is obviously more discursive and detailed than that of Brampton; his narrator is overtly preoccupied by the fact that he cannot sleep and he is more expansive on the subject. Further, Chaucer's

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47 *Chaucer's Dream Poetry*, ed. by Helen Phillips, Nick Haveley, London 1997, pp. 50-52/1-4 and 25-37. For prefatory material to other late medieval dream visions, see *The House of Fame*, *The Parliament of Fowls* and *The Prologue to the Legend of Good Women* in the same volume. See also, for example, *Pearl*, ed. by E.V. Gordon, Oxford 1953 and *Piers Plowman*, ed. by A.V. C. Schmidt, 2nd edn, London 1995.

text lacks the obvious devotional tenor so apparent in Brampton. But there are certain similarities in the situations of the two narrators; both are alone in bed (this becomes apparent slightly later in Chaucer's poem), neither can sleep and both blame this on sickness. And the similarities persist; Brampton's narrator, troubled by his sleeplessness and blaming it on an acute awareness of his own sin, sends (as quoted above) for a 'brodir ful dere':

> Myne hert for sorowe began to blede
> I sent aftir a brodir ful dere
> Of hym me thought I had great nede
> I schroue me to hym or I yede
> Of thought of worde þeis thre
> I cryed to god wt great drede
> Aftir *   *   * Ne reminiscaris domine.[48]

> My heart began to bleed for sorrow
> I sent after a most excellent brother
> I thought that I had great need of him.
> I made my confession to him before I went
> Of thought, of word, of these three,
> I cried out to God with great fear
> In the manner of 'Lord, do not remember'.

who advises the narrator to read and recite the Penitential Psalms as remedy for his sins:

> This brodir was ful wise of lore
> And saide theis synnys forgeuyn are
> If þou purpos to syn no more
> God of his mercy will þe spare [...]
> Ferthir more for thy trespas
> That þu hast done to god of heuyn
> If god will lend þe life and space
> Thou schalt sey the psalmys sevyn
> The better with god þu maist be evyn.[49]

> This brother was most wise in learning
> And said 'these sins are forgiven.
> If you do not intend to sin any more
> God will spare you, out of his mercy [...]
> Furthermore, for the trespass
> That you have done to God of heaven,
> If God will grant you life and space
> You shall say the seven psalms
> In order that you might be clear of debt before God.'

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48   Kreuzer, pp. 370-371.
49   Kreuzer, p. 371.

In a not unrelated move, Chaucer's narrator also resolves to deal with his sleeplessness in a 'text based' manner, by asking someone to fetch him a book to read:

> So whan I sawe I might not slepe
> Tyl nowe late this other nyght,
> Upon my bedde I sate upright
> And bade one reche me a booke,
> A romaunce, and he it me toke,
> To rede and drive the nyght away.[50]

> So when I saw that I was unable to sleep
> Until just recently this other night,
> I sat upright on my bed
> And asked someone to fetch me a book,
> A romance, and he brought it to me,
> To read and to drive the night away.

Again, obviously, there are real differences between the two: Brampton's narrator is clearly operating within a devotional sphere and is set his reading as penance ('[t]he better with god þu maist be evyn'), whereas Chaucer's chooses his own book (a 'romaunce') and reads simply to pass the time (to 'drive the nyght away').[51] And finally, although the similarities between Brampton's preface and the conventions of dream poetry seem incontestable, the friar's poem of course lacks the one defining ingredient of Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, and of dream poetry as a genre–namely, the dream itself. Indeed, while Chaucer's narrator proceeds to fall asleep and to re-emerge into a dream landscape, Brampton's does not sleep and is virtually erased from the poem by the psalm paraphrase that follows the preface.

Given this, what did Brampton have to gain by generically quoting from the dream vision in his introductory lines?[52] What does the allusion

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50 Phillips and Haveley, *Chaucer's Dream Poetry*, p. 52.

51 I am indebted to Dr. Nicholas Perkins for pointing out that just as Brampton might be drawing on devices associated with dream poetry, so Chaucer may allude to some conventions and commonplaces of devotional poetry at the outset of *The Book of the Duchess*. The dreamer's 'ydel thoght' ('idle thought') (4) and the fact that he has 'felynge in nothynge' ('feeling in nothing') (11) could suggest that he has fallen prey to the sin of sloth, and there may also be a parodic sense that although he should have chosen to read the bible as a remedy for this sin, the 'romaunce' which he actually picks up appears to be the Lover's Bible (ie., Ovid).

52 Of course, Brampton is by no means the only late medieval author to draw on the conventions of dream poetry in a poem that does not actually feature a dream. Some devotional lyrics also appear to set themselves within this generic context; see, for example, 'Als i lay vp-on a nith / Alone in my longging, / Me þouthe i sau a wonder sith, / A maiden child rokking' ('As I lay one night / Alone in my longing, / It seemed to me that I saw a wonderful sight, / A maiden rocking a child') (*Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century*, ed. by Carleton Brown, revd. by G.V. Smithers, 2nd edn, Oxford 1952, pp. 70-75). See also

lend to his poem that we do not find in that of Maidstone? Put simply, literary dreaming was taken very seriously in the Middle Ages, and certain types of dreams were thought to carry messages of real import and often supernatural significance.[53] So by opening in a manner reminiscent of the conventions of such visionary literature, Brampton's preface leads us very deliberately to expect a poem in which we are granted access to an authoritative voice. And despite the absence of the dream itself, this is indeed exactly what happens; following immediately upon the confessor's injunction to recite the Penitential Psalms ('Be gyn and sey wt mylde stevyn / Oft * * * Ne reminisc et cetera') ('Begin and say repeatedly with a gentle voice / 'Do not remember', etc'), the narrator's voice modulates into the biblically authoritative voice of the Psalmist (or at least a vernacular paraphrase of the same) and the fictionalising prologue gives way to scripturally based meditation.[54]

The observation that the narrator's voice modulates into that of the Psalmist raises an important question, a question that this essay has touched upon already, and one that is of as much relevance to Maidstone's poem as it is to that of Brampton. Throughout these penitential paraphrases, who is actually performing the psalms, in both senses of the word outlined above? Is it David, whose acute awareness of his own sin was believed to have given rise to the sequence of Penitential Psalms? Or are the performers Maidstone and Brampton, as respective authors? Alternatively, are both texts performed by the poetic personae that they have constructed? Or are we, as audience, the true performers of the psalms? Are we in fact participants in, rather than observers of, the text? The answer is surely that at different times and to differing degrees almost all of the above can legitimately be regarded as key performers of the paraphrases in question.[55]

'As I lay vp-on a nyth / My þowth was on a berd so brith / That men clepyn marye ful of myth / Redemptoris mater' ('As I lay one night / My mind was on a bird so bright / Whom men call Mary full of grace / Mother of the Redeemer') in *Religious Lyrics of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Carleton Brown, Oxford 1939, pp. 108-109. I am again indebted to Dr. Nicholas Perkins for his observation that, at its outset, Thomas Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes* also positions itself as a 'waking dream' in a manner which bears quite some similarity to Brampton's opening. See 'Musyng upon the restelesse besynesse […] / As I lay in my bedde apon a nyght, / Thought me byrefte of slepe the force and might' ('Musing on the restless anxiety […] / As I lay in my bed one night, / Worry bereft me of the efficacy and power of sleep') (*Thomas Hoccleve – Selected Poems*, ed. by Bernard O'Donoghue, Manchester 1982, p. 73/1, 6-7).

53   For an accessible account of medieval dream theory, see the introduction to Phillips and Haveley, *Chaucer's Dream Poetry*.

54   Kreuzer, p. 371.

55   The one exception to this is David. Neither Maidstone nor Brampton seems interested, for the purposes of their paraphrases, in the historical role of David as supposed author of the

At the most basic level, the poems are performed by Maidstone and Brampton as respective authors; after all, the translations have been devised by them, and they are responsible for setting them in poetic form. But this notion of author as key performer is problematic in both cases; in Maidstone's because he is rigorous in deleting any traces of authorial individuality from his poem, and in Brampton's because we know virtually nothing about him as a historical individual.[56] Indeed, given the fact that we know of his existence only by means of his identification in association with the penitential paraphrase attributed to him, one might say that the text actually performs him rather than vice versa; in a curiously paradoxical move, Brampton is brought into being by the poem that has been attributed to him.[57] To make this claim obviously involves an understanding of performance as creation, an understanding supplementary (although not unrelated) to those which have been introduced already in this essay. But the legitimacy of such an understanding is highlighted once again by the Middle English Dictionary which, among its definitions of 'performen', lists the sense 'to make or construct'; our perception of Brampton is constructed in and by the text with which he is associated.[58]

Yet Brampton can also be argued to take on an active role in constructing the vivid narrative persona and situation with which his poem begins, and in a sense, one could say that it is this persona who truly performs the text and the penitential activity associated with it. To return to a section of the preface from which I quoted previously, the penance enjoined upon the narrator by the confessor involves performance both in the sense of doing God's will by retreating from sin:

> If þou purpos to syn no more
> God of his mercy will þe spare

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psalms. Instead, as this essay has suggested, their priority is one of encouraging the reader's devotional appropriation of the speaking voice of the Psalmist.

56 As I have suggested already, Brampton foregrounds his narrative persona as performer of the text more obviously than does Maidstone. Although, in both paraphrases, authorial individuality is largely effaced in favour of identification with the speaker of the psalms, Maidstone is more rigorous in his self-deletion. Not only does his poem lack Brampton's particularising and dramatic prologue, but it is littered with alliterative formulae (eg., 'For foule wiþ feþer ny fische wiþ fynne / Is noon vnstidfaste but I' ('For no foul with feather nor fish with fin / Is as unsteadfast as me.') (Edden, *Maidstone's Psalms*, p. 49/35-36)) and with images typical of the religious lyric (eg., 'þenke þi coruptible cors / Is nou3te but wormes mete, iwis' ('Think that your corruptible body / Is nothing but food for worms, indeed') (Edden, *Maidstone's Psalms*, p. 57/173-174)) that make it difficult to define his poetic voice as anything other than conventional.

57 A similar point, much more fully developed, is explored in Manuele Gragnolati's essay in this volume, 'The Performance of the Author in Dante's *Vita nova*'.

58 For this interpretation of 'performen', see MED 3(a), as quoted in footnote 3 of this essay.

> If you do not intend to sin any more
> God will spare you, out of his mercy

and in the sense of engaging wholeheartedly in the act of penitential recitation:

> Ferthir more for thy trespas
> That þu hast done to god of heuyn
> If god will lend þe life and space
> Thou schalt sey the psalmys sevyn
> The better with god þu maist be evyn.[59]

> Furthermore, for the trespass
> That you have done to God of heaven,
> If God will grant you life and space
> You shall say the seven psalms
> In order that you might be clear of debt before God.

But, as noted above, the distinct narrative persona who features so strongly in Brampton's preface does not maintain his presence throughout the poem. Indeed, the pseudo-autobiographical particularity of his situation disappears as soon as the psalm paraphrase begins, and he is not revisited at the end of the text.[60] He was, it would seem, a useful but dispensable device, whose individuality is absorbed easily into the non-specific 'I' who voices the rest of this poem, and who also features throughout Maidstone's text.

Reference to the role of the non-specific 'I' in Brampton's and Maidstone's paraphrases alerts our attention once more to the ways in which both texts make themselves available to us as readers.[61] By presenting their translations as articulated in such a manner, these authors invite us to assume the voice of the psalmist, to play our part in the performance of penance that the texts require.[62] Indeed, in both texts, the imperative placed on us as readers to involve ourselves in penitential

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59   Kreuzer, p. 371.

60   When viewed in light of the generic norms of dream vision, one might say that Brampton's poem lacks the resolution often (although not invariably, particularly in the case of Chaucer) associated with the moment of waking at the end of the dream/poem. His narrator remains stranded in the text, effaced by the generic 'I' of the psalm paraphrase.

61   In thus effacing their individuality in favour of the non-specific, Maidstone and Brampton differ markedly from the compiler and scribe Ivan, discussed in C. M. MacRobert's essay in this volume ('Remember me in your prayers': Reading the Church Slavonic Psalter as an act of commemoration'), who personalises his Psalter manuscript by inserting his own name throughout.

62   This assuming of the psalmic voice would have been all the more striking in a medieval context, in which private reading could be a voiced activity. For background, see, for example, Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading,* Stanford 1997. For a thought-provoking investigation of performativity and private (primarily monastic) reading in the late Middle Ages, see Jessica Brantley's aforementioned monograph, *Reading in the Wilderness.*

activity is reinforced by the occasional modulation of the singular 'I' into the plural 'we'. So, for example, in the midst of the first-person particularity of Brampton's preface, we find ourselves implicated:

> Of *my* mysdedis avenge þe nought
> But graunte *me* mercy and pite
> *My* wordis werkis and wicked þou3t
> Spare *thi pepill* þt is outrage
> *We* cry to þe Full pytuously…[63]

> Do not avenge yourself on *my* wrongdoings
> But grant *me* mercy and pity
> *My* words, deeds and wicked thoughts
> Spare *your people* who are wanton
> *We* cry to you most piteously.

and Maidstone involves us from the very first line of his treatise:

> To Goddes worshepe þat [dere *vs*] bou3te,
> To whom *we* owen to make *oure* moon […]
> Þe seuen salmes are þour3e sou3te
> In shame of alle *oure* goostly foon…[64]

> To the praise of God who redeemed [*us* at a high price],
> To whom *we* ought to make *our* remembrance […]
> The seven psalms are thoroughly examined
> To the shame of all *our* spiritual enemies

In fact, without our participation, both of these poems would be incomplete. In order to fulfil their intended function of reconciling the individual with God, they require our penitential engagement, without which they would not *mean* as they should. Put another way, these texts

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63 Kreuzer, p. 370 (Italics mine). It is also noteworthy that, on occasion, Brampton leaves behind the reflective first person voice of the Psalmist, and becomes more overtly instructional, addressing his comments to a second person. See, for example, his response to Psalm 31: 5: 'I have acknowledged my sin to thee, and my injustice I have not concealed. I said I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord: and thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin', which reads: 'If þou wt gode advisement / Of thy synnys wilt þe schryve / Thy soule schall neuer in hell be brent / While þu wilt here þi penance dryve / Amend thy life I Red þe blyve / Or euer thy wittis from þe fle / And think þe while þu art alive / Of * * * Ne reminiscaris et cetera' ('If, after thorough reflection / You will make confession of your sins / Your soul shall never be burnt in hell / As long as you will perform your penance here. / I advise you to swiftly amend your life / Otherwise your wits will flee from you forever. / And while you are alive, bethink yourself / of the words 'Do not remember etc') (Kreuzer, p. 375).

64 Edden, *Maidstone's Psalms*, p. 47/1-2 and 5-6. Both authors, on occasion, also involve us as readers by clearly setting up their individual 'I' as an example to all readers. For example, see the concluding couplet of Maidstone's comment on Psalm 6: 7: 'I have laboured in my groanings, every night I will wash my bed: I will water my couch with my tears', which reads: 'þerfore I wepe & water out wrynge, / As I wel au3te and euery wi3te' ('Therefore I weep and wring out water, / As I, and every person, certainly ought') (Edden, *Maidstone's Psalms*, p. 50/55-56).

require us to perform them, not simply in the sense of *voicing* their words, but also in the sense of *completing* them, of executing their imperatives. To return once more to the Middle English Dictionary, 'to perform' is 'to perfect, [to] make perfect, [to] make whole'; it is our duty as readers to perfect the text.[65]

Furthermore, one might say that just as we 'complete' the text (insofar as we enact the precepts and principles of the Penitential Psalms) so, in a reciprocal move, the text offers us the chance of 'completing' ourselves (in that it provides us with the tools to reconcile our sinful selves with the divine); we both perform, and are performed by, the poems that we read. Viewed thus, Maidstone's and Brampton's paraphrases can be understood to share characteristics with the liturgy, for just as liturgical repetition implies that the speaking individual (or community) is affected and changed 'by the words that constitute the rite (eg. couples are married; the unbaptized are baptized …)', so, these poems suggest, the recitation of the Penitential Psalms effects change in the individual's relationship with God:

> Thou schalt sey the psalmys sevyn
> The better with god þu maist be evyn…[66]

> You shall say the seven psalms
> In order that you might be clear of debt before God.

And, of course, 'a claim of this order' places Maidstone's and Brampton's poems, alongside the liturgy, 'in the category of performative speech acts.'[67]

In the final chapter of her *Revelation of Divine Love,* the fourteenth-century English mystic Julian of Norwich writes:

> This booke is begunne be Gods gift and his grace, but it is not yet performid, as to my syte.[68]

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65 See footnote 3 of this essay, definition 1(a) To complete (work, a task, a course, etc.), finish; (b) of persons: to live out (time); (c) to perfect (sb. or sth.), make perfect, make whole; dedicate (a house), consecrate; **not performed**, incomplete, imperfect; **~ to knouen**, know (sth.) perfectly; (d) to complete the number of (sth.), comprise; **~ up**. Echoing this definition, in his influential work on ritual and theatre, Victor Turner characterised performance thus: '[T]o *perform* is to complete a more or less involved process rather than to do a single deed or act.' (Victor W. Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York, 1982), p. 91). See also Holsinger, 'Medieval Literature and Cultures of Performance' where he points out that Turner traced the etymology of performance to the Old French *parfournir*, 'a verb that connotes a furnishing forth, a completion, or the thorough accomplishing of a task – various forms of *doing*, in other words' (p. 274).

66 Kreuzer, p. 371.

67 Nichols, *Liturgical Hermeneutics*, pp. 145-146.

68 *Julian of Norwich: A Revelation of Love*, ed. by Marion Glasscoe, Exeter 1976, revd. 1993, chapter 86, p. 134.

> This book is begun by God's gift and his grace, but as far as I can see, it is not yet performed.

Despite the completion of her book, Julian sees her visionary experience and its ramifications as remaining incomplete, unperformed, until we, as readers, involve ourselves in the text, and allow it to affect and alter our lives and experience. And in invoking notions of performance and (in)completion just as her treatise nears its end, Julian anticipates Brampton, whose remark '[t]eche me to performe thy wylle' (with which this essay began) forms part of his translation of Psalm 142, the last of the Penitential Psalms; the real performance of the treatise – and of the godly life, he suggests, lies beyond the confines of the written page.[69] Indeed, there is a very real sense in which texts such as those which have been explored in this essay are not performed (ie., complete) until we have performed (ie., read and done) them, and allowed ourselves to be performed (ie., re-created and re-constructed) by them.

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69 Kreuzer, p. 403.

C. M. MacRobert

'Remember me in your prayers'

Reading the Church Slavonic Psalter as an act of commemoration

Among the medieval Orthodox Slavs, at least up to the end of the fifteenth century, Scriptural books circulated not in the form of a complete Bible but for the most part in formats appropriate to their use in public liturgical and private devotional acts of worship.[1] So even in manuscripts of the commentated Psalter, presumably intended primarily for study, the liturgical division of the text in the Eastern Orthodox monastic tradition into twenty sections (*kathismata*), each further divided into three subsections (*staseis*), is routinely indicated, and directions may be supplied on how to recite the psalms.[2] In many Church Slavonic psalters of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries penitential hymns and prayers are interpolated to be read after each *kathisma*, turning the recitation of the psalms into a devotional exercise. Although this practice has parallels, and no doubt had models, in Greek manuscripts,[3] the variable choice of additional material in Church Slavonic manuscripts seems to owe something to local or even individual preferences: the small number of South Slavonic psalter manuscripts extant from this period mostly

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1 Parallels can doubtless be found in Western Europe, for instance as described by Susan Boynton, 'Prayer as Liturgical Performance in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Monastic Psalters', in *Speculum*, 82 (2007), pp. 896–931; I am grateful to Dr Manuele Gragnolati for drawing my attention to this article.

2 The commentated Pogodin Psalter includes introductory hymns, the prayer to be used before reciting the Psalter and the instruction 'and sing gently without hurrying until the end of this book' immediately before the first psalm, see Vatroslav Jagić, *Slovenskaja psaltyr'*. *Psalterium bononiense*, Vienna, Berlin, St.Petersburg 1907, pp. 9–10. It is unlikely that this advice was meant to extend to the commentary.

3 Archimandrite Amfiloxij, *Drevle-slavjanskaja Psaltir' Simonovskaja do 1280 goda*, vol.3, 2nd edn, Moscow 1880-1, pp. 63-81; Elena Vladimirovna Češko et al., *Norovskaja psaltyr': Srednebolgarskaja rukopis' XIV veka*, vol.1, Sofia 1989, pp. 52–56; Georgi Radomirov Părpulov, *Towards a History of Byzantine Psalters* (D.Phil. dissertation, Chicago 2004), UMI Dissertation Services 2005, vol. 1, pp. 18-19, 118-122.

contains a relatively standard repertoire of texts,[4] but the choice of supplementary material in the rather more numerous East Slavonic psalters exhibits greater variety and individuality, as well as a more marked and sombre penitential character. For instance, some include Marian prayers alongside those addressed to the Deity;[5] some contain sequences of texts written specifically for use with the Psalter and made up largely of quotations from the *kathismata* which they are intended to follow;[6] and some incorporate hymns and prayers which may be original Church Slavonic compositions.[7]

For the most part the motives for the particular choices of supplementary texts in psalter manuscripts remain as obscure as the identity of the scribes who wrote them, though the default assumption must be that they were intended for private devotional use by the individual monk in his cell,[8] as an extension of such services as compline (*apodeipnon*, Church Slavonic *povečerie*)[9] and the midnight office (*mesonyktikon*, Church Slavonic *polunoščnica*):[10] these both include sequences of two penitential hymns (*katanyktika*) followed by one in honour of Christ's mother (*theotokion*), drawn from the same repertoire as those in the psalters. The occasional appearance in psalter manuscripts of a hymn for the repose of the dead (*nekrosimon*)[11] could be due to the use of such

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4   C. M. MacRobert, 'The Systems of Supplementary Penitential Texts in the Psalter MSS Peć 68, Belgrade 36, and Pljevlja 80', in *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, NS xxiv (1991), pp. 1–22.

5   MS 327 in the Rumjancev collection of the Russian State Library has, in addition to the usual penitential prayer, a second prayer addressed to the Mother of God after each surviving *kathisma* (2, 3, 10–18); there are also occasional Marian prayers after *kathismata* in the Simonovskaja Psalter, MSS 235 (x4), 325 (x3) in the Synodal collection of the State Historical Museum in Moscow, in MS F.п.I.3 (x5), F.п.I.2 (x3), F.п.I.1 (x2), F.п.I.4 (x1) in the Russian National Library, in MSS 28, 32, 34 (x2) and 27, 35 (x1) of the Synodal Typography collection in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents, in MSS 15231 (x2), 15482 (x1) in the Historical Museum in Jaroslavl' and MS 8662 (x1) in the Troicko-Sergievskij collection of the Russian State Library.

6   C. M. MacRobert, 'A Hymnographical Curiosity: Troparia Composed for the Psalter', in *Bibel, Liturgie und Frömmigkeit in der Slavia Byzantina. Festgabe für Hans Rothe zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. by Dagmar Christians, Dieter Stern, Vittorio S. Tomelleri, Munich, Berlin 2009 (Studies on Language and Culture in Central and Eastern Europe 3), pp. 243-266.

7   C. M. MacRobert, 'In search of a Canon: the dissemination in 14th-century East Slavonic manuscripts of prayers and hymns attributed to Kirill of Turov', in *Kirill of Turov. Bishop, Preacher, Hymnographer*, ed. by Ingunn Lunde, Bergen 2000 (Slavica Bergensia 2), pp. 175–195.

8   Konstantin Timofeevič Nikol'skij, *Posobie k izučeniju ustava bogosluženija pravoslavnoj cerkvi*, St Petersburg 1900, p. 137; Mixail Nikolaevič Skaballanovič, *Polnyj Tipikon*, Kiev 1910, p. 438.

9   Mixail Aleksandrovič Lisicyn, *Pervonačal'nyj slavjano-russkij tipikon*, St Petersburg 1911, pp. 92–95.

10   Skaballanovič (n. 8), pp. 431–435.

11   E.g. in MSS F.п.I.3, *kathismata* 10, 16–18, F.п.I.1, *kathisma* 10, Synodal Typography 28, *kathisma* 4.

material in the services for Saturday. In a few instances,[12] however, the systematic inclusion of *nekrosima* after each *kathisma* suggests that the manuscripts may have been intended also for the recitation of the Psalter with associated hymns and prayers during the watch over the corpse or in the graveyard.[13] This may be one of the routes by which such texts came into popular circulation among lay people, as attested in collections of hymns from the fifteenth century on.[14]

Of the three psalter manuscripts known to me which reflect this practice, one was written by the priest Ivan in the town of Luck (Volhynia) in 1384.[15] The scribe provided a colophon explaining that he wrote in time of sudden deaths, probably from plague, which prompted him to contemplate his own mortality:[16]

> In the year 6892 (1384) this book was written in the city of Luck, the first year after the death of Grand Prince Dmitrij Kediminovič, in the reign of his children Fedot, Lazor', Semen, in the time of Ivan, Bishop of Luck. This book was completed in the month of August, on the 4th day, on the feast of the holy martyr Eleutherius. It was written by the priest of S. Catherine, the most sinful servant of God, Ivan. And now I say to you, abbots, fathers, priests, brothers, deacons, children, if I have made a mistake anywhere in writing, then correct the text as you recite it and do not curse me, because the time was not well ordered, but calamitous: many people took to flight, and here sudden deaths started to happen, and when we heard and saw this we were overcome with horror and trembling in anxiety for our own death, and started to write simply and in haste and then did not have time to put in good headings / initials.[17] And to whomsoever God may grant these books, perhaps to my children, remember me

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12   C. M. MacRobert, 'Two Lykewake Psalters: The MSS Västerås/UUB5/UUB6 and Jaroslavl' 15482', in *Scando-Slavica* 38 (1992), pp. 108–127.

13   Nikol'skij (n. 8), pp. 755–756.

14   K. Korableva, 'Duxovnye stixi kak pamjatniki znamennogo raspeva (stixi pokajannye)', in *Musica Antiqua Europae Orientalis* 4 (1975), pp. 535–546 (misnumbered 556). For the later development of this genre, see Fedor Martinovič Selivanov, *Russie narodnye duxovnye stixi*, Marijskij gosudarstvennyj universitet, Moscow 1995, and the appended bibliography, pp. 145–159.

15   It is now in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, Acquisti e doni 360.

16   Cited in the original Church Slavonic by Carlo Verdiani, 'Il salterio Laurenziano-Voliniense. Codice paleoslavo del 1384', in *Ricerche slavistiche* 3 (1954), pp. 1–29, and with corrections by Vadim Borisovič Krys'ko, '*Bjaše veremja ne stroino, no bědno*: zapis' pisca v Luckoj psaltyri 1384 g.', in *Slavistika sinxronija i diaxronija: Sbornik statej k 70-letiju I. S. Uluxanova*, ed. by Vadim Borisovič Krys'ko, Moscow 2006, pp. 429–438.

17   Verdiani (n. 16), p. 23, and Krys'ko (n. 16), pp. 436–437, both suggest that the word used at this point, *glavizny*, refers to the illuminated capital letters at the start of each psalm, some of which are indeed unfinished. This would however be an unparalleled use of the word, which normally means 'chapter' or 'heading', a sense which is also applicable to the Luck Psalter, since Ivan provided exegetical headings to pss. 1-8 and 18, but not to the rest; see C. M. MacRobert, 'The classificatory importance of headings and liturgical directions in Church Slavonic psalters of the 11th–15th centuries', in *Byzantinoslavica* 57 (1996), pp. 156–181, especially pp. 166–167.

[in your prayers], the sinful servant of God, the priest Ivan, who laboured for Christ's sake, and may God remember you. Glory to our God, Amen.

Taken in conjunction with the other contents of the manuscript, this colophon sheds revealing light on the scribe's priorities and intentions. Notwithstanding his sense of urgency, Ivan included an introductory prayer (the beginning of which has been lost), a prayer to be recited at the end of the psalter, directions for reciting *anastasima*, hymns celebrating the Resurrection, after the seventeenth *kathisma* at Sunday Mattins and on Easter Eve; and after each of the twenty *kathismata* he intercalated two *katanyktika*, a *nekrosimon*, a *theotokion* and a penitential prayer. He thus added approximately thirty-five folia to the length of his copying task. Moreover, he may well have spent some time on the selection and ordering of his material: a conscious choice must have produced the regular alternation between prayers addressed to Christ and to his Mother, and may be responsible for the sequence of hymns and prayers, which taken as a whole seems to have no close parallel in other East Slavonic psalters of this time. Such of the texts as are found in other sources, medieval or modern, generally occur in different orders and combinations, and some have not as yet been located elsewhere.

When the hymns which Ivan wrote into his psalter can be identified by comparison with printed liturgical books,[18] it emerges that seven of the *nekrosima* are used in the service of burial for priests, that is to say the service which Ivan could have expected to be conducted at his own death. This is surely no accident: at the end of his colophon Ivan expressed the wish that the users of his manuscript should remember him in their prayers, and he had devised a strategy for ensuring that this would happen, by inserting his name Ivan, or Ioan in its Church Slavonic form, in eighteen of the twenty-one prayers and two of the hymns. In all, his name appears twenty-seven times: in prayers to the Mother of God after *kathismata* 1(x2), 3(x2), 5, 7(x4), 9(x2), 11, 13, 15, 17; in prayers to Christ after *kathismata* 4, 8(x2), 10, 12, 14, 16, 18; in the general commemoration after *kathisma* 20; in the prayer at the end of the psalter; and in *theotokia* after *kathismata* 9, 13. This is a rare departure from the normal practice by which the places where personal names might be introduced into prayers were indicated by a standard formula, *imę rek* ('saying the name').[19] Ivan

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18 This has to be done by translating the incipit of the Church Slavonic text back into Greek, searching for hymns with the same or similar wording in Henrica Follieri, *Initia hymnorum Ecclesiae graecae*, i-v, in *Studi e Testi* 211–215bis (1960–1966), and then checking for similarity with the rest of the text in the printed service books which Follieri used. The results cannot be regarded as definitive.

19 The only parallel known to me is in MS 646 in the Bulgarian National Library in Sofia, dated 1787, a collection of miscellaneous prayers in each of which the scribe Niketa has inserted his name; I am indepted to Adelina Anguševa for this information.

was familiar with this convention, which he followed at appropriate points in the prayer of general commemoration which stands after the last *kathisma*; but at junctures where the name of the reader himself could appropriately be inserted he supplied his own name, often specifying his clerical rank of priest. Consequently anyone who read the manuscript would automatically find himself complying with the scribe's request, to commemorate him in prayer. The reader could of course substitute his own name or someone else's, indeed would be likely to do so: if the rule by which the Psalter is read over dead monks and laymen but the Gospels over priests and clergy of higher rank was in force in fourteenth-century Volhynia,[20] Ivan presumably did not expect his psalter manuscript to be read over his own body. Nevertheless anyone using the manuscript for private devotion or for a commemoration of some monk or layman would be forced at the same time to remember Ivan, whose anxiety to make this happen led him to insert his name more often than is usual, in one instance as many as four times in a single prayer. Simply by writing his manuscript Ivan performed an act of penitential self-commemoration; but in addition he impelled multiple repetitions of that act, whenever he or others read his text.

In the appendix to this article the sequence of hymns and prayers in Ivan's psalter is supplied, together with English translations, in order to give an idea of their characteristic phraseology and imagery, the degree of their popularity as measured by their attestation in medieval and more recent sources, and the extent of Ivan's interventions. The range of allusions to the Bible, particularly the New Testament parables, and to traditional Christian eschatological beliefs is standard in the repertoire of *katanyktika* and *nekrosima*, but the motif of contrasting darkness and light as a spiritual metaphor, which is a recurrent feature of this collection of texts, may possibly reflect personal choice; it is not matched in the nearest parallel, the Jaroslavl' MS 15482. The amount of effort which must have gone into the selection, copying and adaptation of these texts, on the part of a scribe who apologizes for his hasty and incomplete work, speaks eloquently for his desire to set in train his own perpetual memorial.

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20 A rationale for it is attributed to Archbishop Symeon of Thessalonike († 1429) by Nikol'skij (n. 8), p. 755.

Appendix: Kathismatic hymns and prayers in the Luck Psalter

(Greek incipits are supplied where they have been identified; the Church Slavonic incipits, which are supplied in transliteration, reproduce the wording of the manuscript. The English translations of the hymns and incipits of the prayers are based on the texts as they appear in the manuscript, following as far as possible the order and choice of words, including a small number of mistranslations of the Greek originals. Texts not so far found in other sources are marked with an asterisk. The scribe's additions of his own name are italicized.   Editorial additions and omissions are enclosed in square brackets. Superscript letters are brought down to the line and enclosed in angle brackets.)

Kathisma 1

Katanyktikon 1: ἀγκάλας πατρικὰς διανοίξαι μοι σπεῦσον — *obętĭja õča ō<t>tvrěsti mi potšči sę* — Hasten to open to me your fatherly embrace: I have wasted my life licentiously and I contemplate[21] the inexhaustible riches of your loving kindness, O Saviour. And now do not despise my destitute heart, for to you, O Lord, I cry in penitence: I have sinned, O Father, against heaven and before you.

Katanyktikon 2: ὅταν ἔλθῃς ὁ θεός ἐπὶ γῆς μετὰ δόξης — *egda priideši be na zemlju sŭ slavoju* — When you come, O God, on the earth with glory, everything is seized with trembling. For a river of fire flows before the judgement seat, and the books are unfolded, and secret things are laid bare. Then deliver me from the unquenchable fire and admit me to stand at your right hand, O righteous Judge.

Nekrosimon: ποία τοῦ βίου τρυφὴ διαμένει λύπης ἀμέτοχος — *kaja žitĭja pišča prěbyvajetĭ pečali nepričastĭna* — What food / pleasure[22] of life remains without its share of sorrow? and what glory stands unchanged on earth? But all is weaker than shadows and more deceitful than a dream. In one moment death receives all this. But in the light of your countenance, O Christ, and in the enjoyment of your beauty, give rest to those who have passed away, as you love mankind.[23]

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21 In Greek a participle, ἀφορῶν; confusion in Church Slavonic with the 1st person singular of the present tense suggests a Middle Bulgarian stage in the textual tradition.

22 The use of Church Slavonic *pišča*, 'food', to translate both τρυφή, 'pleasure', and τροφή, 'food', is commonplace, cf. Joseph Kurz, Zoe Hauptová et al., *Lexicon Linguae Palaeoslovenicae*, Prague 1966–1997, *sub voce pišča*.

23 Priest's burial, see Jacobus Goar, *Euchologion sive rituale Graecorum*, Venice 1730, photographic reprint, Graz 1960, p. 461; Ljudmila Andreevna Petrova, Natal'ja Semenovna Seregina, *Rannjaja russkaja lirika*, Leningrad 1988, p. 140.

Theotokion: **μητέρα σε θεοῦ ἱκετεύομεν** — *i mt̃rĭ tę bž̃iju molimŭ* — We all pray to you, the Mother of God, placing our hope in your loving kindnesses we cry out and in love we flee for refuge to your goodness. For we sinners have you as our intercessor and have secured as our salvation in temptations you who alone are the most pure.

Prayer: *priimi g<s>žę bc̃e gla<s> ml̃tvy mojeja* — Receive, O Lady, Mother of God, the voice of my prayer, which I bring to you in my unworthiness from a passionate heart. For I know no other intercessor except you […] do not leave me, your sinful servant *the priest Ivan*, to perish finally […] but show me mercy and admit me, your sinful servant *the priest Ioan*, to the pasture of the sheep at the right-hand side within the fence of blissful paradise […] [24]

Kathisma 2

Katanyktikon 1: **ἐγὼ ὑπάρχω τὸ δένδρον τὸ ἄκαρπον** — *azŭ jesmĭ neplodnoje drěvo* — I am the barren tree, O Lord, bearing no fruit of repentance at all. I fear to be cut down and am in terror of that unquenchable fire. Therefore I pray you, before that calamity convert me and save me.[25]

Katanyktikon 2: **μετάνοιαν οὐ κέκτημαι** — *pokajanija ne stęžaxŭ* — I have not attained repentance nor even tears. Therefore I pray you, O Saviour, before the end to convert me and grant me remission of my sins, that I may be delivered from torment.

Nekrosimon: **ἐκ γῆς πλαστουργήσας με** — *otŭ zemlę sozdavŭ mę* — Having created me from the earth, you condemned me to return again into earth for my transgression. You have appointed a day of trial on which the deeds of each man will appear manifest before you. On that day absolve me, O sinless God, granting me forgiveness for my sins, and do not cut me off from your kingdom.

Theotokion: **οὐδεὶς προστρέχων ἐπὶ σοι** — *nikto že pritěkaja k tebe* — No-one who flees to you for refuge comes away from you ashamed, O most holy Mother of God, but asks for grace and receives a gift as is expedient for his request.

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24 Rumjancev MS 327, *kathisma* 11; Ekaterina Borisovna Rogačevskaja, *Cikl molitv Kirilla Turovskogo. Teksty i issledovanija*, Moscow 1999, pp. 116 and 162.

25 Petrova and Seregina (n. 23), pp. 43, 258, 325; Aleksandr Vladimirovič Pozdneev, 'Drevnerusskaja poèma "Pokajanny na osm' glasov"', in *Československá rusistika* 5 (1970), pp. 193–205, especially 199 and 201.

Prayer: *g<s>i iže nadŭ lazoremĭ plakavŭ sę* — O Lord, who wept over Lazarus and shed merciful tears over him, receive the prayers of my bitter grief, and by your passion heal my passions […]

Kathisma 3

Katanyktikon 1: *vŭstani dŝe moja ō<t> sna* — Arise, my soul, from sleep, open my lips in prayer, light the lamp full of your oil. For see, the bridegroom comes; be ready to go in with him, lest the doors be closed to you. Cry out to Christ our God: I have sinned against you, O righteous Judge, save me.[26]

Katanyktikon 2: *priležiši ljubovĭju grěšĕ* — You persist in loving sin and sleep the sleep of sloth, O soul. Arise to sing and pray the Saviour in penitence: absolve me, O Christ God, and have mercy on me.

Nekrosimon: πάντα ματαιότης τὰ ἀνθρώπινα — *vse souetĭe člv̆čĭskoe* — All that is human is vanity, all that will not remain after death. Riches will not remain, not will glory go with us, for death will come and destroy all this. Therefore we cry out to Christ who is immortal: give rest to those who have passed from us where all rejoice to find their home in you.[27]

Theotokion: *krěpostĭ i pěnĭje ljudemŭ tvoimŭ jesi* — You are the strength and the song of your people, O most pure Mother of God. Delivered by your prayers from adversity we always resort first in our requests to you, the great refuge of our souls.

Prayer: *tobě neporočněi mtri ba našego* — To you, the stainless Mother of our God, I your sinful servant *Ivan* pray without ceasing. Remember, O most pure, what the divine lips of the Word and God said: every one who asks shall receive […] but you, O Mother of the merciful one, spare me, your servant *Ivan* […][28]

Kathisma 4

Katanyktikon 1: *zemnaja vrěmenĭnaja vŭzljubivŭ* — Enamoured of what is earthly and temporal, I lose the good things which are eternal; but you, O Lord, the only lover of mankind, direct the thought of my mind to yourself and save my destitute soul from sin.[29]

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26 Essentially the same hymn, though with some minor differences in wording, is to be found in Petrova and Seregina (n. 23), p. 101 and 278; Pozdneev (n. 25), p. 203.

27 Priest's burial, see Goar (n. 23), p. 462; Petrova and Seregina (n. 23), p. 63.

28 Rumjancev MS 327, *kathisma* 14.

29 MacRobert (n. 7), p. 192.

Katanyktikon 2: ὡς κύματα θαλάσσης — *jako volny morĭskyja* — Like the waves of the sea my iniquities have risen up against me, O Lord, and alone like a ship in deep waters I am tossed by my sins. But steer me to your quiet haven, O Lord, through repentance save me.

Nekrosimon: ἀνθρώποι τί μάτην ταραττόμεθα — *člvci čto vsoue mẹtemŭ sẹ* — Why are we men troubled in vain? The path which we run is short, our life is smoke, vapour and dust and ashes, appearing for a little and perishing in haste. Therefore let us cry out to Christ who is immortal: give rest to those who have passed from us where all rejoice to find their home in you. [30]

*Theotokion: *dševnago mi padĕnĭja* — I weep my spiritual fall at every hour, I call on you, O Virgin without stain, for help. Have mercy, O Lady, Mother of God, deliver from eternal torment my humble soul.[31]

Prayer: *g<s>i is<s>e x<s>e jedinočadyi sñe* — O Lord Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son, you who are in the bosom of the Father and true God, source of immortal life, light of light, you came and deigned to clothe yourself in our destitute flesh […] O good Shepherd of your sheep, do not give me, your sinful servant *the priest Ioan*, over to be a delight for abuse by my enemies […]

Kathisma 5

Katanyktikon 1: *otŭ beščislĭnyxŭ grĕxŭ* — Out of innumerable sins I cry out to you in my wretchedness: I labour in the deep waters of my thoughts, I pray to you alone, O Christ, as my Saviour, deliver from the nets of the enemy my humble soul.

*Katanyktikon 2: *kako svojego padenĭja plaču* — How shall I weep my fall or how shall I appear before your face, O Christ, when I have not kept your commandments? But I beseech you and cry out to you, O God, cleanse me from my sins and save me.

Nekrosimon: ἐμνήσθην τοῦ προφήτου βοῶντος — *pomẹnouxŭ prŕka vopĭjušča* — I remembered the prophet who cried out: I am earth and dust. And again I contemplated the graves and saw bare bones, and I said: now who is this, a king or a beggar, a sinner or a righteous man? But give rest, O our Saviour, with the righteous to your servants as you love mankind.[32]

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30 Priest's burial, see Goar (n. 23), p. 462; Petrova and Seregina (n. 23), pp. 61 and 365.

31 Mistakenly identified in MacRobert (n. 7), p. 193: the two hymns in question have the same opening phrase, but diverge thereafter, a common stumbling block in the study of liturgical texts.

32 Priest's burial, see Goar (n. 23), p. 463; Petrova and Seregina (n. 23), pp. 90 and 368.

Theotokion: θείας γεγόναμεν κοινωνοὶ φύσεως — *b︮ž︯ĭju jestĭstvou byxomŭ obĕ̌ščnici* — We became participants in the Divine essence because of you, O Mother of God, ever Virgin, for you bore God incarnate for us. Therefore we honour and magnify you.

Prayer: *vl<d>čce b︮c︯e čl︮v︯koljubivaja g<s>z︯e* — O Mistress, Mother of God, Lady who loves mankind, you know my intention and my deeds and the infirmity of my worthless substance […] do not cease to pray for me, your humble and dejected and sinful servant *Ivan*, that through your intercession I may attain forgiveness of my manifold sins […]

Kathisma 6

Katanyktikon 1: *vŭzdyxanija ne imamŭ jako mytoimecĭ* — I have no sighs like the publican, nor tears of repentance like the adulteress, I perish cruelly in despair; but show your loving kindness, O God, and have mercy on me.

*Katanyktikon 2: *jako b︮ŭ︯ ml<s>tivŭ jesi* — As you are a merciful God and Father of consolation, hear me as I pray to you. O Giver of light to those in darkness, glory to you.

Nekrosimon: σὺ ἔπλασάς με κύριε — *ty sozda mę g<s>i* — You have made me, O Lord, and laid your hand upon me, and commanded and said: you shall return again into earth. Set me on your right path and pardon my sins and save me, I pray you, O Lover of mankind.

*Theotokion: *ty jesi vĕrnymŭ krĕpostĭ b︮c︯e* — You are the strength of the faithful, O Mother of God, you are the inexhaustible deep waters of mercy. Therefore save those who venerate you, O most glorious.

*Prayer: *priimi moje ispovĕdanije g<s>i b︮e︯ moi* — Receive my confession, O Lord my God, and grant me your help quickly and treat the incurable sicknesses of my heart. You are the true healer, who takes away the sins of the whole world, who fulfils every request of those who ask of you in prayer, O Lord […]

Kathisma 7

Katanyktikon 1: πάντας ὑπερβάλλω τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ — *vse prĕspĕvaju grĕxy moimi* — I surpass all in my sins: from whom shall I learn repentance? If I sigh like the publican, I think I shall weigh down the heavens. If I weep like the adulteress, I shall defile the earth with my tears. But grant me remission of sins, O God, have mercy on me.

Katanyktikon 2: *strašnoje ispytanije tvojego soudišča g<s>i* — The fearful inquisition at your judgement seat, O Lord, strikes the ear with trembling,

where the incorporeal multitude stand before you and the deeds of all are made manifest. At that place preserve me uncondemned, O Christ God, as I cry out in penitence, save me.

Nekrosimon: λύει ἀπᾶσαν λύπην ὁ θάνατος — *razdroušajetĭ vsę pročeje sm̃r̃tĭ* — Death, bequeathed by Adam to our race, undoes all else[33], for we became corruptible by partaking of food. Again, let us bear in mind that we were created from the earth and shall become dust again. Therefore with the voice of gladness let us pray to the Creator to grant rest to those who have passed away and abundant mercy.

*Theotokion: *otŭ čreslŭ tvoixŭ d̃v̄ce* — From your loins, O Virgin, light shone forth on the world, for you gave birth to the Word. Pray him, O pure Mother of God, to save our souls from the snare of the enemy.

Prayer: *pr<s>taja vl<d>čce g<s>že b̃ce. vědę* — Most holy Mistress, Lady, Mother of God, knowing that I am foul, impure and unworthy and full of every sin and every unclean action and all evil […] have mercy on me, your sinful servant *Ioan*, and help me and console me, unworthy as I am of mercy and of all consolation […] have mercy on me, your sinful servant *the priest Ivan*, who have transgressed in wilful mind the statutes and commandments of your Son and my God […] do not leave me, your sinful servant *the priest Ivan*, to perish […] and allow me, your sinful servant *the priest Ivan*, to see at the time of my departure your mild face, O Mother of God […]

Kathisma 8

Katanyktikon 1: *ninevŭgitęnŭ plačĭ priimŭ x<s>e* — O Christ, who accepted the weeping of the Ninevites and did not despise the prodigal who cried out to you in conversion, accept me too, who have sinned, O Master, like him and save me.

Katanyktikon 2: *danilomĭ drevle svoje projavi x<s>e vŭtoroje prišestvije* — Through Daniel of old, O Christ, you revealed your second coming on the earth, to execute dreadful judgement on all. I pray you, O merciful one, deliver me from that everlasting condemnation.

Nekrosimon: θρηνῶ καὶ ὀδύρομαι — *plačju sę i rydaju* — I weep and wail when I think of death and see lying in the grave the beauty created for us in God's image, without form or glory or shape. O wonder, what is this which befalls us, this earthly mystery? How are we given over to

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33   The Greek variant reading λοιπόν appears to underlie the Church Slavonic translation *pročeje*, 'further, else'.

corruption? How are we accounted to death? Truly by the command of God, as it is written, who grants rest to those who have passed away.[34]

Theotokion: *neporočnaja nevěsto* — O Bride without stain and Mother of the Word, from your womb without seed light shone forth to those shrouded in darkness. Therefore we magnify you in faith.

Prayer: *c<s>rju slavy jedine besmertne. oče nb<s>nyi. boudi mi pomoščnikŭ* — O King of glory, the only immortal, heavenly Father, be my helper as I am ever defeated by passions […] have mercy on me, your sinful servant *the priest Ivan*, O Healer of souls and bodies, heal my soul […] but as the creation and work of your hands, have mercy on me, your sinful servant *Ivan* […]

Kathisma 9

Katanyktikon 1: ἕως πότε ψυχή μου ἐπιμένεις — *dokolě dše moja priležiši sŭgrěšenijemŭ* — How long, O my soul, will you persist in sin? How long will you not accept the teaching of repentance? Be mindful of the judgement which is to come, cry out to Christ God who knows our hearts: I have sinned against you, O sinless Lord, save me.[35]

***Katanyktikon 2*: *skoro vari dše moja ō<t> nošči grěxovnyja* — Hasten quickly, my soul, from the night of sin, run to the dawn light of the King's great hall, cry out to him who knows the secrets of the heart: Lord, have mercy on me in your compassion, purge the darkness of my soul and save me.

Nekrosimon: ἀμέτρητος ὑπάρχει τοῖς ἀσώτως βιοῦσιν — *beščisla jestĭ bloudno živouščimŭ moučenije* — Immeasurable is the torment for those who live licentiously, the gnashing of teeth and inconsolable weeping, lightless gloom, the outer darkness, the worm which sleeps not. Tears are useless, the judge is inexorable. Therefore before the end let us cry out saying: O Master, Christ, give rest to those whom you have received with the elect.[36]

***Theotokion*: *skoraja vŭ bědaxŭ pomoščnice* — Swift helper in calamities to all who call on you in faith, Virgin without stain, our Lady Mary, intercessor for Christians, have compassion on me, your sinful servant *the priest Ivan*, in the darkness of sin. Enlighten me, O all-merciful, and do not turn away your face, O Queen, for with you as intercessor we sinners rejoice in gladness.

Prayer: *mnoga blgaja vŭsprijemŭ ō<t> g<s>a mojego* — Although I had received many good things from my Lord I became oblivious of them all,

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34 Priest's burial, see Goar (n. 23), p. 463.

35 Essentially the same hymn, though with some minor differences in wording, is to be found in Petrova and Seregina (n. 23), pp. 55, 261, 326; Pozdneev (n. 25), p. 201.

36 Priest's burial, see Goar (n. 23), p. 464; Jaroslavl' MS 15482, likewise after *kathisma 9*.

devoid of human understanding. Therefore I cry out to you, O Mistress, Mother of God, have compassion on me, your sinful servant *the priest Ivan* […] For you are able, O Lady, to help me, your sinful servant *the priest Ivan* […][37]

Kathisma 10

Katanyktikon 1: *ouml<s>rdi sę vl<d>ko na moje obraščenije* — Show compassion, O Master, to bring me to conversion, do not remember the defilement of my heart, have mercy on me in your compassion, cleanse my soul and body. As I perish in iniquity, at the prayers of all your saints save me.

Katanyktikon 2: *ouvy mně d̃še pomęni sę čto jesi* — Woe is me, O soul, remember what you are. Why do you not tremble at the dread judgement of the great King of all creation, who makes us a new being? Cry out thus: I have sinned more than those of old who were under the Law and before the Law, and now in compunction I cry out to you, O Master, Lord my God born of a virgin, have mercy on me and save me.

Nekrosimon: ὡς ἄνθος μαραίνεται — *jako cvětŭ ouvędajetĭ* — As a flower fades and as a shadow passes by, so every man is undone. Again when the trumpet sounds, the dead shall arise as in an earthquake to meet you, O Christ God. Then, O Master, set those whom you have taken from us in the habitations of the saints; give rest, O Master, to the spirits of your servants, O Christ.[38]

Theotokion: *kimĭ ŏbrazomĭ javlju sę licju tvojemou d̃vo neporočnaja g<s>žе* — In what guise shall I appear before your face, O Virgin without stain, when I have defiled the garment of my body, when I have desecrated holy Baptism? And now with tears and sighs, O Mother of God, I call upon you: help me in your compassion, strengthen me with your aid, O joyous Helper of the whole world.

Prayer: *g<s>i b̃e pomęni ml<s>ti tvoja i ščedroty tvoja* — O Lord God, remember your mercies and loving kindnesses which you have from of old towards sinners […] and do not shame me, your sinful servant *the priest Ivan*, of my hope […]

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37   Rumjancev MS 327, *kathisma* 12.
38   Petrova and Seregina (n. 23), p. 53.

Kathisma 11

Katanyktikon 1: *mnoga i beščislĭna moja prěgrěšenĭja* — Many and countless are my transgressions, I am at a loss how to purge them; but I pray you, the only benevolent hearer, O Jesus, the healer of souls and bodies, release from the wiles of the evil one my destitute soul.

Katanyktikon 2: θρήνησον ψυχή μου τὴν ἑαυτῆς ῥαθυμίαν — *plači sę dše moja svojeja si lěnosti* — Weep, O my soul, your own sloth, stand up now, before the end turn back, reject the tumults of life and cleave to the good God, and he will save you as he loves mankind.

Nekrosimon: *strašna smr̃tĭna taina* — Fearful is the mystery of death and dreadful the torment for those with understanding, for like lightning the judge will come and at the sound of the trumpet the dead will arise. But O righteous Judge, give rest to your servants whom you have received.

Theotokion: *pomoščnice kr<s>tĭjanomŭ* — Helper of Christians and sure salvation of the whole world, do not despise me, O Lady, who require your help. Grant mercy, O Virgin without stain, to me, your servant.

Prayer: *k tebe vseneporočnaja g<s>že* — To you, all-unstained Lady, Virgin, Mother of the most high God, I dejected in soul with defiled mind cry out in prayer: have mercy, O Queen, on me in the grip of sins, hateful to angels and men and detestable to your Son and to you, O Mistress […] do not disdain, O most pure, me your sinful servant *Ioan* […]

Kathisma 12

Katanyktikon 1: *na pouti žitiistěmĭ jesi ō dše* — You are on the path through life, O my soul, and the evening already advances towards night. My mind [and][39] thought wavers in trepidation. I pray you, O Jesus, the rising sun of righteousness, in your great mercy enlighten my destitute soul.

Katanyktikon 2: *vŭnčoudou vinograda stoju* — I stand outside the vineyard and no-one hires me, O Saviour, because I am possessed of sloth and do not have the fruit of penitence. But admit me with those hired at the eleventh hour to receive a reward from you, O Master, for you alone are most merciful.

Nekrosimon: ὅτε τῷ λόγῳ σου παραστηθόμεθα — *egda slo<v>mĭ tvoimĭ predŭstanemŭ* — When we stand before your Word at your impartial judgement seat, O Lord, do not put us to shame who have put our trust in

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39   The Church Slavonic wording, *oumŭ moi myslĭ paritĭ*, is not readily construable, since the verb *pariti* is normally intransitive. The interpretation tentatively put forward here, by which the two nouns are conjoined subjects of the verb, depends on the loss of a hypothetical conjunction *i* by haplography.

you, O our Saviour. For we have all sinned, but we have not rejected you. Therefore we pray you: set in the habitations of the just, O Christ, those whom you have received from life, as you alone are the giver of life.

Theotokion: μεταβολὴ τῶν θλεβομένων — *priloženije skorbęščimŭ* — You who are respite for those who grieve, relief for those who are sick, O most lauded Mother of God, save the city and the people. Peace to those at war, calm to those in danger of drowning, O only intercessor for the faithful.

Prayer: *vl<d>ko g<s>i is<s>e x<s>e privěčnyi cr̃ju. ouslyšavyi* — O Master, Lord Jesus Christ, pre-eternal King, who heard the prayer of your foremost apostle Peter when he was in the constraint of chains and prayed to you, and you sent him an angel to comfort him […] have mercy on me, your sinful servant *Ivan*, who pray to you in brokenness of heart […]

Kathisma 13

Katanyktikon 1: *jako razboinikŭ ispovědaju ti sę* — Like the thief I confess you and I weep like the adulteress. I cry out from my heart: forgive my egregious sins, O you who alone are without sin.

Katanyktikon 2: *zlymi napastĭmi ō<t> vraga ōbętĭ mi oumŭ* — In the evil snares of the enemy my mind is captured. I fall before you in soul with compunction, crying out: do not despise me, O merciful Lord, in the grip of despair, but hasten speedily and save me.

Nekrosimon: *vse prijemletĭ smr̃tĭ i vse tlitĭ adŭ* — Death receives all and hell subjects all to decay and the grave covers all, the rich man and the poor. Now neither brother nor friends nor worldly rank can help us. Therefore, O Christ God, admit those who have passed away to the kingdom of heaven, as you love mankind.

Theotokion: *pr<s>taja dṽo g<s>že. za mene svojego raba* — Most holy Virgin, Lady, Mother of God, beseech your Son and my God for me, your servant *Ioan*, that my prayer may not be detestable to his stern gaze, but that he may have mercy on me in his compassion.

Prayer: *tobě prč<s>těi bž̃i mtr̃i. azŭ ōkanĭnyi rabŭ tvoi* — To you, O most pure Mother of God, I your wretched servant *Ioan* fall in prayer. See, O Queen, how I sin without cease and anger your Son and my God. Many times I have repented […]

Kathisma 14

Katanyktikon 1: *drěmanĭjemĭ zlymĭ ōbętŭ byxŭ* — By evil somnolence I was overcome and the slumber of despair enveloped me; but in your vigilant compassion, O Lord, stir me up and save me.[40]

Katanyktikon 2: *vŭ lěnosti žitĭje izŭnourixŭ* — In sloth I have dissipated my life and reached the final point of passions. Have mercy on me in my love of sin, O merciful Lord, heal the sicknesses of my soul and deliver me from eternal torment.

Nekrosimon: ἀληθῶς ματαιότης τὰ σύμπαντα ὁ δὲ βίος σκιά — *voistinou soujeta vsęčĭskaja. žitĭje se sěnĭ* — Truly all is vanity, this life is a shadow and a dream. For everyone on earth is troubled in vain, as the Scriptures said: when we gain the whole world, then we take up our habitation in the grave, where kings and beggars are together. Therefore, O Christ God, give rest to those who have passed away, as you love mankind.[41]

Theotokion: ἡ νοητὴ πύλη τῆς ζωῆς ἄχραντε θεοτόκε — *myslĭnaja dveri žizni prč<s>taja bce* — O rational door of life, most pure Mother of God, we fall before you in faith. Deliver us from temptation, as we glorify your offspring. Pray for the salvation of our souls.[42]

Prayer: *paky zapętŭ byvŭ ōkajanymŭ oumomĭ* — Ensnared again by my wretched mind and by devilish inclination I am a slave to sin. Again the prince of darkness and passionate pleasure draw me like a wretched slave to their will to serve fleshly desires [...] but as you said, O God who does not lie, that there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, so let there be over me, your sinful servant *the priest Ioan* […][43]

Kathisma 15

Katanyktikon 1: *skryvyi rabŭ talantŭ* — In my wretchedness I have become the servant who hid the talent which he received from you for trade; and what shall I do when you come to hold judgement? On that day spare me, O Lord, and do not send me to the fire, O merciful one.[44]

Katanyktikon 2: ἰάτρευσον με τὸν νοῦν — *ouvračjui mi g<s>i. oumŭ* — Heal my mind, O Lord, wounded by the sensual pleasures of life. Subdue the turmoil of my passions, lead me into the path of repentance, that I

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40   MacRobert (n. 7), p. 193.

41   Priest's burial, see Goar (n. 23), pp. 455–6.

42   MacRobert (n. 7), p. 190.

43   Rumjancev MS 327, *kathisma* 14.

44   MacRobert (n. 7), p. 193.

may cry out to you with the voice of compunction: O Lord, do not condemn me according to my deeds, but in your mercy save me.[45]

Nekrosimon: *sŭdětelju i tvorče žižitelju izbavitelju* — Maker and creator, founder and deliverer, release me and absolve me, O Christ God, and have mercy on my soul when you put me to the question. On that day spare me, O merciful one, receive my soul, O Master who knows its secrets.

Theotokion: *soudišče pomyšleju prě<s>taja g<s>že* — I think of the Judgement, O most pure Lady. I have fled to you for refuge, for I have put out the candle of light bestowed on me by God. Enlighten me in the darkness of my many sins, O Virgin without stain.

Prayer: *nadeže vsěmŭ koncemŭ zemli* — Hope of all the ends of the earth, most pure Virgin, Lady, Mother of God, you are my consolation, do not disdain me foul as I am, for my hope is in your mercy. Quench the flame of my sins, sprinkle with the dew of penitence my parched heart, cleanse my mind from sinful thoughts [...] help me, your sinful servant *the priest Ioan*, now and forever.

Kathisma 16

Katanyktikon 1: ἐν κλίνῃ κατακείμενος ἁμαρτημάτων — *na loži sležiu gréxy* [*sic*] *ŏkradenŭ* — I lie down to bed defrauded by my sins. I have no hope of salvation, I have weighed down my soul in the sleep of sloth. But you, O God born of a virgin, raise me up to sing and save me.

Katanyktikon 2: *xotęi vsěmŭ člvkomŭ sp<s>ti sę* — You who desire all men to be saved and to come into their rightful inheritance, in your great compassion visit my poor soul too, O Lord, receive me, who have wasted all my life in fornication like the adulteress, and have mercy on me.[46]

Nekrosimon: *tlěnenŭ jesi člvče* — You are subject to decay, O man, why do you think proud thoughts? Why do you exalt yourself, when you are of the earth below? Why do you not think of the judgement, why do you take no care for your end? Your rapacity is ceaseless; prepare for your departure. Therefore we cry out to Christ who is immortal: give rest to those who have passed from us in that place where all rejoice to find their home in you.

Theotokion: *skvernŭnymi ŏbyčai. oumŭ moi ŏpletenŭ* — My mind is entangled in foul habits. I pray you, the undefiled Virgin and Mother of God, cleanse me from every kind of defilement and save me.

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45   MacRobert (n. 7), p. 193.
46   MacRobert (n. 7), p. 193.

Prayer: *mnogomoutnoje more žitiiskago volnenija* — The turbulent sea of the turmoil of life troubles my mind and the arrows of the wicked robber, evil thoughts, have struck my soul. For look, like a child I have been ensnared in mind to my own desire […] have mercy on me, your sinful servant *Ioan*, O Lover of mankind, in the grip of evil dangers, oppressed by the weight of despair […]

Kathisma 17

Katanyktikon 1: *o<t> očĭju ō<t>tręsŭši sonŭ* — Shaking sleep from your eyes, trim your lamp with oil, O my soul. The midnight voice of the heavenly powers has sounded: they proclaim the coming of Christ the King. Run, O soul, with your talent in hand and with abundant interest, that with the angels you may be admitted to the bridal chamber.

Katanyktikon 2: κριτοῦ καθεζομένου καὶ ἀγγέλων ἑστώτων — *soudĭi sědęščju anĝlomŭ prědŭstojaščimŭ* — When the judge takes his seat and the angels stand before him, when the trumpet sounds and the flame burns, what will you do, O my soul, as you are led to judgement? For then your evil deeds will appear before you, and your secret sins will be laid bare. Therefore before the judgement cry out to Christ God: cleanse me and save me.

Nekrosimon: οὐκ ἔστιν τῶν ἐν βίῳ τερπνῶν οὐδέν — *ně<s> vŭ žitĭi semĭ krasno ničto že* — There is nothing lovely in this life which does not pass away, both riches and glory, youth and bloom. For death brings equal decay to everything. It receives [is received among?] the things which cannot be shaken.[47] It is sown in corruption and raised in incorruption, it is sown in dishonour and raised in glory. In that glory give rest with the righteous, O Christ, to your servants as you love mankind.

Theotokion: *čto věčno na zemli* — What is eternal on earth, what is not snatched away by death? Kings and princes are troubled in vain. But you, O Lord without beginning, immortal King, free me from my countless sins for the sake of the Mother of God, O most merciful one.

Prayer: *bc̃e crc̃e vl<d>čce g<s>že dṽo mr̃ie* — O Mother of God, Queen, Mistress, Lady, Virgin Mary, Mother of the most high God: your Son and God, not despising the sinners who fled to him for refuge, saved all and brought them to true understanding. But I, in my wretchedness, have defiled my baptism and transgressed the vows of monastic life […] do not disdain me, your sinful servant *Ioan* […]

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47 The Church Slavonic *prijemletĭ nedvěžimaja* [*sic*] is a literalistic and syntactically questionable translation of δέχεται τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα, presumably an allusion to Hebrews 12:27 μείνῃ τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα.

Kathisma 18

Katanyktikon 1: *svědyi taina sr<d>ca mojego* — You who know the secrets of my heart, O uncompromising Judge, most merciful Lord, deliver me, a sinner, from the flame of Gehenna and save me, O Lover of mankind.

Katanyktikon 2: *oto sna grěxovnago ouboudi mę člvkoljubče g<s>i* — Rouse me from the sleep of sin, O Lord, Lover of mankind, and strengthen me through your Holy Spirit, and teach me to do your will. Save me by your cross, O most merciful one.

Nekrosimon: *vešči batĭstva čto souje želaje[te] zemnii* — Why do you earthly men desire in vain the stuff of riches? Why do you make a show of gold when it is is subject to decay? Death accepts no gift, nor will the riches of decay readily deliver you. For it does not fear human glory nor is it in awe of powers, nor does it spare poverty, but cuts down all equally. For the rest, my beloved brethren, bearing in mind how small our life is, let us beseech of Christ rest for those who have passed away and for our souls great mercy.

Theotokion: *slastoljubĭjemĭ plotĭskiymŭ ōskvernixŭ si dšju* — With love of fleshly pleasure I have defiled my soul. I pray you, O Lady, Mother of God, Virgin without stain, to give me the great inward mercy of your Son and our God.

Prayer: *vl<d>ko g<s>i oče ščedrotŭ i be vsego outěšenĭja* — O Master, Lord, Father of loving kindnesses and God of all consolation, show your loving kindness on me your unworthy servant, let not the multitude of my evils defeat your love for mankind […] save me, your unworthy servant *Ioan*, who have committed every sin and all wickedness […]

Kathisma 19

Katanyktikon 1: τὴν ταπεινήν μου ψυχήν ἐπίστρεψαι — *směrenyja dša moja posěti* — Visit my humble soul, O Lord, which has wasted its life in sins, and receive me as you did the adulteress and have mercy on me.

Katanyktikon 2: διαπλέων τὸ πέλαγος τῆς παρούσης ζωῆς — *prěplyvaju poučinou žitĭja sego* — I sail across the deep waters of this life, I think of the depths of my many evil deeds, with no helmsman for my thoughts. But I cry out to you in Peter's voice: save me, O God, as you love mankind.

Nekrosimon: *mimoidetĭ oubo vsěxŭ souščĭstvo* — All being passes away like dust on the wind, riches perish and glory will not endure, for these things will perish. Only works will be profitable. The deceased lies without breath and naked; he has no-one to help him. Therefore, my beloved

brethren, bearing in mind how short our life is, beseech of Christ rest for those who have passed away and for our souls great mercy.

Theotokion: οἱ τὴν σὴν προστασίαν κεκτημένοι — *iže tvoje zastouplenije. priobrětše* — We who have won your intercession, O most pure Mother of God, are delivered by your prayers from temptations, for always protected by your Son's cross we duly magnify you.

Prayer: bl̃ago cŗę bl̃aja m̃ti — Good Mother of the good King, look on your servant in your mercy, stretch forth your helping hand, raise up one crushed by passion […][48]

Kathisma 20

**Katanyktikon 1*: *mene ōsouženago ne ōstavi g<s>i* — Do not leave me condemned, O Lord, in my desire for the shortlived and ill-famed joys of this world. Have mercy on me, O merciful one, do not condemn me in the severity of your wrath, but steer me to your quiet harbour in your mercy. Free my soul and body from torment, O righteous Judge.

Katanyktikon 2: *žitĭje svoje vŭ bezakonii ižžižixŭ* — I have wasted my life in iniquity, I have defiled my body and soul through my thoughts, but I fall before you in prayer, like the prodigal son I cry out: I have sinned before you, O Master, but as you love mankind have compassion on me and save me.

Nekrosimon: ὄντως ματαιότης καὶ φθορά — *voistinou soujeta i tlę* — Truly every worldly sight[49] is vanity and corruption. For we all waste away and all die, both princes and judges and nobles, rich and poor and every being on earth. Some day even he who rules as emperor is committed to the grave. Truly human life is vanity.

**Theotokion*: *tebe istinĭnouju bžĩju mtrĩ* — I pray you, true Mother of God, pure Virgin, with the prophets and apostles and holy fathers and martyrs and with all the saints, O most pure Mistress, pray the Master, your Son and our God, that I may have a share in the radiance of the light of his countenance. Accept, O Lady, this worthless prayer and bring it to your Son and our God, that for your sake he may save our souls.

Prayer for all Christians: *g<s>i is<s>e x<s>e sp̃sitelju naš. vŭzakonivyi namŭ ljubovĭ* — O Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, who gave us the law of love, teach us in love to pray for others too […] have mercy on our Prince *N* and all his government and his troops, grant him profound peace; have mercy, O Lord, on our Bishop *N* and on the priests and deacons and the

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48   Rumjancev MS 327, *kathisma* 13; MacRobert (n. 7), pp. 180 and 183–184.

49   Church Slavonic *viděnĭje*, apparently based on a misreading of Greek πάντα τὰ τοῦ βίου ἡδεα, 'all the sweet things of life'.

whole order of churchmen; have mercy, O Lord, on my parents *N* and my brothers and sisters *N* and on all the relations of my family; have mercy, O Lord, on my friends *N*, whosoever have done or intended me good or done or intended or said evil against me, and turn the evil to good; have mercy, O Lord, on those who serve and have served us; have mercy, O Lord, on the order of religious in monasteries and hermitages and those who serve you in all places and who pray for us; have mercy, O Lord, on those who live conjugally, men and women, according to your law; have mercy, O Lord, on young men and maidens, infants and old men and those far gone in years, widows and orphans and the destitute; have mercy, O Lord, on those infirm in flesh and the sick and those tempted by unclean spirits and those on the point of madness and those who have lost their wits entirely; have mercy, O Lord, on all who travel by land and by water and on those who labour in their homes and in captivity and in exile and in chains in prison and in every kind of adversity. Convert, O Lord, the heathen to Christianity, and in your mercy, O Lord, have mercy also on me, your sinful servant *Ivan*, while I still live in this world or when I go on my way. By free will or by constraint, deliver me from every assault of the adversary and from dangers, adversity and affliction and from infirmity, grievous illnesses and sudden death. Grant me time for repentance before my death. Give rest, O Lord, to the souls of those who have departed this world, from Adam to this day: patriarchs, metropolitans, bishops, abbots, priests and deacons, monks and all the church clergy and all orthodox emperors and princes and judges, rich and poor; give rest, O Lord, to my parents and all my relations by name and to our brethren and those who serve us and to those who have met their end by the sword and in all kinds of adversity, those who have not had the benefit of your divine sacraments, through your bountiful loving kindnesses. Give me a share in the everlasting good things of the heavenly kingdom, for you are our God and to you [we ascribe] glory.

Prayer on finishing the Psalter: mnogoml<s>tive preščedryi g<s>i — O most merciful and compassionate Lord, who said: ask and you shall receive, hoping in your word I exerted myself to recite this psalter. Therefore if in any psalm I have erred, whether talking with another or in thought, let it still be always acceptable to your love for mankind, and save me, your servant *Ivan*, according to your mercy, that I may ever praise you all the days of my life.

Benjamin Thompson

Performing Parliament in the *Rotuli Parliamentorum*[1]

1 Introduction

Looking for 'performativity' is not, perhaps, the natural mode of research for historians. Even if they are found analysing texts to distinguish between their declarative and performative modes, they are less likely to do so self-conciously, or to use such terminology, than their more literary colleagues and other cultural critics. Interdisciplinarity can, of course, cross these boundaries. With the cultural turn in historical studies in the last generation has come a sharpened interest in (to take performativity at its most literal level) the drama and ritual of religion and politics. In the latter sphere the ways in which the monarchy dramatized itself, especially through royal entries into cities and the associated processions and pageants, have been increasingly scrutinized.[2] It is all the more curious, therefore, that one of the most public stages on which politics was performed, parliament, has barely been analysed for its dramatic aspects.[3]

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1 I am heavily indebted to the new edition of *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, ed. by C. Given-Wilson et al., Scholarly Digital Editions, Leicester 2005. Internet version, at http://www.sd–editions.com/PROME, last accessed on 2 October 2008 [henceforth *PROME*]. Material from the 1376 parliament is cited largely by bracketed numbers in the text, corresponding to the numerical divisions in *PROME*, which are derived from those of the *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, London 1783. Material from other parliaments is cited by the year of the parliament, the month in roman numerals if there was more than one parliament in that year, and the section number, thus: 1377.i/13. I have quoted the English translation from *PROME* (occasionally tweaked) except where the Anglo-Norman French words are important for the argument. Also important is Given-Wilson, 'General Introduction', and W. M. Ormrod, 'Edward III: Parliament of April, 1376, Introduction', in *PROME*; see also Ormrod's 'On—and Off—the Record: the Rolls of Parliament, 1337–1377', in *Parchment and People in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Linda Clark, Edinburgh 2004 (Parliamentary History special issue) pp. 39–56.

2 E.g. G. Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph*, Oxford 1998.

3 Early modernists have investigated some aspects, however: David Dean, 'Image and Ritual in the Tudor Parliaments', in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. by Dale Hoak, Cambridge 1995, pp. 243–271; Henry S. Cobb, 'Descriptions of the State Opening of Parliament, 1485–1601: a Survey', in *Parliamentary History* 18 (1999), pp. 303–315. For interest in locations, see n. 17 below.

This is despite extensive recent work on the official record of parliament, the *rotuli parliamentorum* ('rolls of parliaments'), which have been re-edited for the medieval period, translated, and made available on-line.[4]

The rolls of parliament, however, turn out to provide a perfect opportunity for the analysis of performativity, not only because of the public and dramatic nature of the institution they record, but also because of the nature of the text itself. In it, several layers of performance are embedded, from narrative description of those public events to official recording of authoritative governmental decisions. The interaction between different modes creates instability in what often seems to be a hybrid text veering between the performative and the declarative. Yet this very instability is itself instructive, not only about the source, but about a crucial institution of English government which the rolls both describe and enact.

Parliament has been in a constant state of evolution throughout English history, and this was true right from its origins in the mid-thirteenth century.[5] While it is reasonable to regard parliament in its first phases as essentially an occasion, in which the various branches of government met in order to expedite executive and judicial business (with or without the aid of representatives of the governed), by the later fourteenth century it was beginning to look more like an institution, with its own procedures, privileges and powers, albeit one usually under firm royal control. Edward III's reign had witnessed some crucial stages in this development, notably the emergence of the House of Commons with a more clearly independent voice.[6] Although the approval of the representatives of shires and towns (as opposed to those magnates and prelates significant enough to be summoned individually, who made up the Lords) had been essential to the granting of extraordinary taxation from the third quarter of the previous century, Edward III's French project had required much more regular and frequent consent in a series of meetings whose form had settled into a standard pattern by the early 1340s. One index of these developments is the form of the common petition, which encapsulated subjects' demand for good government in return for tax, and which was recorded in standard form in the roll from

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4   See n. 1.

5   Given-Wilson, 'General Introduction' (n.1), §A(i); the last general survey of the medieval English parliament was *The English Parliament in the Middle Ages*, ed. by R. G. Davies, J. H. Denton, Manchester 1981, although John Maddicott's Ford Lectures on the origins of parliament are eagerly awaited.

6   G. L. Harriss, *King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369*, Oxford 1975, p. 514; idem, 'The Formation of Parliament, 1272–1377', in Davies & Denton (n. 5), pp. 29–60.

1341.[7] Indeed, one underlying issue reflected here is the organic relationship between parliament and its record: to what extent did the form and content of the roll itself influence the development of parliament?[8]

In order to scrutinize this interaction, this historian's contribution to these essays analyses the roll of one of the most famous and turbulent parliaments of the middle ages, that of the 'Good' Parliament of 1376 (a name found in a contemporary chronicle and subsequently championed by late-Victorian constitutionalism).[9] The parliament was long by medieval standards, at over ten weeks between Monday 28 April and Thursday 10 July,[10] and took place in an atmosphere of military and political tension to which its events contributed.[11] Edward III in his mid-60s was reaching the end of his 50-year reign, and losing his grip; but his eldest son the Black Prince, hero of Crécy and Poitiers, was himself failing and in fact died during the parliament, on 8 June. The war which had restarted against the French in 1369, funded by frequent and high taxation, had seen a series of English reverses, causing the government now led by Edward's next surviving son, John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, to negotiate a truce in 1375. Moreover, the economic legacy of the Black Death of 1348-9 and of subsequent outbreaks of plague was increasingly felt by the politically pre-eminent landlords: it was precisely at this point that prices stopped keeping pace with rising wages, creating a real threat to landlords' incomes.[12] It is not surprising, therefore, that the headline events of the parliament, in which we see for the first time a Speaker representing the Commons to the crown, involved attempts to hold the government to account by impeaching ministers and courtiers (another first), and by imposing a council on the executive (a more traditional way of attempting to influence the course of policy), as well as refusing a direct tax-grant. Moreover the long interval (by recent standards) since the last parliament

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7   Given-Wilson, 'General Introduction' (n. 1), §B(i); Ormrod, 'On—and Off—the Record' (n. 1), pp. 39–42.

8   An issue of central concern to Ormrod in ibid.

9   *The St Albans Chronicle: The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham, I: 1376–1394*, ed. by John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, Leslie Watkiss, Oxford 2003, pp. 2–3; John R. Green, *A Short History of the English People*, vol. 1 (illustrated edn, London 1892), pp. 444–451; but note the moderation of the arch-constitutionalist, William Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England*, vol. 2 (4th edn, Oxford, 1897), pp. 448–455.

10   *PROME*, 1376 parliament, nos 1, 51; Ormrod, '1376, Introduction' (n. 1), at n. 33.

11   For a convenient recent summary, G. L. Harriss, *Shaping the Nation: England, 1360–1461*, Oxford 2005, pp. 440–444; and for greater detail, George Holmes, *The Good Parliament,* Oxford 1975, chs 1–4.

12   Bruce Campbell, *English Seigniorial Agriculture, 1250–1450*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 5, 7–8.

in late-1373,[13] during such a difficult period, gave rise to a very large number of petitions from the Commons (nominally 140), which form more than three-quarters of the 50,000-word roll, or twenty-five of its thirty-two membranes.

The Good Parliament and its roll were therefore both typical and unusual amongst medieval parliaments. The sheer length of the record reflects the turbulence of its events, in which government was challenged in unprecedented ways. Yet these proceedings were conducted broadly according to previous norms, and similarly the roll is structured like any other parliament roll.[14] Indeed the achievement of the parliament was less in the immediate political sphere (its measures were quickly overturned, if in some areas the government had to put on the Commons' clothes in order to do so),[15] than in its demonstration of the possibilities inherent in the structures of the institution as it had already developed. Thus its atypicality sheds light on the typical. This is especially true for the aspects of performativity which concern us here, because the political tensions of the parliament are not only reflected in the structure and language of the roll, but also played out in the complex relationship between events and texts which was the essence of parliament's proceedings. This study will first isolate the declarative and narrative elements of the roll and, by contrast, its performative sections, before probing the hybrid interaction between them; this will raise questions about the relationship of the roll to other texts in parliament, their themes, and the extent to which the roll thus performed English government, even an English constitution.

2 Declarative

Parliament rolls purport at first glance to offer a narrative of the session they record. Parliament opened at a specific time and place, but, it is explained in some detail, in 1376 its opening was delayed by a day:

> 1. On the Monday immediately following the feast of St George in the fiftieth year of the reign of our lord King Edward the third since the conquest of England, which was the first day of this present parliament, the greatest part of the prelates and lords and some of the commons were assembled at Westminster before the king himself, in his chamber. But because some of the sheriffs had not yet returned their writs of parliament, and also because some of the prelates,

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13   The last such gap was during the Black Death, 1348–1351: *PROME*, Edward III, list of parliaments.

14   For the 1370s rolls, however, the petitions were not fair copies written up with the roll, but working drafts with royal answers added in different ink: Ormrod, 'On—and Off—the Record' (n. 1), p. 47; idem, '1376, Introduction' (n. 1), at n. 1.

15   Holmes (n. 11), ch. 6.

earls, barons, knights of the shires, citizens of the cities and burgesses of the boroughs had not yet arrived, our lord the king was advised to wait until the following morrow to make the pronouncement of this parliament; and thus it was done. And a proclamation was made thereon in the Great Hall of Westminster that all those who had summons of parliament should be there on the said morrow at eight o'clock in the morning, and that all the sheriffs should return their said writs of parliament there, on grave penalty.

2. On the morrow the prelates, duke, earls, barons and the other great men and commons, justices, serjeants-at-law and others assembled in the Painted Chamber; and there, before the king himself and all the others, Sir John Knyvet, knight, chancellor of England, by order of the king, made the pronouncement of the reasons for the summons of this present parliament […]

The combination of chronological and locative precision with past tenses, above all the past historic ('qe fust le primer jour de ce present parlement'; 'Johan Knyvet […] fist pronunciacion'), and a succession of events linked by various conjunctions ('et issint fuist fait') sets up a narrative mode which is matched at the end of the main roll:

50. Also, the said commons humbly prayed our lord the king in the said parliament that it would please their said lord the king, in great comfort of all the realm, to cause the noble child Richard of Bordeaux, son and heir of Sir Edward, eldest son of our said lord the king and prince of Wales, whom God absolve, to come into parliament, so that the lords and commons of the realm could see and honour the said Richard as the true heir apparent of the realm. This request was granted, and thus the said Richard came before all the prelates, lords and commons in parliament on Wednesday, the morrow of St John in the aforesaid year [25 June], by the order and will of our same lord the king. […]

51. Item, […] our lord the king […] sent for the prelates, lords and commons who were summoned to this parliament to come to him at the said place of Eltham to hear the answers to the common petitions there and to bring an end to this present parliament.

After this the membranes of petitions and royal answers follow, at the end of which proceedings are rounded off:

213. And thereon the same commons put forward in parliament a great roll or a great schedule, and another bill annexed to the same roll, containing around forty-one articles. […] And thereon the said chancellor of England, on behalf of the king, then said to the knights of the said shires and citizens and burgesses there present that they should make suit for writs for their wages of parliament in the usual manner. And soon after, the prelates and lords rose and took leave of our aforesaid lord the king; and thus when they left this present parliament at[16] the said place of Eltham, the same parliament had continued from day to day from the beginning of the same until this present Thursday, 6 [*recte* 10] July in the present year, this same parliament lasting over ten weeks in all.

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[16] *PROME* translates 'al' as 'for'.

This frame prioritizes the narrative elements of the series of events which constituted a parliament.

Other details of place and date through the text (as with Prince Richard's appearance on 25 June) reinforce this impression. The triers of petitions are variously instructed to hold their sessions in the chamberlain's chamber (6) and the Marcolf Chamber (7); and the Commons (8) were instructed to withdraw 'a lour aunciene place en la maison du chapitre del abbe de Westm'', a phrase which probably means 'in their *former* place in the chapter house of Westminster Abbey', rather than their 'customary' place, because we happen to know that they met in the Painted Chamber in 1373.[17]

When describing the most dramatic events of the parliament, the impeachments, the roll generally adopts a narrative tone:

> 15. And then the said commons came into parliament, publicly making protestation that they were of as good will and firm purpose to aid their noble liege lord with men and goods and whatever they have, as ever were any others in any time past, and always would be with all their power. […] And thereon the same commons made a declaration of three points in particular. […]

> 16. […] And then, the same commons complained in particular about the people written below, affirming that many deceits and other evils were done to the king and his realm in the manner that follows:

> 17. First, Richard Lyons, merchant of London, was impeached and accused by the said commons of many deceits, extortions and other evil deeds done by him to our lord the king and his people […]

> 18. To which the said Richard, present in parliament, said that as regards the said loan made to the king of the aforesaid 20,000 marks, he is completely without guilt. And he further said […]

> And thereon it was witnessed publicly in parliament that our lord the king on the previous day had expressly said to some of the lords here present in parliament that […]

> And as regards the other articles, the said Richard made no answer, but said that if he had trespassed or acted wrongly in anything, he would submit to the mercy of our lord the king.

> 19. Wherefore the said Richard was sentenced to prison at the king's will, and was to be put to fine and ransom, according to the seriousness and horrible nature of the trespass; […]

> And thereon the said Richard was again sent before the lords of parliament, and was told that it seemed to the lords that his crimes were so great and horrible that

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17   John G. Edwards, *The Second Century of the English Parliament*, Oxford 1979, pp. 4–7. For interest in locations, see *Parliamentary History* 21 (2002), especially Alasdair Hawkyard, 'From Painted Chamber to St Stephen's Chapel: The Meeting Places of the House of Commons at Westminster until 1603', pp. 62–84, esp. pp. 64–70. *PROME* translates as 'customary', in defiance of Edwards' and Hawkyard's comments.

this did not suffice to make satisfaction. And the said Richard immediately submitted his body, his lands, tenements, goods and chattels to the king's mercy, and willed and granted that his body, lands, goods and chattels be at the king's will to ordain and do with the same what would please him; asking the king to grant him his life if it would please him, and if not, that he would do his will fully concerning himself and whatever he had. Wherefore it was also decided that all his lands, tenements, goods and chattels should be seized into the king's hands, and his body would remain in prison at the king's will.

The impeachment of William, Lord Latimer follows in similar vein. Latimer 'then present in parliament' (26) defended himself, and engaged in a tit-for-tat dialogue with the commons:

28. […] And thereon after many other words and explanations had been declared and discussed, in full parliament as well as otherwise before the prelates and lords only, for our lord the king as well as for the party of the said Lord Latimer, and after many examinations were made thereon in private and in public and long deliberation was had, a judgment was returned in parliament to the said Lord Latimer […]

He was found 'en defaute', sentenced to imprisonment, fines, and removal from office, and then bailed by a group of mainpernors to appear again (28-30). The next victim, William Ellis of Great Yarmouth was also present in parliament and exchanged words with the Commons, who produced two witnesses (31-32). But when John, Lord Nevill was impeached, one of the prosecution witnesses, Reginald Love, a London merchant, attempted to retract evidence that Nevill had wronged him, until pressure from the Commons forced him to aver it. 'And thereon the Commons prayed judgement against the said Lord Nevill' (34).

The parliament roll thus records these proceedings being played out day-by-day, in a visible enactment both of government and of accountability. The roll's broadly narrative framework and its locative and chronological detail added nothing to the authority of the record; rather, they established the authority of parliament itself, as an event, in the governing process. Parliament required not only a formal record of decisions, but also an impression of the events through which such decisions were taken, as well as of the various individuals and groups which contributed to them. Nor should the public—even theatrical— aspects of the staging of governance be ignored, surely one reason why the clerks described the places and scenes in which governance was enacted. The process of governance is as important in the parliament rolls as its products, especially with respect to the community's contribution to that process.

Nevertheless, such chronology as the roll contains turns out to be highly misleading. The precise course of parliaments is in fact difficult to reconstruct from the parliament rolls, because of their formulaic

structure.[18] They begin with the assembly of the members and then the charge to parliament generally delivered by the chancellor (sometimes alongside the parliamentary sermon) which is the royal outline of the agenda, normally including a request for taxation. The receivers and triers of petitions are then named, and this is almost immediately followed by grants of taxation. Other business is recorded thereafter, before the common petition is transcribed with the royal answers, some of which led to legislation. Yet the petition was generally presented nearer the beginning of parliament, and the grant of tax formally made at the end. Indeed, in practice negotiations about both proceeded in parallel through the course of parliament.[19] Moreover the 1376 roll is unusual in specifying the date of the end of the session, if it is given incorrectly as 6 July rather than the 10th.

The Good Parliament is in fact notable for the first really extended treatment of a parliament in chronicles, those of Thomas Walsingham, which was written at St Alban's soon after the event, and the *Anonimalle* written later at York, but probably on the basis of an eye-witness account by a royal clerk, which may have been a deliberately-circulated political pamphlet.[20] The latter in fact provides a very precise chronology for the first half of the parliament, as well as revealing the proceedings in the Commons' chamber for the first time. From this we learn that the committee of twelve lords appointed to consult, or intercommune, with the Commons, was appointed at the latter's request on 9 May, eleven days after the opening, and after considerable discussion in the Commons about their grievances. But the roll records it straight after the appointment of triers and the sending of the Commons to the chapter-house, thus implying that the lords 'were appointed in parliament' at crown initiative, as part of the chancellor's preliminary arrangements for the conduct of business (8). Equally, the appointment of an afforced royal council of nine lords follows in the roll as the next item but one (10), after the tax-grant (9); yet in the *Anonimalle* it took place on 26 May, just as that chronicle's chronology gives up. There follow in the roll ordinances about the conduct of councillors (11-13) which may have been made at the same time, although that against bribery might equally have come after the

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18   Given-Wilson, 'General Introduction' (n. 1), §B(i).

19   Harriss (n. 6), p. 505.

20   *St Albans Chronicle* (n. 9), pp. 2–53; *The* Anonimalle *Chronicle, 1333–81*, ed. by V.H. Galbraith, Manchester 1927, pp. 79–94 (translation in John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century*, Oxford 1987, pp. 301–313; for which see now, Clementine Oliver, 'The First Political Pamphlet? The Unsolved Case of the Anonymous Account of the Good Parliament of 1376', *Viator*, 38 (2007), pp. 251–268. For the chronology, Ormrod, '1376, Introduction' (n. 1); 'On—and Off—the Record' (n. 1), pp. 44–46.

impeachment proceedings which seem to have occupied June; certainly the repeal of the ordinance on sweet wines (14) is likely to have followed the proceedings against John Pecche (33). The fact that the roll has at this point become a series of ordinances means that the sense of chronology of the opening has been lost. The re-adoption of the narrative mode at 15—'Et puis apres les ditz communes vindrent en parlement' (quoted above)—thus does not take place against a secure background of continuous chronological exposition. Moreover this section further fudges the chronology, in that the Commons' protest that they would be prepared to help the king with tax-grants but for the corrupt wasting of the realm's treasure by his intimates (15-16) took place on 12 May according to the *Anonimalle*, a fortnight earlier than 10. The roll then leads straight from this declaration into the impeachments (17ff.) with specific narrative linkage (end of 16): 'Et puis apres, meismes les communes se firent pleindre en parlement par especial des persones desouzescritz' ('And then, the same commons complained in particular about the people written below'); yet this process seems to have begun on or after 26 May.

The patchiness of the roll as a narrative is further seen in its inadequate account of the impeachments. Some proceedings are given in considerable detail; yet others are incomplete, confused, or missing altogether. The roll records Latimer's trial at length, with apparently verbatim exchanges between the parties (20-27), and concludes with his sentence (28). It then ('Et sur ce') proceeds to record him being bailed to reappear before the king and lords (29-30). One way or another this is confusing: if this is in the right order, it is curious that the roll fails to tell us any more about the proceedings or Latimer's fate; more likely, the bail process is out of order and in fact preceded the trial, as is suggested in the dialogue where Latimer claimed that he had already put his defence 'to our lord the king when he was similarly impeached thereon before the king himself' (27). Alice Perrers, the king's grasping mistress, was another major target of the Commons' ire from the beginning, according to the speeches recorded in *Anonimalle* and by Walsingham, and was removed from court on 26 May according to the former;[21] yet she is almost entirely absent from the roll, only surfacing in an ordinance against women pursuing cases in royal courts by way of maintenance (45). Others who were impeached by the Commons also fail to appear on the roll.[22] These inadequacies stem largely from the fact that, that despite their narrative frame, the rolls' purpose was not purely, or even primarily, to provide a chronological account of parliament.

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21   *Anonimalle* (n. 20), p. 92; *St Albans Chronicle* (n. 9), pp. 42–51.
22   Stury, Fastolf, Leicester, Sporier: Ormrod, '1376, Introduction' (n. 1), at n. 30.

3 Performative

The rolls provide a formal and authoritative record of the proceedings of parliament. They were not the formal record of legislation, which was contained in the statute roll.[23] But for other purposes they provided the authoritative account of what had happened in parliament and what had been agreed and ordained there. Hence their formulaic structure from the 1340s, with the opening preliminaries followed by the grant of taxation, other business, then the common petition and royal answers.

In recording these acts, the parliament roll loses its narrative superstructure and its chronological precision. Once the preliminaries were over, with the appointment of the intercommuning committee at no.8, a new membrane records formal business with a new tone. First is the tax-grant, which in the Good Parliament only ran to a continuation of customs:

> 9. The lords and commons assembled in this present parliament, having ('eantz') consideration for the very great burdens and expenditures which our lord the king makes ('fait') […] have ('ont') of their good will and free volition, in maintenance of the said wars, granted ('grantez') to our said lord the king similar subsidies of wool, leather and woolfells [to those in 1373].

This reads like a transcription of a formal text, especially with the use of the perfect 'have granted' rather than the narrative past historic.[24] The following sections recording ordinances about the continual council (10-13) are introduced with 'Et est ordenez et assentuz', 'Item, […] est ordeigne', 'est ordene'; and, finally, 'Item, est accordez et assentuz qe l'ordinance nadgaires fait des vins douces […] soit repelle' ('Item, it is agreed and assented that the ordinance formerly made concerning sweet wines […] should be repealed') (14). The switch into a present-centred mode indicates the change of register of the roll into a formal record. The roll in fact purports to quote the ordinance against Alice Perrers directly, 'en la forme qe s'ensuit:' ('in the form which follows:') (45). Earlier, in listing the triers of petitions (6-7), the text moves from the narrative 'feurent assignez' of the appointment of receivers (4-5) to 'sont assignez', as if quoting directly from a document. The narrative state trials also contained documents formally recorded. A list of parishes in Brittany and the amount of tribute they paid to Latimer was quoted in full (22), as was

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23   Henry G. Richardson & George O. Sayles, 'The Early Statutes', in their *The English Parliament in the Middle Ages*, 1981, XXV, pp. 15–17; see below n. 42.

24   See also 28, a direct quotation, which uses the perfect thus. Other parliaments did record the grant more explicitly in verbatim fashion; e.g. *PROME*, 1377.x/27; also 1379/13; except for the use of the present rather than the perfect, this is identical in form to the grants recorded in 1376 and subsequent parliaments, e.g. *PROME*, 1377.i/19, 1378/29–30.

Latimer's sentence (28); and the record of Latimer's bail, with his mainpernors (bail guarantors), was a separate document sewn onto the roll (30). In the parliaments of the second half of the fourteenth century nobles increasingly used parliament as a forum for the pursuit of their own business, notably the restoration of inheritances, partly as a way of securing a formal record of proceedings with extensive quotation of relevant documents.[25] In these sections the rolls read like the proceedings of a court, in which capacity parliament was indeed acting in such cases.[26]

It is above all the petitions which the roll records verbatim. The section is introduced with the lightest of scaffolding (52): 'Cy apres s'ensuont les peticions baillees avant en escrit au parlement par les communes' ('Hereafter follow the petitions put forward in writing at parliament by the commons'). The petitions are then recorded in their original form, in the present tense: 'A nostre tresredoute et trespuissant seignur le roi; supplient toutes le comunes de sa terre' ('To our most dread and most powerful lord the king; all the commons of his land petition') (52); 'Item, prie la commune' ('Item, the community prays') (53). Similarly, the royal answers are in the performative present: 'le roi voet q"' ('the king wills that') (52), 'Soient l'estatutz ent faitz mises en due execucion' ('The statutes made thereon should be duly executed') (53); or future, 'Le roi se ent advisera' ('The king will consider this further') (63). These represent executive actions which had practical effects, for instance the repeal of Great Yarmouth's charter allowing a monopoly of herring sales (76), the exemption of some East Anglian cloths from minimum widths (142), and commissions of inquiry.[27] In normal parliaments, petitions commonly formed the basis for legislation which reflected the Commons' language, even if the crown did not always feel bound by their precise words.[28] The Good Parliament unusually did not give rise to such legislation, probably because of the breakdown of the political relationship between crown and Commons, and the parking of petitions with the council; but many statutes were reaffirmed in the royal answers, such as the labour legislation preventing the free movement of workers and villeins, and limiting wages to pre-plague levels (117).

The roll was thus itself an authoritative document amongst the records of government. This is evident from the fact that the rolls of previous parliaments were searched for authoritative versions of their

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25　See below, at nn. 33, 35.

26　The 'three points' of the Commons' general charges against the courtiers (16) probably existed in textual form too; the roll and the *Anonimalle* (n. 20), pp. 84–88, are very close textually; see also below, at n. 50.

27　*PROME*, 1376, Appendix, 16–17, 20–21.

28　Ormrod, 'On—and Off—the Record' (n. 1), p. 42.

texts. This is not often explicit before 1376: one such example was in 1343, when a search was commanded for the anti-papal legislation at Edward I's last parliament at Carlisle, which later became the basis for the Statute of Provisors.[29] A more telling case is the 1354 annulment of the condemnation of the earl of Arundel in 1327, which in repealing the quoted statute explicitly overrode the evidence of any other document, including the parliament roll: 'notwithstanding any recitation or word put in this statute or in any other statute, record, remembrance, roll of parliament or in any other places whatsoever; which recitation, words, enrolments, record and remembrances, if there shall be any, shall be cancelled and treated as null forever'.[30] Such references became more frequent after the Good Parliament itself. In 1378 the customs grant of 1376 was renewed, its terms quoted 'par la forme et manere qe s'ensuit'; then it had been 'pleinement accompliz, come plainement appiert en les roulles de mesme le parlement' ('fully performed, as plainly appears in the rolls of the same parliament').[31] In the same parliament the Commons asked for a copy of the tax-grant from the previous session, in October 1377.[32] In that parliament, the earl of Salisbury reasserted a claim to the honour of Denbigh, which Edward had restored to the Mortimers in 1354, citing a petition he had presented in the parliament of 1372; the matter was pursued in the next parliament, where the entry on the 1377 roll was quoted verbatim, and the matter ran on in subsequent parliaments with ever-more-extensive and multi-layered quotation of the rolls of the previous sessions.[33]

At times the rolls exhibit awareness of their authoritative status, and the concomitant importance of the accuracy of the record they contain, just as with other legal records. In the Good Parliament, Henry Despenser, bishop of Norwich, pursued his claim to his eponymous archdeaconry, alleging an error in the record and process in the common bench, and asking for it to be exhibited in parliament and corrected (48); he was told that errors in Common Pleas could only be corrected in King's Bench, but that errors in the latter should be corrected in parliament, whose roll would, presumably, therefore provide an authoritative record. There are numerous instances from the early fourteenth century of specific provision for a particular ordinance or decision to be entered onto the parliament roll, or added if by mistake it

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29   *PROME*, 1343/60.

30   *PROME*, 1354/15.

31   *PROME*, 1378/29.

32   *PROME*, 1378/22.

33   *PROME*, 1372, Appendix, 6; 1377.x/28; 1378/31, 1379/19, 1380.i/19; see also 1384.v/15.

had been omitted.[34] The restorations of John Maltravers in 1352 and Roger Mortimer in 1355 were to be enrolled on the parliament roll 'q'est de record' ('which is of record'), for the greater assurance of their estate.[35]

Such references are more frequent after 1376, which suggests an increasing self-consciousness about the importance of the roll.[36] The names of councillors and their terms of appointment were to be recorded in Richard II's minority; in 1377 this was linked to the provision that these terms could not be changed except by parliament.[37] Similarly, despite the routine recording of the conditions of tax-grants, it was sometimes explicitly laid down that they should be enrolled.[38] From the late 1380s bishops began to use the rolls to record their protestations against business in which their orders did not allow them to concur, notably condemnations to death and anticlerical legislation, requesting specific enrollment.[39] The executors of Edward III similarly asked in 1379 that their petition and the response from the judges 'fuist enroullez en roulle de parlement de record' ('might be enrolled on the roll of parliament as of record').[40] During Chancellor Michael de la Pole's impeachment in 1386, he correctly claimed that his creation as earl of Suffolk in 1385 had been enrolled on the parliament roll, by order of the king, even though the Commons (presumably without immediate access to that roll) denied this.[41] The roll could even be amended later: after Easter 1380, a great council of lords heard the ordinance made in the Hilary parliament on the powers of JPs; they agreed that their intentions about these powers had not been clearly enrolled at the time, and went on to clarify them and issue new commissions.[42]

The usurpation of Richard II by Henry IV in 1399 provides the *locus classicus* for the importance of the parliament roll. The Record and Process of Richard's deposition was entered on the parliament roll of Henry's first parliament. Yet, although the assembly which was sitting at the time of

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34   *PROME*, 1315/7 for the latter; 1316/3 appointment of Lancaster to lead Council; 1318.x/276; 1324; 1348/4; 1351/7–9, 18, 23.

35   *PROME*, 1352/54, 1355/29.

36   As an electronic search in *PROME* shows.

37   *PROME*, 1377.x/47; 1379/11; also 1381/74; 1385/10.

38   *PROME*, 1383.x/12; 1391/10; 1393/11.

39   *PROME*, 1388.ij/9, 1390.ij/24, 1391/8, 1393/20, 1397.i/22, 27; also 1397.ix/21, the lords' oaths to uphold the doings of parliament to be enrolled.

40   *PROME*, 1379/25b–26.

41   *PROME*, 1386/7; 1385/16.

42   *PROME*, 1380.i/38–40. I do not address the question of the relationship between statutes and ordinances, and the statute and parliament rolls: for episodes and commentary, see Ormrod, Introductions to *PROME*, 1353, 1354, 1362, 1363, 1373; also *PROME*, 1406/62. Richardson & Sayles (n. 23), pp. 32–46.

these proceedings had been summoned by Richard as a parliament, it was no longer so once he had had 'abdicated'; it became an assembly of estates which met to hear the deposition and the claim of Henry to the throne. It only became a parliament again once Henry had summoned it on his own royal authority. The deposition therefore in principle had no place in the roll of that parliament; but it suited the new regime to record in detail the process of and reasons for Richard's removal, to provide an authoritative (if partisan) record.[43] Indeed, one of the accusations against Richard was that he caused the parliament roll (of 1397) to be 'altered and erased by his own will'.[44] Despite this, consideration in 1401 of the 1399 moderation of the Statute of Provisors brought to light the fact that the entry on the 1399 roll did not quite match what the Commons thought they had agreed.[45] The logical consequence of this concern over the accuracy of the record was to exercise scrutiny over its creation; this the Commons did in 1406, at the end of a difficult parliament, when they successfully petitioned for a committee of Commons and Lords to be present at the 'engrossing' of the roll.[46]

What was recorded on the parliament roll had, thirty years on, become an important political issue. The authority of the roll, nevertheless, had been established much earlier in the fourteenth century, and probably even before its standardized form emerged in 1341. Even so, it seems likely that the Good Parliament itself contributed to this process, given the increasing frequency of reflexive entries in the rolls thereafter, as well as the subsequent attention given to parliament by chronicles. The authority of the roll was necessarily linked with the authority of parliament, which by the end of Edward III's reign had developed (quite as much at royal initiative as his subjects') into a forum for political negotiation in which some powers and procedures had become entrenched, especially the right to grant taxation and to agree and repeal statutes. While the roll did not generally contain the final form of statute legislation, it did record the process by which laws were agreed, usually by petition and answer, and it also recorded ordinances which would not be registered on the statute roll, as well as a unique record of other parliamentary proceedings. It would be too much to claim that the text of the roll in itself carried executive weight: royal assent created statutes, and Commons' grants made taxation. But in providing the formal record of

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43   *PROME*, 1399/10–54; Given-Wilson, '1399, Introduction'.

44   *PROME*, 1399/25.

45   *PROME*, 1401/26; Given-Wilson, 'The Rolls of Parliament, 1399–1421', in *Parchment and People* (n.1), p. 59.

46   *PROME*, 1406/65; see Given-Wilson (n. 45) for other occasions when Henrys IV & V were reminded not to misrepresent decisions.

these and other acts, and in quoting their terms precisely, in language which often abandoned past description for present action, it came as near as it could to encapsulating the performance of government.

4 Hybrid

Parliament rolls thus have two different modes of exposition, declarative and performative, in which, on the one hand, the proceedings of parliament were narrated as a series of past events, and, on the other, the texts of formal documents and decisions were recorded, some as present executive action. It must already be apparent that the two were closely connected; but this is particularly emphasized in a third mode, in which the roll describes narratively the recitation of texts which it then transcribes verbatim.

Such is true of the preliminary proceedings: while the chancellor's opening charge is summarized in 1376 rather than quoted (2), it is recited in many other parliament rolls, including those of the preceding and succeeding meetings.[47] Especially in the case of a parliamentary sermon, it is reasonable to assume that the chancellor or bishop was reading from a text.[48] The names of receivers and triers of petitions are then explicitly said to have been read out to the king, 'y feurent luez devant le roi mesmes par la forme qe s'ensuit' ('these were read before the king himself in the form that follows') (3-7), a form which is used throughout the roll to introduce such a recitation. At various points during the impeachment sessions relevant documents were read out, and recorded thus on the roll. In the case of William Ellis, bills were brought forward by witnesses which were read out ('lues en parlement'), and quoted in full on the roll (31). The list of parishes who paid protection money to Latimer was introduced as: 'une bille estoit baillez avaunt en parlement, en la forme qe s'ensuit' ('a bill was put forward in parliament, in the form that follows') (22). Other proceedings which were not so overtly recitations nevertheless often seem so, as with the 'three points' of the Commons' opening salvo against the courtiers (16), and the accusations against Latimer and Lyons (17, 21, 24-5): the precision of the accusations, as well as chroniclers' access to the same information, suggests that the clerks must have been transcribing written documents.[49] Subsequent parliament rolls provide plenty of evidence for the oral recitation of documents which were also

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47   *PROME*, 1373/2–4, 1377.i/4–12.

48   But see the language issue, below.

49   See above, n. 26.

formally recorded, including many of those noticed above, such as the documents in the Montagu case, the petitions of Edward III's executors, the episcopal protestations, and the commissions to the JPs.[50] At the end of the Hilary 1377 parliament which reversed many of the acts of 1376, 'the manner and the articles of the general pardon and grace which the same king had made to his commonalty were recited, in the manner which follows afterwards'.[51] It also seems certain that grants of tax were formally read out, although it is often not explicit.[52]

Whether the most extensive parliamentary texts, the Commons' petitions, were actually read out in 1376 is not entirely clear; the roll only reports that the Commons were summoned to Eltham 'pur y oier les *responses* des communes peticions et faire fyn de ce present parlement' ('to hear the *answers* to the common petitions there and to bring an end to this present parliament') (51).[53] To read over 35,000 words of petition at a single sitting would have taken a considerable time, especially at the sick king's bedside. Indeed the Commons did not even hear all the responses: 'and [the lords and commons] heard the *greater part* (la greindre partie) of the answers to their common petitions in the manner that follows; and they also heard the judgments made concerning people and ordinances, concerning councillors as well as others, in the aforesaid manner'. Yet in the next (much shorter) parliament, in late January and February 1377, the main section of the roll concludes: 'the common petitions which follow afterwards, with the answers given to the same in the said parliament, were read in the usual manner (en manere acustumee) in the hearing of all the prelates, lords and commons in the said parliament in the presence of the same president'.[54] The previous day, the king had ordered the customary recitation of the last day of parliament, 'come la manere est de faire al darrain jour de parlement' ('as it is customary to do on the last day of parliament'). The length of the 1376 petitions may therefore have caused it to be an exception the norm that the petitions and answers, as well as grants and other important ordinances, were recited orally as the final act of parliament.[55]

A significant amount of parliamentary business thus revolved around the recitation and discussion of formal texts. This was because the

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50   See above, at nn. 33, 39–40, 42.

51   *PROME*, 1377.i/22; this reading is again referred to at1377.x/99.

52   See above, at n. 24, for the terms in which they are recorded, including present-tense elements; *PROME*, 1380.xi/14–15 is a 'declaration', a word usually associated with recitation in the rolls.

53   Emphasis here and in the quotations which follow is mine.

54   *PROME*, 1377.i/22.

55   See further below on successive presentation of petitions.

governmental system of which parliament was a part was heavily text-based.[56] References to texts are littered through the roll, right from the start: at the opening some sheriffs had not yet returned their writs, and were ordered to do so on the next day, on grave penalty (1). Another missing document was Lyons' warrant giving him royal authority to collect wool customs, which he was unable to produce (18)—the kind of exception which drives home the point. On the other side, the Commons hoped to produce a 'ragman' sealed by lords of Brittany containing accusations against Latimer, but it could not be found (21), unless it is the petition which follows (22-3). The issues which rumbled through the parliament concerning Great Yarmouth partly turned on royal privileges granted them by charter, which enabled the burgesses to monopolize the herring trade in the eastern counties, and to force the burgesses of Lowestoft to pay them customs on their own coastline; these charters were overturned in the parliament.[57] The petitions and royal answers are similarly strewn with references to texts, such as charters (e.g. 54), commissions (55), writs (58), franchises and liberties (59), protections (60), ordinances (62), and not least statutes (64, 68): indeed one stock royal answer was 'Soient les estatuz ent faitz tenuz et gardez' ('The statutes made thereon should be upheld and observed') (e.g. 56, 57), and others resulted in the issuing of documents. The common petition opened as it usually did with perhaps the defining texts of English kingship (at least from the subjects' point of view): they requested confirmation of Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest (52). And even when parliament was ending, further documents were produced, such as the bill against Adam Bury, two bills about Yarmouth, and perhaps a great roll or schedule, with another bill of forty-one articles (47, 212b). The parliament roll was heavily based on the quotation of text because so much of English governmental activity was based on and defined by the written word.

The consequence of this for the parliament roll was that it adopted a hybrid mode of reportage which combined an apparent narrative of events with a formal record of the relevant documents. Sometimes it is clear whether the roll is in narrative or performative mode; but their close relationship, not to say inextricability, is apparent in the roll's sometimes startling oscillation between them. This is manifested most obviously in the inconsistent use of tenses throughout the roll. Whereas the receivers of petitions 'feurent assignez' ('were assigned') (3-5), the triers 'sont assignez' ('are assigned') (6-7), as the text slips silently into direction

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56　See above all, Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 2nd edn, Oxford 1992.

57　*PROME*, 1376/31–32, 49, 76, 170, 176, 212, Appendix, 3. For background, A. Saul, 'Local Politics and the Good Parliament', in *Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval English History*, ed. by A. Pollard, Gloucester, 1984, pp. 156–171.

quotation. Yet the following paragraph (8) describing the withdrawal of the Commons and the intercommuning committee, is firmly in the past again ('departirent', 'furent assignez'). Then again, the grant of taxation (9) initially uses the present-centred perfect tense ('ont grantez' – 'have granted'); thus the subsequent move to the past historic ('prierent […] promystrent', 'prayed […] promised') suggests a change from quotation to narrative. Yet the Commons' request for a continual council which follows (10) is firmly in the present: 'monstrent au roi et as seignurs du parlement […] 'Par quoi ils prient' ('declare to the king and to the lords of parliament' […] 'Wherefore they pray'). The king in turn 'l'ad ottroie' ('has granted it'), and further clauses are prefaced by 'Et est ordenez et assentuz' ('And it is ordained and agreed'), a present-performative mode which is then maintained through the following ordinances.[58]

The same vacillation is evident in the impeachments. These start as a narrative (15), in the past historic, 'Et puis apres les ditz communes *vindrent* en parlement, y faisantz protestacion overtement q'[…]. Mais ils y *distrent*' ('And then the said commons came into parliament, publicly making protestation that […]. But they said'); yet despite the continued use of narrative scaffolding ('Et pluis y *distrent*', 'And they said further'), it is clear that a document is being quoted, which becomes overt when the tense slips briefly into the present mid-way: 'Dont lour *semble*' ('Thus it seems to them'). The paragraph ends by introducing the three points which are outlined in the next (16), which are more explicitly quotations, without narrative scaffolding ('Primerement […] Item […] Item […]'), framed in the perfect and present: 'meismes l'estaple et bullyon *ont este* depuis, et encores *sont*, en grande partie sustretz et apoy de tout annyntiz' ('the same staple and bullion since have been, and still are, in great part withdrawn and almost completely ruined'). The same happens in the impeachment of Lyons which follows (17): 'Primerement, Richard Lyons, marchant de Londres, *estoit empeschez et accusez* par les dites communes' ('was impeached and accused by the said commons'); but the text slips into a more present-centred mode, first with the perfect ('Et par especial de ce qe le dit Richard [and others] *ont procurez*', 'And especially because the said Richard [and others] have procured'), then the present: 'Et *dit est* communement q'il *prent*' ('And it is said that he takes'): this looks as if the text is now quoting directly. For Lyons' response the text moves back into

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narrative (18): 'A qoi le dit Richard, present en parlement, *dit*' ('To which the said Richard, present in parliament, said', presumably past historic for 'dist').[59] Again, Latimer '*estoit empeschez et accusez* par clamour des ditz communes' ('was impeached and accused by the charge of the said commons') (20), leading to a catalogue of misdeeds (21), which seem to be quoted or paraphrased: 'Primerement […] sicome en une lettre […] appellee ragman […] pluis plainement *appiert*' ('First […] as more fully appears in a letter […] called a ragman'). But the absence of the ragman causes the intrusion of narrative: 'De quelle rageman les communes *prierent* d'avoir la veue en parlement, et celle requeste *fust grante*, mais le dit rageman nene *poait estre trovee* en aucune manere, ne homme ne savoit dire pur veritee ou il estoit devenue' ('The commons requested that they be able to examine this ragman in parliament, and this request was granted, but the said ragman could not be found in any way nor could anyone say for certain what had become of it'). Then again, the petition of the people of Becherel, quoted directly, returns to formal recording (22-3), with further accusations quoted or paraphrased (24-5), before Latimer's reply and the ensuing dialogue switch back to past narrative (26); and yet again there is a brief intrusion of direct quotation embedded in his indirect speech (27), 'Et ce est il prest, et toutdys ad este, de prover' ('And he is, and always has been, prepared to prove'). This failure to maintain a consistent sequence of tenses and the distinction between reported speech within narrative scaffolding and direct transcription is one with which any minute-taker will sympathize; but the parliamentary clerks' problem was compounded by their dual role of recording the events of parliament (albeit selectively) and quoting the relevant documents on which so much turned.[60]

Another symptom of the clerks' difficulty in recording the text-based events of parliament is the problem of language. The roll is largely in Anglo-Norman French, its main language until the mid-fifteenth century, and the main spoken language of the aristocracy until the late-fourteenth century itself. But many of the documents in play were in governmental Latin, and where these were read out and/or quoted, Latin was normally used, such as the royal documents quoted in the Salisbury case in subsequent parliaments.[61] One 1376 petition recites in Latin a clause of

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59 Normally 'dit' is past participle, and often adjectival, but occasionally (e.g. twice in 27), as here, it must be past historic; the fact that later in the paragraph it becomes 'dist' confirms this – or the tenses are even more unstable than I am arguing here.

60 The *PROME* translation perpetuates the inconsistency with inaccuracies of tense; e.g. 'vouchast' and 'surmyst' (33) are past historic not 'vouches […] submits'. Note that 'conust' (e.g. 31, 33) should be 'acknowledged', not 'knew'.

61 E.g. *PROME*, 1380.i/19.

the Statute of Westminster II, 1285 (68), although a Latin letter cited in
another is paraphrased in French (102); perhaps it is not surprising that
the petitions of the clergy (198b-208) were recorded in Latin. Another
frontier was that between French and English: a few charming Anglicisms
such as 'ragman' (21) and 'ercedeakne' for archdeacon (48, 84) are
suggestive. The roll's paraphrase of the opening charge by the lay
chancellor, Sir John Knyvet, is in the predominant Anglo-Norman French
(2). But on the 1362 rolls another layman, the chief justice, was, on the
one hand, said to have delivered the charge in English, while, on the
other, the roll records it, fully quoted in direct speech, in French, 'souz la
fourme qe s'ensuit': the clerks, who did not show it if they noticed the
irony, were evidently able to translate easily.[62] Sermons written down in
Latin were frequently delivered to a lay audience in English.[63] The
possibility that the *Anonimalle* account was a French translation of an
English original may suggest that the Commons discussions were
conducted in English.[64] Some speakers and clerks were evidently able to
move easily between the languages, and the rolls thus conceal some of the
linguistic variety on display, especially in the period when English would
become more widely spoken amongst the political elite: it was said (albeit
with a propagandist edge) to be Henry IV's 'lingua materna' in 1399.[65] The
movement between languages thus highlights the complex relationship
between the spoken and the written word in parliament.

This relationship was in fact three-cornered—between the events of
parliament, the documents under discussion in it, and its record. The
breakdown of the boundaries between roll, documents, and events thus
highlights the close relationship between the performance of parliament,
and the performative nature of its texts. The question that follows is the
importance of the roll itself in government. Its authority has already been
touched on; but did the process of its construction, and its construction of
the events of parliament, contribute anything to English political culture?

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62   *PROME*, 1362/1.

63   *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester (1373–1389)*, ed. by M. A. Devlin, 2 vols,
      London 1954 (Camden Society 3rd series 85), pp. xx–xxi.

64   *Anonimalle* (n. 20), p. xxxiv.

65   *PROME*, 1399/53; Richard II's renunciation of the throne was read to the assembled
      estates in Latin and English, 1399/15; and note the deployment of all three languages
      throughout the 'Record and Process'. The rolls of Henry VI's reign were initially in Latin,
      with the petitions in French and, increasingly, English; see e.g. *PROME*, 1439, for a
      glorious mixture.

5 Construction and Rhetoric

It is clear from the foregoing that the clerk of parliament and his under-clerks had plenty of written material available with which to make up much of the roll; it was in part a straightforward question of transcription.[66] The note that the bill against Adam Bury 'is in the file with the private petitions of parliament' affords a brief glimpse of the clerks' archiving procedures (47, also 212).[67] Otherwise, clerks may have taken notes on the sessions; occasionally we can see that specific items of parliamentary business were assigned to particular clerks to write up, such as the case of Alice Perrers in 1377: these were generally trials which were evidently going to need a systematic record.[68] But the structure of the roll, with its formulaic elements, rarely required them to go outside material which either was text-based, or would have been foreseen to require special recording. The problem with the Good Parliament may have been not only its length, but also some of its periods of stalemate and a lack of clear direction in its proceedings, which resulted in the clerks having, later, neither adequate notes nor good memories of what had happened. Even the *Anonimalle* passes over several days at a time with the equivalent of 'further meetings ensued'.[69] It is not surprising that the roll not only formularized the chronology of parliament, but also had to fudge some of its proceedings: for instance the account of Latimer's trial degenerated into a summary that there were many more discussions in various contexts (27). The mixed source-base of documents, notes and memory thus probably explains some of the inadequacies of the roll construed as a narrative.

Was there also a political element to the roll?[70] Given that the clerks were the crown's employees, as chancery clerks, perhaps they ironed out some of the violence of the parliament's attack on the government for political purposes. This would explain, for instance, why the grant of customs (9) appears as a positive response to the royal request for aid more than a refusal of direct taxation, why the intercommuning committee appears on the roll to have been appointed on royal initiative (8), and why a number of those accused by the Commons fail to appear in

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66 For the latest summaries of the little we know about the process of construction, Given-Wilson, 'General Introduction' (n. 1), §B(i); Ormrod, 'On—and Off—the Record' (n. 1).

67 See also 1377.x/34.

68 *PROME*, 1377.x/40, 43; also 1380.i/18. The chief justice provided his own record of a case in 1380.i/24–25.

69 *Anonimalle* (n. 20), pp. 88, 90.

70 Ormrod, 'On—and Off—the Record' (n. 1), pp. 43–48; Ormrod, '1376, Introduction' (n. 1); Given-Wilson (n. 45), pp. 63–64.

the roll at all.[71] The fact that the roll was becoming increasingly referred to, and that the speed of its construction and the nature of its authorization were soon to become contentious issues, suggests that the record itself was becoming more politicized.[72] But an overview of what the 1376 roll does contain scotches any notion that the clerks engaged in a political fix. Most of the main roll (15-47) leaves the same impression as the chronicles, that the parliament's main business was an increasingly systematic attack on the courtiers. And the much larger body of petitions similarly involves the unfolding of a coherent critique of government.

The insistent theme of the Commons' rhetoric was the common profit of the realm, an idea prominent in the *Confirmatio Cartarum* of 1297 which embraced not only the crown's well-being but also that of its subjects: 'pur la commune profit' (57); 'pur aise du poeple et profit du roialme' ('for the ease of the people and profit of the realm') (62); they conducted the impeachments 'pur profit le roi et commune profit du roialme' (189, 212).[73] The opposite of profit was damage, a matchingly endemic concept through the roll, 'grant damage du roi et del roialme d'Engleterre' ('to the great damage of the king and the realm of England') (17, 24, 28): for instance, because of Latimer, 'le roi et son roialme ont euz et suffertz plusours autres grevouses perdes, damages et vilanies sanz nombre' ('our lord the king and his realm have had and suffered many other grievous losses, damages and hardships without number') (25). Petitions routinely alleged an action to be 'a grande damage et empoverissement de le poeple' ('to the great damage and impoverishment of the people') (85), or simply 'a commune damage' (57). This might extend further, 'a grande poverte et destruccion de vostre roialme' ('to the great poverty and destruction of your aforesaid realm') (90), or 'a grande

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71 See above, n. 22.

72 The roll for September 1331 was delivered into chancery in February 1332; and see above, at n. 42, for the Hilary 1380 roll which was able to incorporate material from the April Great Council. The 1406 episode (above, at n. 46) suggests that the record would be speedily constructed; Given-Wilson (n. 45), pp. 58–59. The acts of the 1422 parliament, which ended on 18 December, were read to council on 23 January 1423; Given-Wilson, 'General Introduction' (n. 1), §B(i).

73 An electronic search shows how endemic the word is throughout the roll. Similarly, the long bill against the pope and cardinals requested the king 'ordeigner covenable remedie d'ycelx, qe serra la plus pleisance chose a Dieu et a seinte esglise plus graciouse et plus profitable pur luy et pur soun roialme qe unqes fuit fait' ('to ordain suitable remedy on the same which will be the most pleasing to God, the most gracious to holy Church and the most profitable for him and for his realm that ever was done') (94). The *Anonimalle* account reflects this rhetoric of profit: 'Et let dite sire Piers al reverence de Dieu et ses bones compaignouns et pur profite del roialme prist celle charge' [as speaker] ('And the said Sir Peter for the reverence of God, and his worthy colleagues, and for the profit of the kingdom undertook this responsibility'), *Anonimalle* (n. 20), p. 83.

depauperacion, adnientisement et destruccion de la dite commune' ('to the great impoverishment, ruin and destruction of the said community') (117). Another contrast to common profit was 'singuler profit', that sought by individuals for their own private interest, which constituted another recurring phrase throughout the roll: 'pur lour singuler profit et avauntage' (17), 'pur lour singuler profit et gayn' (24).[74] The underlying rhetorical dichotomy of the Good Parliament was thus private interest versus the common good, and it remains prominent throughout the petitions as well as the impeachments.[75]

The Commons thus attacked a series of targets whom they alleged to have been pursuing their own interests against those of the realm, thus damaging king and people. The main culprits were those who had been close to the king, 'aucuns privez entour le roi et d'autres de lour co[n]vyne' ('certain intimates of the king, and others of their faction') (15-16): they were emphatically 'privez', individual and not acting for the common good, and perhaps secretive, a conspiratorial coven, 'covyne'. These phrases become a short-hand in the roll for the courtiers which the impeachments attacked and for the corrupt interest which they represented.[76] But the attack, especially in the petitions, also encompassed officers and ministers, in a long tradition of complaint against the arms of a powerful government; purely local officials were still capable of causing oppression and damage to the people.[77] Next in the litany of evil 'others' were enemies and aliens of various sorts, predictably undermining the welfare of the king's faithful subjects and lieges. Not much could be done about real enemies abroad, the Scots, French and Castilians, although they feature as the background to policy,[78] but those who had managed to get into the realm were a different matter, not least spies.[79] Merchants were singled out (by those whose markets and franchises they invaded) (59, 143), especially Lombards, who indulged in 'false plotting, fraud and conspiracy among themselves' (160, also 81, 94, 103). They were said to have introduced 'a horrible vice which cannot be named';[80] but lest their wickedness had been under-appreciated, it was pointed out that many of them were really 'Jews and Saracens and secret spies' (58). Alien clergy were also suspect, both those holding benefices (90, 97, 120) and alien

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74   Also 25, 33, 52, 55, 57, 62, 80, 81, 125, 186.

75   Only occasionally was it suggested that the cause might be less sinister, e.g. 'par feblesce de conseil et governail' ('through the feebleness of counsel and governance'), 59.

76   See also the petitions: 55, 60, 65, 80, 190, 191.

77   E.g. 53, 65, 74, 79, 191–8, and passim.

78   2–3, 132, 136, 137, 143, 150, 177.

79   58 59 104 143; and an alien castellan at 160.

80   Presumably usury, especially by comparison with 158.

religious (128). Indeed, a significant section of the petitions was aimed at the pope and cardinals and all their works (including their collectors) (94–115), whose opening ingeniously managed to combine many of the evils of the day by seeming to blame the clergy for the Black Death:

> And for as long as these good customs [the endowment of the church and the performance by the clergy of works of charity to the honour of God] were followed the realm was full of all prosperity, such as good people, and good lawful conduct of clerks and clergy, of knights and knighthood (which are two things which always rule together), of peace and quiet, of treasure, corn, cattle and other rich assets. But since the good customs were corrupted and obstructed by covetousness and simony, the realm has been full of various adversities, such as wars and pestilences, hunger, cattle murrains and other grievances. Wherefore the realm is so impoverished and destroyed that there is not one third the people or other aforesaid things there used to be, for the aforesaid reason and for the reasons written below.

All this the royal clerks faithfully recorded. Indeed, they played a role in facilitating parliamentary business as well, to the extent of helping to construct the common petition.[81] In normal circumstances, the Commons met to put together their petition, while private petitions were distributed by the receivers (royal clerks) and tried by the triers. Some private petitions, however, were deemed to be of such general significance that they were also directed to the Commons, who then 'avowed' them as part of the common petition. This is evident in the Good Parliament in the large number of petitions which explicitly came from the inhabitants of particular localities.[82] The success of the opponents of Great Yarmouth's privileges in getting their petitions aired has been noticed, perhaps because they constituted a coalition of different groups: broadly 'les communes des countes de Suff', Essex, Cantebr', Hunt', Nichol, Norht', Bedeford, Buk', Leycestre et autres de la commune' (76) ; but more specifically 'certeines gentz de la ville de Loystoft' (49) and 'les poveres communeres de Jernemouth qi sont venuz a Londres pur eux pleyndre au parlement' ('the poor commonalty of Yarmouth who have come to London to complain at parliament') (170, 176). Some petitions from 'Les povres communes de la terre' evidently involved local issues and officials, and were thus originally local;[83] indeed petitioners from particular localities

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81   Ormrod, 'On—and Off—the Record' (n. 1), pp. 48–56.
82   See, overtly, 54–59, 62, 76, 130–153, 157, 166–180, 212; Gwilym Dodd, *Justice and Grace: Private Petitioning and the English Parliament in the Late Middle Ages*, Oxford 2007, pp. 148–151.
83   67, 75, 83, 162, 181, 193–196.

routinely described themselves as 'poor commons' in a rhetorical contrast with the power of the authorities which oppressed them.[84]

This rhetorical stance connected particular local grievances with the emerging general critique of government in the Good Parliament. It is demonstrable that the common petition in 1376 grew organically rather than being put together in a single process.[85] Some petitions grew out of others: that no-one impeached in the parliament should be pardoned, that punishments be carried out, and that no judgements be repealed (188-9), are evidently from the end of the session, as was a cancelled petition asking for execution of the petitions, and mentioning continual councillors.[86] The repeal of the ordinance of sweet wines must have arisen from the proceedings against John Pecche in which that was the central issue.[87] We have seen petitions being presented at the last minute; and the petitions of the clergy (199-208), compiled in convocation, and the burgesses of Calais (209-12), were added to the roll of the common petition. The original common petition may have comprised forty-one articles, to which all the rest were added.[88] It therefore seems likely that so many petitions were entered on the roll precisely because of the organic development of the Commons' stance: as their discussions proceeded, it became increasingly evident that the apparently local instances of oppression being presented were all connected with the main thrust of the Commons' attack on the inadequacy and corruption of government. The fact that some local petitions which survive were reworded in order to be presented as part of the common petition illustrates this gradual aligning of the local and general grievances.[89]

The clerks who edited these petitions were at the centre of this organic process of construction. The petition-section of the roll of 1376 was not a final, neat, copy, but a penultimate draft with the royal answers written in in different ink, perhaps the copy which was taken to Eltham;

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84 130–178 passim; see also more general groups, such as 'les communes de plusours citez et burghs' (139), 'ses povres communes des citees et borghs', (166), 'sez povres enhabitantz les villes portes' (133), 'sez liges par les costes de la meer d'Engleterre' (136).

85 Ormrod, '1376, Introduction' (n. 1); Dodd (n. 82), pp. 148–151.

86 67 and 79 also envisage a role for the continual council, although this is only in the response. The changing forms of address (below §6) may also attest to the changing reality as to who would actually consider the petition.

87 14, 33; and see 86.

88 212: 'une grande rolle ou une grande cedule, et une autre bille annexez a mesme le rolle, contenantes entour .xli. articles' ('a great roll or a great schedule, and another bill annexed to the same roll, containing around forty-one articles'); did both together comprise 41, or only the 'autre bille'?

89 Dodd (n. 82), pp. 149–50; *PROME*, '1376, Appendix'.

its membranes are a different size from the main section.[90] It looks as if the clerks had not had time to iron out inconsistencies: the four petitions about alien priories (46, 66, 124, 128) take quite different views about the desirability of protecting the alien religious and their revenues, blaming their state variously on Latimer's clerk and the king's intimates, the demands of the king and Rome, secular farmers, and the priors themselves. It is hard to see that the Commons avowed them all, or at least did so knowingly or in a single session. The answer to one such petition against aliens holding benefices (120), was 'Ceste bille est aillours responduz, c'est assavoir, en les deux autres grosses billes de ceste matire' ('This bill is answered elsewhere, that is to say, in the two other large bills on this matter'), and there are other examples of repetitious petitions.[91] Other editorial failures in 1376 thus show, by exception, that the clerks were normally able to tidy up the common petition much more fully.[92] Equally, they failed to eliminate voided petitions: a petition from eastern counties about the Lincoln/Boston staple (62) was rejected because it had *not* been avowed by the Commons, which would not have appeared in a fair copy. Indeed the possibility that this petition was sneaked corruptly onto the roll by a clerk highlights the clerks' role in constructing the common petition: it was they who directed petitions around the various parts of parliament, reworded local petitions to make them fit both the normal forms of a petition better, and (normally) constructed a coherent version of them for the roll.

The clerks were therefore not politically partisan: it was their job to facilitate commons business, and in 1376 this meant facilitating the development of a hostile attack on government. They were a professional self-regulating cadre not just beholden to the political authorities of the day, but with a professional ethos to service parliament as a whole—the crown and the subjects which belonged to it. Of course they no doubt viewed politics and government from a broadly royal perspective; but so did the political classes more generally, a group which in late-fourteenth-century England certainly encompassed the gentry and burgesses elected to the Commons, and a much wider circle of those who elected them. The parliament roll itself reveals the extent to which political culture was common to government and those who (temporarily) opposed it. [93]

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90   Ormrod, '1376, Introduction' (n. 1).

91   90, 97, also 104, 106; 88 and 184; 74, 79 and 186; 189 and the cancelled petition at 212.

92   Note also a few curious editorial problems, e.g. cases where 'le dit consail' ('the said counsel') is referred to without having yet been mentioned in the petition (e.g. 72, 75, 81, 87), and some singular/plural interchange, below, at n. 100.

93   On late-medieval English political ideas see especially J. L. Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship*, Cambridge 1996, chs 1–2; Christine Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses, 1437–1509,*

This shared political ideology was performed in formalized rhetoric. The opening charge (2) described the main purpose of parliament as 'pur faire ordenance par lour bons advis pur le bon gouvernement de la paix de son roialme d'Engleterre' ('to make provision through their good advice for the good government of the country of his realm of England'), neatly associating royal responsibility for good governance with the subjects' to provide counsel. The other purposes were to provide for defence against the king's many enemies, and for its maintenance. Of course this was fundamentally a request for taxation, itself an index of the need of the crown for its subjects' co-operation: the chancellor elaborately thanked the prelates, lords and commons for previous aids and counsels, and requested their 'bone continuance'. But it was wrapped up in the language of co-operation and mutual interdependence which drew the king's subjects into the governing process. This mutually warm rhetoric was reflected by the Commons, for at the end 'ils se loierent grantement trestouz de mesme nostre seignur le roy' ('they all greatly praised our same lord the king') (51), not least because of the sentences on the councillors they had just heard. Such deference is habitual in petitions; they open (52):

> A nostre tresredoute et trespuissant seignur le roi; supplient toutes le comunes de sa terre: […] par vostre trespitivouse benignite, en vostre tresgraciouse jubilee […] Qe plese primerement, al honour de Dieu et de vostre roial majeste, et salvacion de tout la roialme […]

> To our most dread and most powerful lord the king; all the commons of his land petition: […] by your most compassionate kindness, in your most gracious jubilee […] May it please you, first, to the honour of God and of your royal majesty, in salvation of all the realm […]

Some go beyond the usual: 'Qe plese a vostre haute seignurie' ('May it please your high lordship') (76); 'lour dit treshonure seignur' ('their said most honoured lord') (77); 'A tresexcellent et tresdote seignur nostre seignur le roy et soun noble et sage conseil' ('To the most excellent and most dread lord our lord the king and his noble and wise council') (209); and from the clergy 'regia celsitudo' ('royal highness') (198b, 208).

The fact that such phraseology gave Richard II ideas emphasizes the shared nature of this discourse.[94] Indeed common profit was initially deployed on the government side by Chancellor Knyvet, who invited

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Cambridge 1997, ch. 2; and, specifically, for shared political culture, John L. Watts, 'The Pressure of the Public on Late-Medieval Politics', in *Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain*, ed. by L. Clark, C. Carpenter, Woodbridge 2004 (The Fifteenth Century, 4) pp. 159-80. In what follows I am much indebted to Dr Watts.

94 Nigel Saul, 'Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship', *English Historical Review* 110 (1995), 854–77; Simon Walker, 'Richard II's Views on Kingship', in *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: Essays presented to Gerald Harriss*, ed. by Rowena E. Archer, Simon Walker, London 1995, pp. 49–63.

parliament to consider how the realm's business (and especially the war) could be more 'profitably' conducted (2).[95] In one royal response, the king would act 'sibien pur le bon governement du roialme come pur son profit demesne et ese de sa commune' ('as much for the good government of the realm as for his own profit and the ease of his community') (190). Such ideas were thus appropriated by the Commons for their use in criticizing the crown: we have already seen their continued insistence on common profit. Their demand for a continual council (10) can be seen as a response to Knyvet's opening charge to make provision for the good governance of the realm: it was framed as a way of helping the king with more substantial aid and advice to fulfil his heavy burdens.

> Also, the commons, considering the misfortunes of the land, declared to the king and the lords of the parliament what would be to the king's honour and the profit of all the land, which is now aggrieved in various ways by many adversities, by the wars of France, Spain, Ireland, Aquitaine, Brittany and elsewhere as well as otherwise, and that the officers who have been accustomed to be close to the king are not adequate without other assistance for such great governance. Wherefore they pray that our lord the king's council should be afforced with lords of the land, prelates and others […]

The king purported to accept it as such: 'And our lord the king, understanding the said request to be honourable and quite profitable to him and to all his realm, has granted it'. Another line of attack embedded in English political culture was the insistence on legal process, from the impeachments downwards; indeed, those processes left unfinished at the end were to be tried 'by commissions and by the king's justices, appointed from the most loyal lords among them, according to the request of the said articles, and due process made as the law requires, without favour' (189).[96] Many petitions (as in most parliaments) were about detailed matters of legal procedure (and abuse), provoking the general principle in a petition about justices of assize, that justices ought 'faire droit auxi bien as petiz come as grantz, et as povres come as riches' ('to do justice to the small as well as the great, and to the poor as well as the rich') (75). The necessity for officials to uphold the law and administer good government was also invoked, for instance in the bill against labourers (117).

The Commons thus presented their attack on the government in language which often emanated from the crown itself, and which was thus

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95 More explicit in the *Anonimalle* (n. 20) summary: 'coment la roialme purroit plus profitablement estre governe al honour le roy et profite al roialme' ('as to how the Kingdom might be more profitably governed to the honour of the king and the profit of the kingdom'), p. 80.

96 Also 27: the lords would consult wise men of the law and do justice in Latimer's case; 31: William Ellis's case sent to King's Bench.

difficult to counter on its own terms. Their (much-delayed) response to the royal request for taxation sounds like gracious acquiescence (9):

> The lords and commons assembled in this present parliament, having consideration for the very great burdens and expenditures which our lord the king makes, and still needs to make from day to day, concerning the maintenance of his wars and of his noble estate as well as otherwise, have of their good will and free volition, in maintenance of the said wars, granted to our said lord the king similar subsidies of wool, leather and woolfells […]

Yet we know it was essentially a refusal, if a polite one. Nevertheless, then and in the preface to their attack on the courtiers (15), they recognized their general obligation to provide aid (9, 15):

> And then the said commons came into parliament, publicly making protestation that they were of as good will and firm purpose to aid their noble liege lord with men and goods, and whatever they have, as ever were any others in any time past, and always would be with all their power.

The Commons' performative formality thus constrained political conflict within acceptable limits. Their due deference and deployment of ideas and language acceptable to all made opposition both possible and acceptable. Indeed in attacking the courtiers, the Commons deployed the age-old tactic of blaming the king's councillors rather than the royal person itself by insistently alleging that the king was being misled by his 'privez' and their 'covyne' (15). Such a formalized, not to say loyal, opposition, did not dangerously disrupt the governance of the realm or expose it to its enemies, yet made it possible for the king's subjects to hold the government to account.[97] Parliament may even be said to have facilitated the work of government by containing and directing opposition, and thus improving the quality of governance. Indeed, a shared political culture revolving around the quality of royal rule was a pre-requisite for the very existence of parliament. Parliament failed when the consensual political culture broke down, as subsequent events were to show, both in 1381 when those who felt temporarily excluded from political discourse resorted to violent opposition, and in 1386-8 when the king refused to respond to the critique of his government.[98] The reversal of many of the Good Parliament's successes can easily conceal the fact that the government learnt lessons and stole some of its opponents' clothes.[99]

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97 Note Walsingham's emphasis on the loyalty of the members of the intercommuning committee, *St Albans Chronicle* (n. 9), pp. 2–5.

98 Nigel Saul, *Richard II,* New Haven, London 1997, chs 4, 8–9.

99 Holmes (n. 11), pp. 159–198.

6 Constitution

This common political culture was the ideology of the implicit constitution of late-medieval England. The structure of that constitution was nowhere more formalized or performed than in parliament, and above all in the roll. In 1376 Parliament itself can be seen in transition from an occasion to an institution. The word was most commonly used in phrases such as 'in parliament', as in the heading of the common petition, 'en mesme le parlement' (52). But it was also possible to make a petition 'a parlement' (117, 121, 172, 193), and parliament could give assent (17, 67, 128, 191) or advice (80), and make ordinances (156) and statutes ('l'estatut du parlement', 28). Clearly the constitutional rights of parliament as a single body were already conceivable, paving the way for the 'power of parliament' described in 1399 (25).

More significantly, the bodies represented in parliament were characterized as single entities in the language of the roll. The Commons were brought into being by royal summons to represent boroughs and shires with full delegated power. Normally referred to in the plural, 'les communes', they themselves routinely used the singular in their own petitions: 'Item, prie la commune' (53ff.). This represents a claim to represent in a single body the whole realm: 'sa commune' or 'les communes d'Engleterre' (15, 46), or indeed, introducing the common petition, 'toutes le [sic] comunes de sa terre' (52).[100] Their representativeness was emphasized by their connection to the people: 'Item, prie la commune […] Dount la poeple pri remedie.' (92). That they were made up of different groups was also acknowledged, but in the context of their common membership of the realm.[101] The damage said to have been inflicted by the various evils complained of (noticed above) was to the king, but also the people, the commons/commune, and the

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[100] Singular and plural are interchangeable even in a single petition, e.g. 86, 91. For some commentary on the unity of the commons, especially in the *Anonimalle* account, see Emily Steiner, 'Commonalty and Literary Form in the 1370s and 80s', in *New Medieval Literatures, VI,* ed. by Wendy Scase, Rita Copeland, David Lawton, Oxford, 2003, pp. 205-7; Matthew Giancarlo, *Parliament and Literature in Late Medieval England,* Cambridge 2007, pp. 71-72, 78-79, 88.

[101] 'Priont chivalers des countees, citezeins des citees et burgeys des burghs qe sont venuz a ceste parlement, pur la communaltee de roialme, et supplient depart la dite communaltee' ('The knights of the shires, citizens of the cities and burgesses of the boroughs who have come to this parliament for the commonalty of the realm, on behalf of the said commonalty, pray and petition') (94); 'supplie toute la commune […] les bones gentz des touz citees et borghs parmy ceste terre si pleignent durement' ('all the commons petition […] the good people of all the cities and boroughs throughout this land strongly complain') (59); 'monstre la povre gent et la commune de son roialme' ('the poor people and the commonalty of his realm declare') (193).

realm—all words reinforcing their unity. In the Good Parliament we see this unity embodied for the first time in the office of Speaker; although only the chronicles specifically reveal this,[102] its traces are evident on the roll in the commons' insistence that they maintained the accusations against Latimer in common, not individually (26).

In practice the Commons contained different interest-groups. Petitions emanated from different localities,[103] or specific groups such as 'ses povres communes des citees et borghs', (166), or 'sez povres enhabitantz les villes portes' (133, also 136). Petitioners often defined themselves against those who, they claimed, were oppressing them, whether the coven of royal intimates, corrupt officers, the pope and cardinals, aliens and Lombards, urban elites and even sometimes the lords, or, at the other end of society, the labourers who were causing such impoverishment, ruin and destruction to the community.[104] The common petition thus exposes competing interests as much as it does social unity. One petition modestly but misleadingly entitled 'Inquests of *quale jus* for the religious' (192) goes on to paint a picture of social fissures between, on the one hand, abbots, priors, men of religion, sheriffs, bailiffs, maintainers of quarrels, and bribed juries, and on the other the king, great lords, and common people who are disinherited by the legal manoeuvrings of the former. Incompatible interests were revealed in the four petitions concerning the alien priories.[105] That these were all issued in the name of the 'comune', however, is in itself significant: other sectional petitions often claimed a more general representativeness, as in 'les chivalers, marchantz de Wiltes', Bristoll, Somers', Glouc' et Dors' et touz les communes du roialme d'Engleterre' (174).[106] Wrongs done to one part of the community were wrongs done to all. We cannot completely reconcile the fact of competing and incompatible interests with the rhetorical construction of 'la commune' and the temporary parliamentary institution which gave it voice. But this is not just a distinction between reality and ideal: the Commons had a real political existence, and in 1376 were the movers of significant political action. The fact that they were a broad church and had to negotiate between different groups whose interests

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102　*Anonimalle* (n. 20), p. 83; *St Albans Chronicle* (n. 9), pp. 14–17, 44–45. The first appearance of the Speaker on the roll is in the next parliament, *PROME*, 1377.i/87; see also 1394/6, the formal presentation of 'lour commune parlour' ('their common speaker') for the first time.

103　As above, at nn. 82-84.

104　For this last (117) see above at n. 74; see generally the catalogue of villains, above at nn. 76-80. For criticism of the Lords, when they failed to defend the coast, they maintained Justices, or oppressed the people with purveyance, 73, 75, 126.

105　See above, after n. 90.

106　See above on 'povres communes', at n. 84.

were themselves in conflict only reinforced the need to perform their
singularity and unity linguistically.

One might imagine that the king as an historical actor and the king on
the parliament roll have a closer identity. On first reading the roll suggests
that he was actively present from the opening, which was conducted
'devant le roy meismes' (1-3). At various subsequent points he is
addressed, 'au roi' for a continual council (10), or 'a nostre seignur le roy'
for Prince Richard to appear in person (50); or he took executive action,
including sentencing Lyons ('a la volente du roy', 19), and removing
Latimer ('le voet et grante', 28). That Latimer was bailed to appear before
the king (29-30), and that he ordered the arrest of two men of Lowestoft
(31) completes the impression of activity. It was also clearly important at
the end of parliament that the Commons should hear the answers to their
petitions from the mouth of the king himself (51). Yet we learn at this
very point that Edward was ill at Eltham and could not travel: the
members of parliament had to attend him there for its conclusion (51,
212b). The *Anonimalle* reveals that he was in fact absent for most of the
session, as was the dying Black Prince, and that Gaunt took their place.[107]
To secure decisions from him, for instance about the intercommuning
committe on 3 May or the continual council on 26 May, required
embassies to travel back and forth from Westminster. The roll often
entirely conceals this process, but on close reading it does contain
indications of the king's absence, such as reference to him in the third
person (15), and decisions recorded in the passive ('est ordene', 11-14):
Lyons 'est agardez a la prisone' at the king's will (19), which evidently did
not require the royal presence. Indeed the Commons addressed the lords
of parliament 'pur le roi', and the lords replied that the Commons'
response would be reported to him (27). Prince Richard's appearance is
telling: although the petition was granted 'par comandement et volentee
mesme nostre seignur le roi' ('by the order and will of our same lord the
king'), when the Commons 'prayed with one voice that it might please
their noble liege lord to grant the said Richard the name and honour of
prince of Wales [...] it was answered that it did not belong to the prelates
or lords to do this in parliament or otherwise, but clearly belonged to the
king himself to do this with great solemnity and celebration'. Evidently he
was not there after all.[108]

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107 *Anonimalle* (n. 20), pp. 83–94; also *St Albans Chronicle* (n. 9), pp. 32–39, 50–51, and the
general passivity of the king in this account.

108 Note the report of the king saying something to some lords (18): the lords were [now]
assembled in parliament, but the text need not mean that the king was there when he spoke
to them. Similarly, Latimer was reported as saying 'si plest a nostre seignur le roi et as
seignurs ycy assemblez' ('if it pleased our lord the king and his lords assembled there') (26):

Edward's absence from parliament, however, while extreme, fitted a normal pattern in which the king's work was done by a variety of other agencies. Parliament was even opened and closed by the chancellor, who delivered the royal charge on the king's behalf (2), and at the end issued instructions 'depar le roi' ('on behalf of the king') to the Commons to claim expenses (212). More significantly, petitions were heard through an elaborate apparatus, triers hearing private petitions, and the council discussing those sent by the Commons. The councils—great, continual and indeterminate—are an important presence throughout the petitions: of those which contain an address clause, most include the council.[109] Indeed such addresses become increasingly frequent in the sequence on the roll: if it was at all chronological, this may suggest that petitions drawn up during—rather than before—parliament took account of the reality of who would consider them. Responses equally commonly envisaged a role for the council in processing them,[110] as did petitioners themselves.[111] In principle the great council meant the lords, and one slip is suggestive: the first bill against Lombard brokers (58) knew exactly who it was in fact addressing in an apostrophe: 'Entendantz, tresnobles seignurs, q' […]' ('Understanding, most noble lords, that […]').[112]

It was in fact the lords who handled the business of the Good Parliament. During the impeachments, Lyons was sent 'devaunt les seignurs du parlement' ('before the lords of parliament') for a second judgement (19). Latimer's trial rolled on 'in full parliament as well as otherwise before the prelates and lords only' (27), and he was sentenced 'par les prelatz et seignurs en plein parlement' ('by the prelates and lords in full parliament') (28). The lords were also said to have made legal

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clearly it is only the lords who are there assembled.

109 68, 71–2, 77, 83, 93–4, etc; and twenty–six of the petitions after no. 118 are so addressed. It was rare to address the council alone (64, 75, 81, 173, 174, 176), and fairly rare to address the king alone: 52, 119, 130, 167, 180, 188, 190, 198b (clergy). 'Qe plese' clauses sometimes invoked the king, although in 75 and 176 this is demonstrably the council. The existence of 'qe plese' clauses not addressed to anyone in petitions with no addressee raises the question of the clerks' editorial procedures.

110 59, 65, 68, 73, 77, 124, 130–2, 168, 180, 182, 190; 67 and 79 suggest a role for the continual council.

111 60, 66, 81, 87, 130–2, 139, 149, 158, 164, 165, 175–6, 178; in 86 and 156 this is specifically the continual council. The fob off 'Devant le grant conseil' ('Before the great council'), used for some later petitions (140, 141, 160, 172, 179, 181), may just mean that they had not yet been processed, although this may suggest (albeit circularly) that the petitions on the roll are in something like chronological order of receipt.

112 Note also two curiously addressed petitions: 'Qe plese a nostre dit seignur le roi et as grantz et communes du parlement d'ordeigner' ('May it please our said lord the king and the great men and commons of the parliament to ordain') (80); 'A touz les seignurs en parlement' ('To all the lords in parliament') (181).

decisions in the cases of William Ellis and the reluctant witness against John Nevill.[113] In the *Anonimalle* it is clear that the Commons are negotiating with the lords presided over by Gaunt. Yet while they played formal roles as triers of petitions (6-7), on the intercommuning committee (8), and as members of the continual council,[114] the lords have less of a *voice* in the parliament roll than the Commons: with the appropriation of the 'commune' by the Commons earlier in the century, the lords no longer purported to speak for the realm. Astonishingly, Gaunt is almost entirely absent from the roll.[115] Yet we know more from other sources about the roles of individual lords than we do of the local representatives, not least because they were politically divided: Gaunt led for the government, and others identified in the impeachments and chronicles supported it;[116] but the earl of March (whose steward was Speaker de la Mare) opposed the crown probably along with other members of the intercommuning committee (8), possibly encouraged by the Black Prince.[117] In the roll, however, the lords are constructed into an entity with a collective presence, 'les seignurs de parlement'; indeed English lords were created by their personal summons to parliament, to the collective house of Lords. There they constituted the buffer of the constitution, advising the king in the light of the Commons' requests, and representing the king to the people. Thus while the roll articulates their separate status, it also regards them as part of the crown: when they speak it is largely on behalf of the king, 'pur le roi'; as 'king and council' they were identified more with the government.

The parliament roll therefore articulates a constitution in which the lords play an ambiguous role, but in which the crown is evidently more than the king. Indeed, some of the business of the Good Parliament was precisely about the way in which a collective monarchy worked. The request for a continual council highlighted the king's need for advice and

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113 'sembloit as seignurs du parlement qe' ('it seemed to the lords of the parliament that') (32); 'Et y fust dit expressement par les seignurs qe lour semblast q' ('And the lords expressly said that it seemed to them that') (34).

114 Although the names of the latter are supplied by *Anonimalle* (n. 20), pp. 91–92. See the few references to the continual council in the petitions (above). Note that the council did not last very long, Holmes (n. 11), p. 159.

115 He only appears as a trier (6).

116 *Anonimalle* (n. 20), pp. 83–93; Gaunt is the villain of Walsingham's entire account, *St Albans Chronicle* (n. 9), pp. 2–53. Note also the long list of bishops, lords and knights who guaranteed Latimer's bail, 30.

117 *Anonimalle* (n. 20), pp. 82, 84, 91–92, 94; *St Albans Chronicle* (n. 9), pp. 2–5 (and for the Prince's alleged support) 12–13 (& n. 16), 18–21, 34–39; Holmes (n. 11), pp. 140–155. Note the debate amongst Lancaster's men reported by Walsingham about how to deal with the challenge from the Commons, which may reflect tactical divisions amongst the Lords; *St Albans Chronicle,* pp. 10-15.

aid when taking important decisions; the subsequent ordinances not only forbade bribery and favour, but also attempted to regulate the flow of information between the king and the council, evidently envisaging that the main discussions would take place in council, with some matters referred to the king for advice or assent (10-12). The premiss of the whole impeachment process was that certain people around the king were systematically deceiving him for their own profit; and some of the petitions similarly played on the king's lack of awareness of what was being done in his name (e.g. 46, 55).[118] Clearly the events of 1376 were driven by the particular circumstances of a lack of royal leadership, soon to be prolonged in a minority, which resulted in an even-more-absent king than usual. But it was the norm even when the king was adult and active for kingship to be collective, and for much to be done in his name of which he had no personal knowledge.[119] The case of the prior of Ecclesfield (46) illustrates the point: the prior was served with a writ 'en noun de nostre seignur le roy' ('in the name of our lord the king') and, by the influence of the king's 'prives', lost custody of his priory; but another royal document was produced showing that the prior rendered forty marks per annum to the crown (of which the king was now defrauded). Evidently the king himself knew nothing either about the forty marks, of which he was explicitly said to be unaware, nor the legal process; but both were conducted in his name. Indeed, subjects were sometimes prevented from involving the king: when William Ellis tried to deflect impeachment by getting the king to arrest two witnesses, he was condemned for breaking a statute which forbade direct complaint to the king (31-2). The structure of petitioning revolved around the king's grace, but sometimes it was inappropriate for this to involve him personally.

Thus the 1376 roll juggles two incompatible facts, that the king himself took little part in the process, while much of it happened in his name. In a way 'le roi' was as much of a construction as 'la commune' or 'les seignurs': yet all were active concepts and agencies, with real constitutional force. Indeed, without royal authorization (whatever that constituted in practice) the government of the realm could not proceed. Hence perhaps the enthusiasm for Richard's appearance, and the archbishop's telling comment (50): while the prince of Wales was now dead, 'it was as if the same prince was still present and not absent, having left behind him such a noble and fine son who is his true image and very figure'. In some respects it did not matter who was king or heir: what was important was to have a figurehead. Of course this also shows the

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118 See the chroniclers' emphasis on these features as well as the roll's, e.g. *Anonimalle* (n. 20), pp. 81ff; *St Albans Chronicle* (n. 9), esp. pp. 8–9, 26–27.

119 A point of particular importance in Watts, *Henry VI* (n. 93).

necessity of having a person on the throne who, unless he was incapacitated through age, youth or insanity, was required to authorize some decisions, such as making a prince of Wales, and to announce responses to petitions. Moreover the personal involvement of the king created scope for political manoeuvring, as in the Ellis case and Lyons' appeal to the king's mercy; Gaunt probably used the need to refer to the king to play for time, delay responses, and thus escape the parliament without too much damage—indeed not a single statute was created by the parliament. So English government involved both collectivized structures following routine procedures, and personal royal involvement and authorization. 'Le roi' in the parliament roll is not always an absent construct, but occasionally a present reality, even if he was lying on his bed of sickness at Eltham. The roll's dual register, formal and narrative, reflects the reality of English monarchy in the complex interaction between the king's two bodies.

The medieval English parliament was a formalized session of royal government in which representatives of the community participated with the king and his ministers and advisers in the mutual fulfilment of their responsibilities to each other and the realm. The exchange of 'le bon gouvernement' and defence for 'aides, conseilx et confortz', was encapsulated in a late petition (190),

> concerning the great expenses, charges, outlays and hardships which [les communes] have sustained willingly since his coronation in peace and war, to maintain him and his honour, and to which they are still amenable and are willing to suffer and sustain in good faith, if they have good and lawful governance, and due correction and punishment of those councillors who have deceived and impoverished the king and his said commonalty.

Through speeches and petitions the king and his common subjects worked towards improved governance, mediated by the lords both advising the king and representing him to the Commons. The underlying political realities of these interactions were more complex, with the lords divided and the diverse Commons evincing a wide range of sometimes incompatible interests; indeed, who controlled 'le roi' was not a simple matter when the king was not always himself. But the formal nature of the occasion and the structure of its routines enabled the polity to perform its business even in a crisis: in fact parliament enabled a crisis both to happen and to be managed without too much disruption to the good governance which was the overt objective of the government's opponents.

While it would be unwise to claim too much for the contribution of the parliament roll to this performance, it can at least be said that it was more than a mere record of an occasion. Even its 'narrative' register may have been designed to perpetuate proper procedure, as well as to record

the formality of parliamentary ritual. But more than that, it performed decisions made in parliament by recording them authoritatively; and, above all, it performed a 'constitution' of a structured polity more formally than anywhere else. Nowhere were 'la comune' or 'les seignurs de parlement' more real than on the parliament roll; even 'le roi' had a constructed existence there in his absence. Equally, the roll helped inculcate a shared ideology of government. Nor were the clerks who wrote it mere observers of events: they were active participants, helping to construct the texts which were integral to parliament, and thus moulding the roll itself. That these texts were themselves actors in the drama of parliament is evident, above all in the possibility that the membranes of petitions may have been the ones actually read out and annotated at Eltham. The increasing reference to the rolls, and the increasing awareness of the importance of the texts recorded, thus make it reasonable to claim that they played a role in the evolving self-conception of parliament, and of its constituent constitutional entities. English government was a process in which both text and performance were fundamental, and often indistinguishable; the *rotuli parliamentorum* both record and perform it.

II. Performing the self:

Constructions of authorial identity

Monika Otter

Scurrilitas:
Sex, magic, and the performance of fictionality
in Anselm of Besate's *Rhetorimachia*

In the second half of her extended meditation on J. L. Austin's *How To Do Things With Words*, Shoshana Felman turns on the author himself and examines his own performance: his delight in bizarre or whimsical examples, often told in the first person; his puckish highlighting of his own contradictions (without attempting to resolve them); his rueful implication that he has not been able to 'perform' for us the coherent theory he has promised—which not only comically undermines one of his chief examples of performative speech, the promise, but also links him, in Felman's mind, with Don Juan, and in Uwe Wirth's mind, as he comments on Felman, with the devil.[1]

This charming notion of a playfully diabolical performance resonates equally well with a rhetorician who performed a good ninehundred years earlier: Anselm of Besate, in his confounding and much-maligned *Rhetorimachia*.[2] Anselm, it is true, cloaks his devilry not so much in self-deprecation as in excessive self-regard (except in the framing letters, where he hints at failure, at audiences not appreciating his work, in short, an 'infelicity' of rhetorical performance not unlike Austin's).[3] Where

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1   Shoshana Felman, *The Literary Speech Act: Don Juan with J. L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*, trans. by Catherine Porter, Ithaca 1983, esp. pp. 61–69, 112–128; Uwe Wirth, 'Der Performanzbegriff im Spannungsfeld von Illokution, Iteration und Indexikalität', in *Performanz: Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. by Uwe Wirth, Frankfurt a. M. 2002, pp. 24–25; see also Eckard Schumacher, 'Performativität und Performance', in the same volume, pp. 387–390.

2   Detractors include, for instance, Ernst Dümmler, in the introduction to his edition, *Anselm der Peripatetiker nebst anderen Beiträgen zur Literaturgeschichte Italiens im eilften Jahrhundert*, Halle 1872; H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'Anselm of Besate and Some North–Italian Scholars of the Eleventh Century', in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 23 (1972), pp. 114–124; Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law*, Philadelphia 1978, pp. 21–27.

3   *Gunzo, 'Epistola ad Augienses' und Anselm von Besate, 'Rhetorimachia'*, ed. by Karl Manitius, Weimar 1958, (Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 2), pp. 103–104, 181–83. Page numbers in the text will refer to this edition. See

Austin is wry and understated, Anselm is over the top: he vigorously acts out his *scurrilitas*, a term we can take in all its senses, from those it had in Late Latin to those it has acquired in modern languages. In the first place it means 'clownishness', a *scurra* being a jester, a clown. It connotes low, coarse humor; in English and some other modern languages, this has become its chief meaning, *scurrilous* meaning 'vulgar, lewd'. In the German *skurril*, on the other hand, lewdness is not necessarily implied; it simply means 'bizarrely comic', even 'whimsical'.

Anselm does not himself use the term *scurrilitas*; I am borrowing it from his compatriot and older contemporary Peter Damian. *Scurrilitas* is a recurrent theme in his works, uneasily connected to any self-statement he makes in the course of his ascetic writings. Its primary meaning is levity, lack of high seriousness—which, for Damian, includes excessive rhetorical display, or even any interest in worldly learning at all.[4] But it is always closely bound up, even equated, with the idea of sexual display and grotesque lewdness. Such hyperbolic, flamboyant (indeed scurrilous?) self-denunciations are perhaps unsurprising in Peter Damian, known for his obsessive interest in asceticism and sexual purity. Yet beyond articulating a conflict between his early training in the liberal arts and his somewhat reluctant rejection of it together with all that is worldly, they express a deeper bind. His asceticism urges him to negate his body, and his rhetorical presence, as much as possible. But to be the reformer he wants to be, to preach and write the new ideas, he needs to put himself on display.[5] His own celebrity status must have been a profoundly conflicting temptation to him, both a violation of his ideals and the means of propagating them. He cannot avoid being rhetorical and performative. The very fact that he puts himself forward as a practitioner and teacher of reform constitutes the sin of *scurrilitas*.

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also Irven M. Resnick, 'Anselm of Besate and Humanism in the Eleventh Century', in *Journal of Medieval Latin* 6 (1996), pp. 1–11.

4   André Cantin, *Les sciences séculières e la foi: Les deux voies de la science au jugement de S. Pierre Damien (1007–1072)*, Spoleto 1975, pp. 77–113, with numerous examples from Damian's work. See also Giovanni Tabacco, 'Pier Damiani fra edonismo letterario e violenza ascetica', in *Spiritualità e cultura nel Medioevo: Dodici percorsi nei territori del potere e della fede*, Napoli 1993, pp. 256–57. On *scurrilitas* as a vehicle for high–medieval authorial individuality, see Erich Auerbach, *Literary Language and its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Ralph Mannheim, London 1965, pp. 146–150.

5   Even to live asceticism entails similar paradoxes: disciplining and denying the body necessarily involves bodily performances (such as heroic fasting, self–inflicted pain, etc.).

Although their early training is evidently very similar,[6] Anselm is temperamentally the exact obverse of Damian: he heartily embraces his *scurrilitas*. He is a cleric but not a monk, as he himself stresses; he is therefore free to have sex if he so chooses (157–158). And he would not dream of renouncing the liberal arts. Far from it: they are his profession, his passion, his boast. Like Peter Damian (and a long rhetorical tradition before and after him), he tends to link his sexual persona and his rhetorical persona. Like Damian, too, he plays through the problems and paradoxes posed by his physical and rhetorical presence in his work. To him, it is not a matter of theology, morality, or personal ethics. It is itself a rhetorical problem and a kind of ontological puzzle: the necessary fictionalization of the speaking subject of a text. And for all his burlesque *scurrilitas*, this is a matter of some anxiety for him.

Anselm has often been dismissed by uncomprehending critics as an ineffectual windbag. The adjective 'pompous' seems to adhere to his name in modern criticism. But his play with grammatical, rhetorical, and bodily 'persons' is quite ingenious, not to mention funny. Like Austin and like Peter Damian, he puts the 'I' into play, by being his own exemplum. Unlike them, he seeks to focus our attention on a 'you', his hapless cousin Rotiland, the direct addressee and butt of the joke of the whole work. Much of the text's rhetorical strategy is governed by the courtroom maneuver of *remotio criminis*, the operation of not only rebutting accusations against yourself or your client, put pinning the crime, or the responsibility for it, on someone else—in this case the accuser himself, Rotiland.[7] If Anselm's persona comes across as feisty, arrogant and overbearing, rather than apologetic and self-deprecatory, it is at least in part because he deflects all doubts, all criticism, all fears of failure outward. While Austin in his examples typically places himself in sticky situations or even legal jeopardy, Anselm holds himself blameless while

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6   Peter Damian was a student at Parma some time before Rotiland and Anselm. Perhaps not surprisingly, they share many intellectual and not–so–intellectual preoccupations. In his treatise 'De divina omnipotentia', Damian discusses future contingents, and notes that they have become a debate topic for schoolboys; he also reports a story about a child being magically transported through closed doors—it is not entirely clear what he means to suggest, but the parallel with Anselm's magical stories is quite striking (PL 145.603; 621–622).

7   Cicero, *De Inventione* II.xxix–xxx, ed. and trans. by H. M. Hubbell, Cambridge, Mass., 1949 (Loeb Classical Library), pp. 253–261; *Rhetorica ad Herennium* II.xvii, ed. and trans. by Harry Caplan, Cambridge, Mass., 1989 (Loeb Classical Library), p. 105. Cf. Alexander Cizek, 'Topik und Spiel in der "Rhetorimachia" Anselms von Besate', in *Topik und Rhetorik: Ein interdisziplinäres Symposium*, ed. by Thomas Schirren, Gert Ueding, Tübingen 2000, p. 107. Anselm's use of the term is somewhat imprecise: in the rhetorics, it denotes a shifting of the blame for an action that is not in dispute (e.g., claiming that the defendant acted under higher orders, or was prevented from carrying out a duty through the neglect of another).

accusing Rotiland. The 'you' of the *Rhetorimachia* is at least as prominent as its 'I'; several lengthy narrative segments are executed entirely in the second person. Anselm engages in a rhetorical contest with his alter ego, as well as a contest of sex and masculine display; he seeks to control, bully, surveil, and even supplant him; and finally reduces him quite explicitly to 'nothing'. But these maneuvers succeed only partially in rescuing Anselm from his own existential jeopardy.

Anselm wrote the *Rhetorimachia*, his only surviving work, when still quite a young man, in about 1048.[8] It is in the form of a letter to his cousin and friend Rotiland, presumably an Artes student and aspiring civil servant like himself, of about the same age or a little younger, that is, in his twenties or perhaps late teens.[9] We are in Northern Italy: Besate is near Milan and Pavia; Anselm calls himself 'a son of the church of Milan'; he says he has studied at Reggio and at Parma, where Rotiland is also a student and where the action of the book seems to be set.[10] The basic conceit is that there has been an ongoing exchange of letters—jokingly polemical letters—between them; Anselm is correcting Rotiland's previous letter, refuting Rotiland's attacks on him, and accusing Rotiland of all manner of things—by way of demonstrating how forensic rhetoric, the *genus iudiciale*, a court case, should work.[11] The charges range from 'you don't know squat about rhetoric' to 'I know what you did with that girl last night' all the way to 'you kill babies, you engage in black magic and have sold your soul to the devil'. What is more, Anselm moves with alarming ease between all these accusations: one moment Rotiland is put on trial for 'offending against my lord Cicero' in the opening sentence of his last letter;[12] the next moment he is being accused of violent crimes, as if an ambiguous sentence and homicidal necromancy were quite on the same ethical plane.

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8   Manitius, 'Einleitung', in *Gunzo, 'Epistola ad Augienses' und Anselm von Besate, 'Rhetorimachia'* (n. 3), p. 69.

9   See Manitius (n. 8), p. 76 n. 4 and p. 77 n. 1 on what we know or can surmise about Rotiland.

10   Giovanni Mariotti, *Memorie e documenti per la storia della Università di Parma nel Medioevo*, Parma 1888; rpt. Sala Bolognese 1984 (Athenaeum: Biblioteca di storia delle scuole e delle università 20), pp. 40–41.

11   There are other examples of practice correspondence, where teachers critique and correct their students' missives, such as the *Ältere Wormser Briefsammlung*, ed. by Walther Bulst, Weimar 1949. See Carol Dana Lanham, *Salutatio Formulas in Latin Letters to 1200: Syntax, Style, and Theory*, Munich 1975 (Münchener Beiträge zur Mediävistik und Renaissance–Forschung 22), pp. 91–93; Karl Erdmann, *Studien zur Briefliteratur Deutschlands im elften Jahrhundert*, Leipzig 1938 (MGH Schriften 1), pp. 171–197.

12   'Versus autem vestre quidem salutationis in dominum CICERONEM vos arguunt offensionis' (111). See also the formal charge on pp. 117–118 (cf. *De Inventione* II. xvii).

The *Rhetorimachia* has been reviled, or treated with extreme reserve, because critics have been unsure how to take it. It seems unstable in tone, genre, and topic, to the point of mild lunacy. It seems unsure of what it wants. In the first place, the *Rhetorimachia* really is what Anselm says it is, namely a textbook, a kind of companion to *De Inventione* and *Ad Herennium*, furnishing practical examples, *quaestiones* for discussion, and a demonstration of how to construct a Ciceronian forensic speech.[13] Anselm even supplied notes in the margin to key the *Rhetorimachia* to the Ciceronian texts.[14] But this serious didactic intent mixes with broad farce, madcap adventures in sex and black magic, and constant aggression, sometimes seemingly beyond the point of good-natured joshing. Only very recently, Beth Bennett and particularly Alexander Cizek have furnished what seem to me convincing takes on the work's genre and tonality, Bennett supplying the missing genre term—Menippean satire—and Cizek, while not operating directly with that term, describing many of its elements.[15] The *Rhetorimachia* does not perhaps qualify as a prosimetrum, but includes enough verse to gesture in that direction.[16] It has the classic Otherworld Journey of the Menippea, in this case Anselm's visit to heaven in a dream. It is dialogic, in a manner of speaking; it engages in open-ended, seriocomic philosophical discussion on a hodgepodge of topics—albeit in a more aggressive tone than is typical of the Menippea. It is openly and often playfully intertextual. It varies widely in tone, veering from earnestness to farce.[17] Of course Menippean satire is

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13   On the use of *De inventione* and *Ad Herennium* in eleventh–century teaching, see John O. Ward, 'The Medieval and Early Renaissance Study of Cicero's *De inventione* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*: Commentaries and Contexts', in *The Rhetoric of Cicero in Its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, ed. by Virginia Cox, John O. Ward, Leiden 2006, pp. 10–22; John O. Ward, *Ciceronian Rhetoric in Treatise, Scholia and Commentary*, Turnhout 1995 (Typologie des Sources du Moyen Age Occidental 58), pp. 105–123; Maddalena Spallone, 'La trasmissione della Rhetorica ad Herennium nell'Italia meridionale tra XI e XII secolo', in *Bollettino dei Classici* 3rd ser. 1 (1980), pp. 158–190; Karl Manitius, 'Zur Überlieferung des sogenannten Auctor ad Herennium', in *Philologus* 100 (1956), pp. 62–66.

14   Manitius (n. 8), p. 88.

15   Beth S. Bennett, 'The Rhetoric of Martianus Capella and Anselm de Besate in the Tradition of Menippean Satire', in *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 24 (1991), pp. 128–42; Cizek (n. 7). See also Manitius's defense of Anselm, 'Einleitung' (n. 8), pp. 83–86.

16   Manitius (n. 8), pp. 85–86.

17   On Menippean Satire, see most recently Howard D. Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered: From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, Baltimore 2005; and the lively introduction in F. Anne Payne, *Chaucer and Menippean Satire* (Madison 1981), pp. 3–37. On the prosimetrum, see Bernhard Pabst, *Prosimetrum: Tradition und Wandel einer Literaturform zwischen Spätantike und Spätmittelalter*, Köln 1994; Peter Dronke, *Verse with Prose: The Art and Scope of the Mixed Form From Petronius to Dante,* Cambridge, Mass., 1994; and Jan M. Ziolkowski, 'The Prosimentrum in the Classical Tradition,' in *Prosimetrum: Crosscultural Perspectives on Narrative in Prose and Verse*, ed. by Joseph Harris, Karl Reichl, Cambridge 1997, pp. 45–65.

in some ways a pedagogical genre; and its use in a school book is modelled by Martianus Capella and even Boethius. The farce is not necessarily detrimental, let alone fatal, to the book's serious didactic intent.

Both Austin and Anselm, we might note, act out their *scurrilitas* in the context of a live academic performance, which nonetheless looks ahead to its reincarnation as a written text, a textbook. *How To Do Things With Words* is based on a series of lectures, and Austin chose not to erase the traces of oral performance in the published version. The *Rhetorimachia* is poised between reading and performance. It is a school book, tied even graphically to other school books, in the service of a pedagogy of close reading, textual analysis, and writing practice closely modeled on textual examples. Yet it presupposes a classroom culture that combines this sophisticated textual study with declamation and rhetorical practice. In one of the several dedicatory letters that frame the treatise, Anselm suggests that if his work was less well received than it deserved to be, if it aroused the 'envy' so feared by writers since antiquity, it may have been not because the kind of instruction it offered was unusual but because it was unusual to spell it out *in writing* (105). Apart from writing and critiquing letters according to textbook rhetoric, the treatise seems to prompt a wide range of classroom activities: first of all, identifying the rhetorical figures and strategies under discussion and locating them in the main textbook, the one that contained *De Inventione* and *Ad Herennium*. There are *quaestiones* or *quaestiunculae*, problems for discussion or disputation, both implied and stated; these are often entertaining, perfectly viable in their own right but framed in a farcical situation. There are examples of faulty logic, which students surely were to spot and discuss. (One of these is the framing device for the most explicit set of *quaestiunculae*: a kind of comprehensive exam, a set of hard conundrums on each of the Trivium arts. For Anselm's contention is that Rotiland has been distracted from his studies by his amatory exploits. Rotiland denies these. Therefore let him answer the *quaestiones*: if he fails, Anselm's accusations are proven true [133–136].)[18] Some of the novellistic segments, the farcical stories of Rotiland's supposed amatory and magical exploits, have open endings, more designed to set up various 'legal' questions than to finish the story. (The story of Rotiland's failed amatory adventure might give rise to a discussion along these lines: 'You promised marriage to the girl you slept with. How binding is that—on you *or* her; what promises were actually made, kept, or forfeited, given that her guardians were negligent, you were impotent, and she forcibly ejected you

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18   It may be true that if Rotiland has committed the crimes he is charged with, he will not be able to pass Anselm's exam. It may follow that if he *can* answer correctly, he cannot have committed the crimes (for sheer lack of time). But is the reverse also true?

from her bed?') Vexingly but quite naturally, a largely oral teaching practice has left relatively few traces in the written record and is therefore largely hidden from our view; but Anselm himself provides a lively testimony that declamation exercises of this sort did in fact go on in the Liberal Arts schools with which Anselm and Rotiland were familiar.[19] That they went on in legal *studia* of the same period and the same region is suggested, among other things, by the *Liber Papiensis*, a mid-eleventh-century collection of Lombard law whose *expositio* contains disputations between different lawyers and pupils of lawyers.[20] And as Anselm relates in a concluding letter to his teacher Drogo, when he took the book to Mainz they knew exactly what to do with it: they organized a *disputatio* on it (181–183). It is precisely the hybrid nature of this odd treatise, between textuality and performance, that makes its experiments with fictionality and first person speech so interesting.

On a larger level, the whole book is framed as an academic performance. It is a demonstration, albeit a farcical one, of a courtroom speech according to Ciceronian precepts—the advanced school exercise called *declamatio*. It is also what Anselm calls a *controversia*, an exercise in ad-hominem polemics; a game of ritual insult and attack, not unlike a medieval 'flyting', or 'the dozens' in modern African-American folk culture, where all sorts of verbal violence are permitted within the protective framework of the genre, within a well-defined and well-delimited game. Mock-polemical letters, or semi-seriously polemical ones

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19 For notices of dialectical exercises in school and court, see Cantin (n. 4), pp. 80–85, 90–91, and notes; Ward, 'Medieval and Early Renaissance Study' (n. 13), p. 22.

20 'Liber legis langobardorum Papiensis,' ed. by Alfred Boretius, in *MGH Legum IV*, Hannover 1868, pp. XLVI–XCVIII, 289–640. What sort of 'schools' of law there might have been before the formal *studium* in Bologna took shape is controversial. For a recent discussion and summary of previous work, see Roberto Greci, 'Sulle tracce di una polemica superata: Gualazzini, Concetti e le origini dell'Università di Parma', in *Studi sul Medioevo per Girolamo Arnaldi*, ed. by Giulia Barone, Lidia Capo, Stefano Gasparri, Rome 2000, pp. 279–309; and Greci, 'Tormentate origini', in *Annali di storia delle università italiane* 9 (2005), pp. 33–46. The far–reaching claims by Ugo Gualazzini ('Scuola e cultura a Pavia nell'Alto Medioevo', in *Atti del 4ᵒ Congresso Internazionale di studi sull' alto medioevo, Pavia 10–14 sett. 1967*, Spoleto 1969, pp. 35–73) and Charles Radding (*The Origins of Medieval Jurisprudence: Pavia and Bologna, 850–1150*, New Haven 1988) are rejected by Giovanna Nicolaj, *Cultura e prassi di notai preirneriani: Alle origini del rinascimento giuridico*, Milano 1991, pp. 3–31, who argues that, from the *Liber papiensis* and other evidence, one can infer at most a kind of apprentice system, rooted more in notarial culture than in jurisprudence; she is skeptical even of the existence of higher–level *artes* training (pp. 16–19), but Anselm would seem to be a strong witness to the contrary. See also Ward, *Ciceronian Rhetoric* (n. 8) and Gian Paolo Massetto, 'Gli studi di diritto nella Lombardia', in *Lanfranco di Pavia e l'Europa del secolo XI nel IX centenario della morte (1089–1989): Atti del Congresso internazionale di studi, Pavia, Almo Collegio Borromeo, 21–24 settembre 1989*, ed. by Giulio d'Onofrio, Roma 1993 (Italia Sacra 51), pp. 109–111.

seem to have been not uncommon among scholars in the eleventh century, especially in Germany, where Anselm hoped to make his career (and eventually did).[21] We are more likely to know of the few that went wrong, where the protections of the ritual were insufficient, offense was taken and minor scandal ensued, such as the well-documented quarrel between the schools of Würzburg and Worms, contemporary with Anselm's work.[22] Surely these failed flytings point to a culture of successful ones, which have not come down to us precisely because they worked as intended, as lively school exercises designed to furnish a large-scale classroom project but also some fun, some school spirit, and some testing-out of that complexly toned ideal of high medieval scholarly 'friendship' C. Stephen Jaeger and John van Engen have explored.[23]

Most intriguingly, there are good indications that the *Rhetorimachia* itself was meant to be performed in a semi-public reading, likely again involving a school or *studium* of some kind. At the very end, Anselm quickly recapitulates the basic parts of classical rhetoric—Inventio, Dispositio, Elocutio, Memoria, Pronuntiatio—of which he comments only on *pronunciatio*, and only to say that he has added marginal glosses to help people see where they need to 'modulate their voice and body language' (178).[24] Best of all, one of the two manuscripts, written not long after the work's composition, supplies neums in three places. Two of these are citations of liturgical chant, and perhaps the presence of neums there is not necessarily significant (even though in context, it would be

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21   In his concluding letter to Drogo, Anselm styles himself 'imperial secretary' and thanks Drogo for his help in obtaining that position ('Gratia dei et vestra imperatorius cancellarius,' 181; 'by God's grace and yours Imperial Secretary'). Much of Manitius's quite detailed description of Anselm's career and his movements between 1045–54 (Manitius [n. 8], pp. 67–74) depends on Erdmann's identification of Anselm with a certain notary in the chancelry known as 'Heinrich C', which seems based on very little evidence (Karl Erdmann, *Erforschungen zur politischen Ideenwelt des Frühmittelalters*, Berlin 1951, pp. 122–124).

22   C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200*, Philadelphia 1994, pp. 66–74. See also Bruno Roy and Hugues Shooner, 'Querelles de maîtres au xiie siècle: Arnoul d'Orléans et son milieu', in *Sandalion* 8–9 (1985), pp. 315–341; C. Stephen Jaeger, 'Ironie und Subtext in lateinischen Briefen des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts', in *Gespräche—Boten—Briefe: Körpergedächtnis und Schriftgedächtnis im Mittelalter*, ed. by Horst Wenzel et al., Berlin 1997, pp. 177–192; and James J. Murphy, 'Ars dictaminis: The Art of Letter Writing', in *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance*, Berkeley 1974; rpt. Tempe 2001, pp. 212–13, on the often acrimonious and aggressive tone of formal letter–writing.

23   Jaeger, 'Ironie und Subtext' (n. 22); John van Engen, 'Letters, Schools, and Written Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,' in *Dialektik und Rhetorik im früheren und hohen Mittelalter: Rezeption, Überlieferung und gesellschaftliche Wirkung antiker Gelehrsamkeit vornehmlich im 9. und 12. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Johannes Fried, Munich 1997, pp. 97–132. See also Erdmann, *Studien zur Briefliteratur* (n. 12).

24   'Quod ut quisque percipiat, ubi vocis vel corporis moderacio expediat, cum aliis forinsecus pronunciationis subdivisionis prescripsimus.'

very funny to sing these quotations, which punctuate, euphemistically and salaciously, an account of one of Rotiland's amatory adventures: 'Convenistis tandem in [...] *Laetare Jerusalem' [163;* 'When you finally arrived at [...] *Laetare Jerusalem [...] '*). The third neumed section, though, is one of the little verse passages of Anselm's own text.

We may imagine, then, a kind of special-project day in a school, akin to what many schools now do on the last day of classes before the long vacation, in which everyone is assembled and Rotiland—known to all, we presume, and likely even present—is being roasted. (This is of course a hypothetical scenario, but it does not matter much whether it literally happened. The point is that the Rhetorimachia suggests that it could have, or should have.) The text is carefully performed, the performer(s) having practised and paying good attention to the performance marks Anselm has provided. On at least one occasion, he—or perhaps everyone in the room?—bursts into song. This comes as part of one of the more outrageous narratives of black magic, in which Rotiland is supposed to have entered a house through the closed door—Anselm doesn't know how—and used a dead man's hand to kill a baby while its mother slept. Hence, a cheerful little ditty on the subject of 'you are a baby killer': '[. . .] ubi miser inquinaris heu de infanticidio!' (173; 'Where you, wretch, are stained, alas, by infanticide!')[25]

Felman dwells particularly on the humorous, sometimes outlandish examples Austin uses to illustrate his points, examples that draw attention to themselves and entice the reader into a kind of complicity with the author. This technique is, of course, neither new nor specific to Austin. All textbook examples are by their very nature self-referential. They exist to illustrate the very form or genre they exhibit, while their narrative or propositional content is pointedly random. Seen in this way, they not only can afford outlandishness; they are well served by it, since it underscores the randomness of their content and (supposedly) throws us back onto the formal aspects they are meant to illustrate. This goes a long way towards explaining the popularity and pervasiveness of the comic, sensational, and/or risqué example in teaching practice from classical rhetoric to modern law schools.[26] (Of course the practice has other

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25 For facsimile reproductions of the neumed texts and an attempt at reconstructing the melodies, see Norbert Fickermann, 'Die neumierten Stellen im Cod. P.', in the appendix of Manitius's edition (n. 3), pp. 213–215. On neumed class texts, see Jan Ziolkowski, *Nota Bene: Reading Classics and Writing Melodies in the Early Middle Ages*, Turnhout 2007; pp. 170–172 on the neumed passages in Anselm.

26 Cizek and Marjorie Curry Woods both remark that a substantial percentage of the hypothetical cases late–antique (and medieval) *declamationes* concern abductions by pirates, forced marriages and sexual violence, surely well in excess of the prevalence of such cases in actual legal practice. Cizek (n. 7) p. 120; Woods, 'Rape and the Pedagogical Rhetoric of

advantages, such as keeping students awake or, more importantly, creating an in-on-the-joke bonding, of obvious value where a group of beginners is being initiated together into a profession or social role.) Such narratives come under what ancient and medieval rhetorical theory termed *argumentum*, the third *genus narrationis* besides *historia* and *fabula*, which exists merely to illustrate hypothetically a legal or didactic point, and where the criterion of truth and falsehood is therefore suspended, replaced with the vague and difficult notion of 'verisimilitude'.[27]

Just as old is the joke of turning around on the jokey exemplum and pretending to take it literally, giving its barely developed random characters a solidity they were never meant to have. Brunellus the Ass in Nigellus Wireker's *Speculum stultorum* depends on the common logic-textbook usage of giving the name 'Brunellus' to 'an individual donkey' as opposed the the genus *donkey* (just as Socrates, to this day, is often the name of 'an individual man' as opposed to 'man in general').[28] The *Speculum* brings us face to face with the Individual Donkey, and in a sense the whole text owes its existence to this admittedly sophomoric joke. Similarly, the *Ecbasis Captivi* and its protagonist the calf arguably owe their existence to a commonly used practice verse for elementary writing instruction: 'Infelix vitulus sudibus quam saepe ligatus' ('A sad little calf often tied to stakes').[29] An extreme case is the popular medieval scholastic joke of the 'Life of St. Nemo', which literally makes a fictional character out of 'nobody', stringing together sentences from the Bible that have 'nemo' as their subject and pretending that 'Nemo' is a person by that name.[30] The characters thus created are a bit more substantial than they are supposed to be, and that is their humorous appeal; but they remain, of course, comically thin. Any further assertion about them instantly results in patent absurdity. The result is a kind of ironic fictionality that depends not so much on the suspension of disbelief as on the transparency of the

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Sexual Violence,' in *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Rita Copeland, Cambridge 1996, pp. 66–70.

27   See Päivi Mehtonen, *Old Concepts and New Poetics: Historia, Argumentum, and Fabula in Twelfth– and Early–Thirteenth–Century Latin Poetics of Fiction*, Helsinki 1996; Peter von Moos, *Geschichte als Topik: Das rhetorische Exemplum von der Antike zur Neuzeit und die historiae im 'Policraticus' Johanns von Salisbury*, Hildesheim 1988, pp. 214–238, 402–412 and passim; Nicolette Zeeman, 'The Schools Give a License to Poets', in *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Rita Copeland, Cambridge 1996, pp. 151–180.

28   Jan M. Ziolkowski, 'The Humour of Logic and the Logic of Humour in the Twelfth–Century Renaissance', in *Journal of Medieval Latin* 3 (1993), pp. 24–25.

29   Bernhard Bischoff, 'Elementarunterricht und Probationes Pennae in der ersten Hälfte des Mittelalters', in *Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Edward Kenneth Rand*, ed. by Leslie Webber Jones, New York 1938, p. 13.

30   Martha Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition*, Ann Arbor 1996, pp. 57–58.

artifice, a playful 'let's say that . . .'. The humor derives precisely from the author's freedom to manipulate the density, the substantiveness of these figures at will, and thus to openly acknowledge their essential fictitiousness.

The special feature of the *Rhetorimachia* (and, to a lesser extent, of *How To Do Things With Words*) is that the chief example is the rhetorician himself, together with his addressee—taken literally and transformed into characters in a way one might not usually expect of an academic book. Anselm is, as he says, himself demonstrating how to do an invective, a forensic speech, a *remotio criminis*. This results not only in a 'thickening' and substantiation of the Rotiland character, even as he is being ridiculed, dimished and demolished. It also results in the rhetorician's self-display and specious self-aggrandizement; a thickening and foregrounding of the rhetorical persona, in ways that seem clownishly inappropriate to the academic genre, even, as Felman notes of Austin, self-undermining.

Of course such a first person can also be read—a possibility that Felman wilfully overlooks—as not very autobiographical at all, but generalizable, as the old-fashioned teacherly usage that employs 'I' not so much self-referringly but as a kind of indefinite pronoun, as one might use 'one' or 'you'. Judith Butler makes an analogous point about Descartes' deixis in describing himself as 'seated by the fire, attired in a dressing gown [. . .] Let me call attention to he fact that the "I" is "here", "ici", because this term in this sentence is a deictic one, and it is a shifter, pointing to a "here" that could be any "here"'—and, by extension, an 'I' that could be any 'I'.[31] It is this simultaneous weakening and strengthening of the first person, its emptying of true autobiographical reference and at the same time its enrichment of the text with autobiographical substance, that I want to trace in Anselm. In a paradoxical but intuitively quite graspable way, the two maneuvers come to much the same thing, for they both make transparent the fictionality of the I that inevitably follows from the kind of textual-performative exercise Anselm is engaging in. As Anselm aggressively fictionalizes the hapless Rotiland, he also fictionalizes his own persona, with consequences both comic and unsettling.

Anselm openly declares his interest in fictionality (or what he might have thought of as *argumentum*, even *fabula*, as not-true or verisimilar narrative). He gives us a strong clue to that effect when he insists in a dedicatory letter that Rotiland's crimes are of course fictitious. The work, he says, deals not with 'vera' but with 'verisimilia', as rhetoric should. An even stronger clue, perhaps, is the very act of including the traditional

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31 Judith Butler, 'How Can I Deny That These Hands and This Body Are Mine?' in *Material Events: Paul de Man and the Afterlife of Theory,* ed. by Tom Cohen et al., Minneapolis 2001, p. 260.

'apotheosis' of the Menippea. Anselm's dream about going to heaven in a dream and conversing with Rotiland's father and other deceased relatives has touches of Virgil, of Boethius, and Martianus Capella.[32] But it is modeled above all on the *Dream of Scipio*, and that would recall the beginning of Macrobius's commentary, another standard school text, where he sets out the uses of *historia, fabula, argumentum*, and the reasons why a serious philosophical text might want to play with overtly made-up material.[33] Anselm himself illustrates such *narratio* in the longer segments recounting the supposed crimes of Rotiland, which have justly been called 'novellistic'.[34] They are over the top and apparently random, as they have to be, both in the spirit of the random didactic example and in the interest of keeping Rotiland off balance: the idea is that Anselm will accuse him of *anything*, the more bizarre and hair-raising the better.

On the other hand, there is a thematic focus to these narratives, clearly relevant to the main theme of rhetoric, and exceptionally well suited to Anselm's purpose: sex and black magic, both of which evoke creation, licit or illicit, and control.[35] To say it a bit too pointedly: even as he accuses Rotiland of outrageous sexual adventures and all manner of demonic malfeasance, Anselm shows himself to both better in bed and better at magic. Using rhetoric, not only can he send Rotiland to hell and himself straight to heaven; he can turn Rotiland into 'Rotiland', and at the same time, Anselm into 'Anselm' (or, as the manuscripts insist on writing, ANSELMVS in all capital letters).

It is not without significance that Anselm and Rotiland are academic peers as well as close relatives: their characters are intertwined.[36] They are locked in a competitive struggle, as the work's title implies. One's loss is the other's gain, and while a tit-for-tat exchange is implied, in this letter we see only Anselm working hard to gain the upper hand. He playfully but

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32   On sources of this episode, see Manitius's notes (n. 3), pp. 138–150; particularly p. 147 n. 1; Bennett (n. 15), p. 136.

33   Macrobe, *Commentaire au Songe de Scipion, Livre 1*, 2.1–21, ed. and trans. by Mireille Armisien–Marchetti, Paris 2001, pp. 3–9; in the translation by William Harris Stahl, New York 1952, pp. 83–87.

34   E.g., Cizek (n. 7), p. 113.

35   A chief source seems to be Horace's *Epodes*, clearly referenced in the episode of the love charm that involves burying a young boy up to his neck (cf. Epode 5, except that in Anselm's account, the intent is not to kill the boy). The *Epodes* could also have prompted the theme of sexual impotence, the close connection between sex and magic, and the use of all these themes for invective. The intertextuality—surely quite evident to students trained in the same schools and on the same texts as Anselm and Rotiland—further underscores the fictitiousness and hence the textuality of the Rotiland character. See Karl Manitius, 'Magie und Rhetorik bei Anselm von Besate', in *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 12 (1956), pp. 55–58; Cizek (n. 7), p. 111.

36   Cizek (n. 7), pp. 118–120.

disturbingly asserts control over his opponent's fictional as well as real existence. While this maneuver seems at first blush to strengthen his own character, and deflects questions and doubts about its ontological status, it is only temporarily successful. Drawing attention to Rotiland's precarious reality, Anselm/ANSELMVS cannot in the end escape the recognition that he is in similar peril.

Sex is a central element in Anselm's invective, and it is narratively connected to magic: Rotiland's supposed magic endeavors are all in the service of getting laid. In this respect, as in rhetoric and disputation, Rotiland is in an odd and oblique contest with Anselm, who emphatically denies any sexual adventures, but nonetheless is of course more than happy to be *suspected* of a vigorous sex life, and indeed actively invites those suspicions; the denials can be read as sly admissions. As often in the treatise, the rhetorical-forensic move is *remotio*. Anselm responds to Rotiland's charges: 'Italiam igitur non ideo perambulavimus, in nocte non ideo vigilavimus, muli ungulam non portavimus, leno cum lenonibus non fuimus, ut tam minus honesta pataremus' (159; 'I have not roamed through Italy, I have not stayed awake for those reasons; I have not carried a mule's hoof ;[37] I have not been a pimp or consorted with pimps for the commission of crimes').

That list alone, one supposes, gets a laugh from the audience: even though it is all in the negative, it still gives us a sense that Anselm is a stud. Even in his grandiose Otherworld Visit, he has time to slip in some innuendo, by the simple expedient of referring to the personified arts of the Trivium as 'the virgins'. As he visits heaven in his dream, the sainted members of his great family are so happy to see Anselm that they try to detain him in heaven; but 'the virgins' forcibly drag him back to earth, on the grounds that given the state of their arts in the present time he is desperately needed there: 'Me itaque invaserunt una, ut colla quidem amplecteretur rhetorica, medium autem pectoris dialectica, pedibus vero adhesit grammatica' (149; 'They all moved on me together, so that Rhetoric embraced my neck, Dialectic the middle of my chest, and Grammar held on to my feet'). When he awakes from this dream and finds himself in his bed,

> Circum ubique manus duxeram, quocumque vero me verteram, sanctorum vel virginum nullam inveneram [...]. Deliberare tandem caeperam [sic][...] utrum cum sanctis quam cum virginibus mallem libentius. Tanta enim in utrisque dignitas, tanta suavitas, ut ex utrisque utram eligere non poteram, ut, si esset possibile, quam cum utra pocius cum utrisque. Sed quia necessitate quadam nature non licet

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37   This, we infer, was supposedly a contraceptive charm. Manitius, "Magie" (n. 39), pp. 69–70.

frui sempiterna illa beatitudine, volui cum utra, quia non potui cum utrisque. Deliberavi cum virginibus, quia non cum spiritibus. (150)

> I felt around me with both hands, but [...] there was no saint or virgin [...] Finally I began to reflect: would I rather stay with the saints or with the virgins? For there was in both such dignity, such sweetness, that I was unable to choose one of the two; if possible I would have preferred to be with both rather than either. Yet since by some necessity of nature it is not permissible to enjoy such everlasting happiness, I wanted to [be] with one since I couldn't with both. I decided to be with the virgins, because with spirits—no.

In negation as well as in the virtual reality of dreams, then, Anselm constructs an insubstantial yet memorable version of himself that is sexually adventurous and potent—all the while virtuously asserting his voluntary abstinence. Nor, it must be said, does Rotiland necessarily lose in status as a result of this flyting. One supposes that he was not upset to be accused of womanizing, and even the rough joking about his impotence probably functions as a backhanded compliment somehow, if only by presupposing his masculine prowess to be strong enough that he can take it.[38]

There is without doubt a topical, political aspect to this posturing, since this is the period of reform in which clerical celibacy was hotly debated and eventually prevailed as the binding norm. The Mainz synod, which Anselm may have attended, issued decrees to that effect. Northern Italy, and Anselm's city Milan in particular, was an early battleground in the controversy. Only ten years later married priests became a highly charged issue in the well-documented and well-studied Patarine movement, a radical, quite aggressive lay protest insisting on clerical 'purity', which for a time brought considerable upheaval and violence to Milan. Clerical marriage must have been under discussion in Anselm's circles, particularly since it was self-consciously one of the distinctly 'Ambrosian' practices that set apart the Milanese church and founded its claims to independence (and Anselm calls himself 'a son of the church of Milan').[39] It is not immediately clear which way Anselm's jokes cut in any such debates. He denounces sexuality but relishes the suspicion of it; he insists on his right as a secular cleric to sex and marriage, but claims to

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38 Playing on impotence—often in the first person, as the speaker's *own* misadventure—is a theme in Horace's *Epodes* and the iambic tradition that stands behind it. See Ellen Oliensis, *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority*, Cambridge 1998, pp. 68–72.

39 See Cinzio Violante, s.v. 'Patarines', in *Catholic Encyclopedia* , Detroit 2003, vol. X, pp. 940–942; Paolo Golinelli, ed., *La Pataria: Lotte religiosi e sociali nella Milano dell'XI secolo*, Novara 1984; Cesare Alzati, 'I motivi ideali della polemica antipatarina: Matrimonio, ministero e comunione ecclesiale secondo la tradizione ambrosiana nella *Historia* di Landolfo seniore', in *Nobiltà e chiese nel medioevo e altri saggi: Scritti in onore di Gerd G. Tellenbach*, ed. by Cinzio Violante, Rome 1993, pp. 199–222.

voluntarily forego it. It does not seem to me that Anselm is taking a position; he just exploits the debate's topicality, and the high tension surrounding it, for multiple equivocations. The two young men are competitively acting out their virility—likely before an appreciative crowd of like-minded peers—against the backdrop of contemporary politics that radically redefine clerical masculinity,[40] evidently against vigorous resistance, or at least amid vigorous joking, from some of those concerned. Anselm, moreover, is in an ambiguous position to begin with: like all the clerics in secular court employment in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, he is a cleric by training and status, but not by trade. He is seeking to become a lawyer or a career bureaucrat at the Imperial court, not a priest. Rotiland's status is even less clear: he may be in lower orders than Anselm, or even a layman outright, which would suggest additional layers to their sexual competition.[41]

All these ambiguities are surely being played out here in some fashion. But the link between sex and rhetoric has a venerable tradition. In classical antiquity, rhetorical education was also education in manliness, combining and fusing oratorical and civic performance with the performance of gender.[42] Anselm may have derived some inspiration from Horace's epodes, one of his sources, where sexual performance in a more physical sense clearly stands in for poetic potency.[43] Medieval rhetoric teaching not only does not avoid but actively includes sexually explicit material, even for quite young students. Alan of Lille's extensive punning and troping on correct grammar and correct sexuality has received much commentary recently, as have similar metaphors and word games in didactic texts such as Matthew of Vendôme.[44] The result is a large-scale metaphor, or even

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40 P.H. Cullum, 'Learning to Be a Man, Learning to Be a Priest in Late Medieval England', in *Learning and Literacy in Medieval England and Abroad*, ed. by Sarah Rees Jones, Turnhout 2003, p. 136. See also John H. Arnold, 'The Labour of Continence: Masculinity and Clerical Virginity', in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans, Sarah Salih, Cardiff 2003, pp. 102–118; R. N. Swanson, 'Angels Incarnate: Clergy and Masculinity From Gregorian Reform to Reformation', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by D. M. Hadley, London 1999, pp. 160–177.

41 If he is indeed the 'Rolandus diaconus et praepositus et magister scholarum' attested at Parma in 1070 (as Manitius surmised [n. 8], p. 76 n. 4; see Greci, 'Tormentate origini' [n. 20], p. 33), then deacon is evidently the highest rank he attained. Not long after, there is an 'Ingo acolytus magister scholarum' (Greci, 'Tormentate origini', p. 33); evidently, one did not have to be in higher orders to teach at a school of this type.

42 Erik Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity: The Rhetoric of Performance in the Roman World*, Ann Arbor 2003, pp. 3–9 and passim.

43 Oliensis (n. 38), pp. 68–72.

44 Garrett P. J. Epp, 'Learning to Write with Venus's Pen: Sexual Regulation in Matthew of Vendôme's *Ars Versificatoria*', in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray, Konrad Eisenbichler, Toronto 1996, pp. 265–279; Robin Hass Birky, '"The Word Was Made Flesh": Gendered Bodies and Anti–Bodies in Twelfth– and

equation, of sexual and verbal prowess, of rhetorical and especially dialectical skills as the ultimate macho weapon. Abelard, as many have observed, plays this card very fully in his autobiographical account, casting himself from the start as a *miles* of dialectics, and then as an aggressor both sexual and intellectual, preying on Heloise as well as his academic rivals. His physical castration and his public intellectual humiliation are also troped against each other.[45]

Much like Abelard, Anselm sees the sex-rhetoric parallel as a matter of control: self-control, whether it be in performing or in abstaining; trying to rig the situation to one's advantage, sometimes with bribes, stealth and underhandedness, sometimes with magic; control of one's love interest, getting her into bed and keeping her happy; surveillance and control of others. (Rotiland's family trying to control him, and Anselm's spying and meddling, become an almost obsessive part of the narrative [129–130 and passim].) Here, again, sex is very closely linked to magic; indeed, sex, magic, and rhetoric can all shade into each other and stand in for each other. They all have to do with manipulating one's environment, controlling others, getting the upper hand, even ruling over the life and death of others. The *Rhetorimachia* is full of stories of giving and denying life, creating or imagining half-alive or only potential creatures. The cousins compete in such exploits. One of Rotiland's necromantic crimes, as we have already seen, involves killing a baby (170–173); in another, he creates a sort of attack zombie by reviving a dead body and programming it to carry out tasks (145–146). A propos of the contraceptive mule's hoof, there is a long discussion on contraception or abortion, on whether it is possible to deny life to babies-to-be. Anselm denies that he carries such a charm; he denies that it would work; and besides, he argues, one cannot deny life to people who do not yet have it (154–156). It is a discussion of future contingents, one of the great problems of medieval logic, and Anselm duly invokes Aristotle and Boethius. But it is also about persons existing or not existing, or existing only as logical propositions. If Rotiland is serenaded as a baby-killer, Anselm is a baby-killer, too, but he is better, or at least better at hiding his tracks: he can erase the very fact of the crime by logic alone. Anselm shows himself to be the better magician—

Thirteenth–Century Arts of Poetry', in *Medieval Rhetoric: A Casebook*, ed. by Scott D. Troyan, New York 2004, pp. 161–215.

45   Martin Irvine, 'Abelard and (Re)Writing the Male Body: Castration, Identity, and Remasculinization', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, Bonnie Wheeler, New York 1997, pp. 87–106; Andrew Taylor, 'A Second Ajax: Peter Abelard and the Violence of Dialectic', in *The Tongue of the Fathers: Gender and Ideology in Twelfth–Century Latin*, ed. by David Townsend, Andrew Taylor, Philadelphia 1998, pp. 14–34.

while denying that he engages in magic;[46] the better sex-god—while denying that he engages in sex. He does not need Rotiland's vulgar antics to get what he wants. Rotiland, limited to operating in the world of material reality, consistently comes up short: even where his magic works, he does not get to enjoy the sex, and he is constantly bested and boxed in by Anselm's more ingenious, less plodding, more textual contrivances.

It is a nice and interesting touch that Anselm performs most of the narrative segments about Rotiland—with the exception of the one told to him by Rotiland's late father—in the second person. This not only increases the accusatory impact but also the sense of direct control, as if Anselm were manipulating Rotiland and having him move about like a puppet. (The episode of the revived corpse sent to retrieve Rotiland's magic book is perhaps a burlesque analogue.) Moroever, the narrator, by confidently imposing his version of events, hijacks Rotiland's real story, his subjectivity, supplanting what Rotiland himself remembers really did happen. Rotiland sees himself transformed into an 'in-quotes' version of himself, a character in Anselm's narrative, even as he watches. He has no legitimate cause for complaint: Anselm has made it clear that he is not 'really' accusing his cousin of all these heinous crimes. Rotiland is merely a textbook example, and Anselm avails himself of his right to manipulate the 'thickness' of such a hypothetical character at will, much as happens in *Speculum stultorum*. Yet the game derives its force, its power to startle and even upset, from the proximity of 'Rotiland' and Rotiland, the fictional and the real person; and Anselm twists the knife by deliberately obscuring the boundaries.

Throughout the book, Anselm gleefully bosses Rotiland around. Not only does he cast himself as the teacher, barely holding on to the last bit of patience he can muster, and Rotiland as the wayward student. Not only does he arrogantly claim the right to name him, brushing aside Rotiland's protest that his name is actually Roland (or, more precisely, that he prefers the Latinization 'Rollandus', but Anselm dismisses this objection as a sign of vulgar ignorance) (137). He also shows a progressive, tightening grip on Rotiland as the work goes on, claiming to see everything, know everything, being thoroughly on top of Rotiland's every action. This starts casually and almost innocently, by way of explaining Anselm's improbable

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46 Where the *remotio* on sex crimes is quite overt, there is a more hidden *remotio* going on regarding magic, as Cizek (n. 7) has noted (p. 120). In the prefatory letter, Anselm recounts that many of his unschooled neighbors suspect him of magic for poring over books all day. He does not counter that charge directly, but spends most of the treatise accusing Rotiland of magic. *Remotio* is thus not only one of the rhetorical subjects covered in the treatise; it is the underlying principle of the treatise itself. Moreover, the remark sets the theme of equating learning and rhetoric with magic. See also Peters (n.2), pp. 25, 28.

knowledge of supposedly secret actions; or by doing a little victory dance after a rhetorical manoeuver he is especially pleased with:

> Credere itaque vel non credere: angustie tibi sunt undique. [...] non evades manus ANSELMI. Negas vel adfirmas: bonus orator semper tibi obviat, vel iam solum restat taceas et obmutescas et, si quid erga me dixeras, iam tandem peniteat. O bonum oratorem, circumcidi undique suam horacionem. Que michi igitur obiecisti vicia, dupliciter propulsat facultas rethorica [sic] et, que in me direxisti facinora, dupliciter illis obviat ANSELMINA eloquentia. (162)

> Believe it or not: you're in dire straits [...] you will not escape the hands of ANSELM. Deny or confess: a good orator will always parry your every move, so that nothing is left to you but shut up and remain silent, and you'll quickly regret having said what you said against me. O what a good orator I am! I have cut down his speech from all sides! The vices you charged me with, rhetorical skill doubly repelled them, and the crimes you tried to pin on me, ANSELMIAN eloquence doubly thwarted them.

Anselm's interference gets more sinister as the work goes on. Supervision and surveillance are a theme of the 'legal case' itself: Rotiland had argued that he could not possibly have done the things Anselm charged him with since his family kept a tight watch on him. Anselm dismisses that argument, saying that Rotiland would rather poison his own mother than submit to such surveillance (129-30).   But having eliminated the supervision of Rotiland's immediate family he substitutes his own. In fact, he quite explicitly inserts his own persona, or his spies, into the stories he tells about Rotiland, even to the point of supplanting other characters. One of the longer narratives, already mentioned, concerns a frustrating and unpleasant sexual adventure:

> Dum hec intus agebantur, qui te foris observabat lenunculus, Iohannes enim tortus, gravitudine sonnii pressus obdormivit et nimiis afflictus vigiliis observasse perdit, cum observare desinit. Meus enim nuncius, observator tuus in hoc ut in omnibus, ad hostium venit, tussiit, pulsavit. Quo cum veneras, sub specie lenonis clamavit: 'Iam venias, inquit, nimium, Rotilande, moraris. Non ultra stabo, vadam, si steteris ultra. Pone finem iocis, exeas, eamus opportet, diescit.' [...] Hoc ideo precepi fieret, ut, quocumque diverteres, quodcumque inciperes, meam tecum diligenciam semper timeres. Te enim tuamque domum talibus placuit custodibus munire, ut nichil tuum michi possit latere. Nichil facis, nichil molliris, numquam temptas, nusquam divertis, ut patere nobis nostra diligentia sentire non possis. Omnia tenemus, te enim hactenus diligenter observavimus. Quod, qui tibi fuit obvius, meus testatur nuncius, quem, cum talia dicere audieras, tuum secretum teneri senseras, pavefactus tandem effugeras. (164, 165–66)

> While all this was going on inside, the little pimp who was standing guard for you outside, John the Cripple, was overcome by heavy sleep and dozed off; and thus afflicted he ceased to pay attention. At that point my messenger, who observed you in this as in all things, came to the door, coughed and knocked. When you came to the door, he, impersonating the pimp, called out: 'Come on out, Rotiland, you have stayed too long already. I am not waiting any longer; if you

stay longer, I'm going away. Put an end to your playing, come out, we have to go, day is coming.' [...] I set this up so that wherever you turn, whatever you undertake, you will always fear my careful watch over you. For I have chosen to outfit you and your house with spies so that nothing of yours can remain hidden to me. You can do nothing, accomplish nothing, you can't attempt anything or turn anywhere without plainly feeling my surveillance. I know everything; I have been watching you carefully. Thus, the man whom you met turns out to have been my messenger; you thought, when you heard him speak, that your secret was safe with him, and instead you came away thoroughly revealed.

Anselm's journey to heaven, his comic apotheosis, is of course the counter-movement to Rotiland's increasing demonization. Cizek has accurately described Rotiland as a kind of dark doppelgänger, in a Jekyll-and-Hyde scenario.[47] But not only is Rotiland assigned the role of Black Sheep to Anselm's model son; Anselm cheerfully and rather brutally supplants his cousin. On the model of Aeneas's encounter with his father's shade, Anselm encounters not *his* father but Rotiland's; Rotiland's father weeps over his miscreant son, repudiates him, embraces Anselm and does his best to detain him in heaven.

Throughout, Anselm has a marked tendency to try to suppress Rotiland, not only figuratively demolishing him in a *disputatio*, but explicitly reducing him to nothing. Logical sophisms involving 'nichil' and 'nullus' come up repeatedly, and Anselm plays them for what they are worth. In the course of one exceedingly hairsplitting discussion on whether Rotiland can use the word "refert" in the way he has, Anselm launches this putdown: 'Quod nullus potest, tibi forsan licet, ut ex nullis sis ullus, tibi quia similis iam sit in mundo nullus' (121: 'What nobody can do is perhaps permissible for you; for you are one of the nobodies; in the whole world "nobody" is like you.')[48] In the farcical love epsiode cited above, sexual impotence is linked to 'being nothing'. Rotiland himself complains to the spy he believes to be his lookout: 'Multa enim in hac nocte feci, nichil vero demum perfeci. [...] Utique, ut paterer, passus sum nec illud miser egero; quod nisi, nichil sum. ' ('I have done so much this night but I have accomplished nothing. [...] I have suffered only to suffer, and will not get it done. If I don't, I'm nothing.') He cites the girl's angry insults against him: 'Recede. Dum enim stas, imago es; dum amplecteris, fumus es; dum concumbere vis, nichil es.' ('Go away. When you stand, you are an image; when you embrace, you are smoke; when you try to have sex, you are nothing.') And Anselm confirms in his own voice: 'Reversus ergo es ad

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47   Cizek (n. 7), p. 120.

48   On the serious version of such discussions, see George Englebretsen, 'Apropos of Nothing', in *Linguistic Analysis* 24 (1994), pp. 32–38; Marcia L. Colish, 'Carolingian Debates over *Nihil* and *Tenebrae*: A Study in Theological Method', in *Speculum* 59 (1984), pp. 757–795.

eam [...] et ut prius et modo nichil. Tu ergo ita existi nichil: ut qui prius intrasti ullus, nunc miser existi nullus.' ('So you returned to her [...] and, as before, nothing. Therefore you came out a nothing: you went in as somebody but now came out as a miserable nobody.') (164-165).

Finally, Anselm proceeds to eliminate Rotiland altogether. He has proved (with spurious logic that students no doubt are meant to spot) that Rotiland is not only a servant of the devil, he practically *is* the devil, and like the devil has lost all hope of salvation. And he ends, remarkably, with a ringing exorcism—exorcising not the devil but Rotiland. These are— slightly abbreviated—the final words directly addressed to Rotiland:

> Erisque bestia inter bestias, qui racionis iudicium perdideras, cui arbitrii interiit libertas, de quo quis sperare iam nequeat. Iam ergo evaneas a Christiana plebe. Crux enim Christi iacet in fronte, fugite ergo, partes adverse. Fugias, inquam, et evanescito, dicam, vel liquescito, spes diis, deo desperacio. Non visurus denuo fugias vel liquescito [...] Itaque dei et hominum ultor existero [...] Fugite, fugite, partes adverse. Quem enim servilis servitus ligat, quem diabolica stringit necessitas, cuius facta nesciunt deum, cuis voluntas creatorem dm difidit suum, cuius opera genus minuunt humanum, huiusmodi ergo non visurus denuo fugias, evanescito, dicam, vel liquescito. O hominem perditissimum, o ab humanitate derelictum, humani generis inimicum! O feditatem flagiciosam, o nequiciam inauditam, libidinem non ferendam! Pró celestem patrem, pró inefabilem pietatem huius intollerabilem tollerans adhuc rabiem! O celi, o terra, o fontes, lacus, flumina! O in eis omnia, adhuc quidem non maria! O heu pro unius scelere nos universos quandoque interire! (176-177).

> You will be a beast among beasts, having lost reason, judgment, and free will, and there is no longer any hope. So you should remove yourself from Christian company. Christ's cross lies before you: flee then, you hostile forces. Flee, I say, evanesce, I say, liquefy, you hope of false gods, despair of the true God. Do not appear henceforth, flee, liquefy; [...] I will rise up as the avenger of God and men. [...] Flee, flee, you hostile forces. You who are bound by servile servitude, who are forced by diabolical necessity, you whose deeds know not God, whose will defies your creator, whose works diminish humankind: do not appear henceforth, I say, flee, evanesce, liquefy. O most depraved of men, o outcast from humanity, o enemy of humankind! O shameful stink, o unheard-of iniquity, o lustfulness beyond tolerance! O our heavenly father, o ineffable mercy, why have you have put up so far with this intolerable fury! O heaven, o earth, o fountains, lakes, rivers, seas, and all that is in them! O, alas, for the crime of one we shall all perish together!

So much for Rotiland. But if 'being nothing' is Anselm's most explicit trope for fictionalization, he plays that trick on his own person, too. In another of the 'nichil/nullus' sophisms, it is really not so clear who is being logically annihilated: 'But since nobody commits that which you charged me with, the advantage you talk about is reduced to nothing, and you too are nothing; you are nobody and not even anything at all.' (158) It sounds like a schoolyard taunt, and it may well evoke a common game

played among logic students. The logical conceit, obviously spurious, is that predicating 'nothing' or 'nobody' of a person reduces him to nothing. (In the previous instance we cited, the sentence 'nobody is like you' was enough to wipe out Rotiland, presumably by implying, 'therefore you are like nobody'.) By claiming that he is one of the 'nobodies' who act in this manner, Anselm comes close to self-cancellation. He just barely manages to turn it against Rotiland, suggesting that since he has made a 'nothing' argument he is himself nothing—failing to score, one suspects, an entirely conclusive point by the rules of this scholastic game. Anselm again flirts with self-cancelation in the narrative segment that most explicitly deals in fiction, in insubstantial figments: the dream that sends him to heaven. In a reversal of Virgil's theme of meeting with the insubstantial shades of the dead, here it is ANSELMVS who is the shade, and it is the dead who, trying to embrace him, embrace nothing but air. This being a dream, he is present only in a dream self; the saints in heaven are more corporeal than he is.

Significantly, the *disputatio* in Mainz, which Anselm reports in his concluding letter to Drogo, also hinges on sophisms about negation and 'nothing.' His interlocutors are insultingly non-committal about the *Rhetorimachia*, and Anselm is doing his best to pin them down: they must 'either praise or blame' his work; the 'medium' they resort to, being 'neither' praise nor blame, amounts to 'nothing'. (182-183; 'Si ex negatione utrorumque medium confectum est, quod ut dicitis neutrum est, non magis utrorumque quam omnium rerum neutrum est. Quod bene perspectum nichil est.') Even though Anselm puts the best face on it, it is clear from this exchange that his performance in Mainz was not the smashing success he says it was; he is desperately fighting for the other disputants to even acknowledge his text, and his person. He does not report their answer to his brilliant dialectic argument, or if they even deigned to respond. His protest against their non-recognition, the 'nothing' they chose to say of his work, threatens to rebound on him, and it remains the last word, spoken by Anselm himself. The *Rhetorimachia* thus ends, if under protest, with a sort of self-cancelation: '[...] inpossibile vel nichil est'. (183; 'It is impossible or nothing'.)

The dialectical argumentation, then, is as limited in its effectiveness as is the strategy of confining the self-fictionalization to the dream journey, or the strategy of *remotio*. In fact, it is Anselm's own annihilation, as the authorial voice, that is really at stake; and aggressively inflicting this indignity onto his alter ego, Rotiland, is perhaps one way of deflecting it from himself. The shadow versions that he has created of himself uncomfortably encroach on his reality. Performing a version of himself in public, Anselm is in the strange situation of playing himself, always an odd

and uncomfortable proposition, as we can verify from our experience of theatrical and film instances. In the simplest case, it is seen as guaranteeing the authenticity of the role being performed. Think of the famous cast list of the *Wizard of Oz*, which includes 'Toto: Himself': who could more authentically represent Toto than 'himself'? Beyond that, at first blush it appears to be a simple, almost comical redundancy or a sort of reinforcement, inviting a narcissistic sense of self-inflation, of being hyper-real. But it turns out to be something else altogether, a suppression of the real-life actor (as one supposes all acting is) in favor of a fictionalized version that takes absolute precedence; the Real Life Actor no longer has any primacy or any right to his own experience.[49]

Let us return for a moment to the school scene we imagined earlier, and assume that both Anselm and Rotiland are present for the festivities. If Anselm performs his roast live before a rambunctious crowd of fellow scholars, the joke is of course primarily on Rotiland. The rhetorical violence done to him is licensed as well as mitigated by the explicit premise that it is all a fiction. Yet although Rotiland may laugh, he will most likely squirm under the attacks and under the laughter of the audience. It all cuts too close to home; the dividing line between him and his 'in-quotes' version is perilously thin. More than that: the fictionalization, ostensibly there to protect him, is itself an attack. It threatens to take over, to take away his autonomy and his very substance.

Yet Anselm, as he knows full well, is necessarily subject to the same effects of performance and textualization. As he plays himself, ANSELMVS threatens to wipe out Anselm. If there is a theory of fictionality in this—or more accurately, a performative *praxis* of fictionalization—it is adversarial, competitive, macho, but also anxious. The idea is ostensibly that the authorial persona lives at the expense of his characters, and in some ways gobbles them up, incorporates their perspective, their speech, their experience, their substance. As they lose autonomy, control over their movements, and their very reality, he gains in strength and creative freedom, he builds up his voice, his presence, the

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49   A wonderful modern analogue is Margaret Cho's stand–up comedy program, 'I Am The One I Want', an anguished but hilarious autobiographical account of being invited to 'play herself' in a TV sitcom and being told that, among other improvements, she most lose weight in order to do so—an experience that very nearly did end in the annihilation of the real Margaret Cho. The absurdity, which at first she incredulously protests and then desperately embraces, is of course that she should make changes to herself (the actress) in order to represent the 'real' Margaret Cho. The protest, 'but I am me!' becomes increasingly untenable as she realies that the real self has no superior claim; yet the psychological effect of this recognition is quite confusing and destructive. *I Am The One I Want*, written by and featuring Margaret Cho, dir. Lionel Coleman, Cho Taussig Productions, 2000.

solidity and reality of his persona. But that reality, too, is a virtual one; and the inevitable self-fictionalization, however camouflaged by the *rhetorimachia*, the rhetorical struggle, is as comical and as unsettling as the violence Anselm is inflicting on his victim. Even though the charges against Rotiland, and hence the venomousness of the piece, are 'not real', even though it is all a game: the struggle, the competition, the desire to control the other and deny him his real existence, but also the performance anxiety and the discomfort of self-fictionalization, are real enough.

Medievalists have often tied the rise and even the very possibility of fictionality to the written medium, the distance it introduces between the author's voice and bodily presence and the text experienced by the audience.[50] The play with fictionality in the *Rhetorimachia* should encourage us to cautiously revise that hypothesis and to explore the links between a performativity and a fictionality that takes into a account the hybrid written, oral, vocalized, performed textual medium that the *Rhetorimachia* represents (and of which *How To Do Things With Words* is a somewhat anomalous latter-day reincarnation). Anselm demonstrates a sense of performativity (and fictionality) that spans all the possibilities from the most bookish textuality to live performance and any hybrids in between. Deeply rooted in the written tradition of rhetoric, as well as its oral teaching tradition, the *Rhetorimachia* evokes a particular performance situation that goes beyond routine classroom practice—what I have dubbed the 'last day of classes' exercise: a culmination as well as a send-up of what went on in class every day during the year.[51] It allows for the possibility of the author performing himself—a possibility his framing letters suggest, where he speaks of taking the book along as he applies for chancelry jobs in Germany. It also allows for the possibility of others performing the role of ANSELMVS, as his reference to performance *notae* suggests. It allows for reading and studying in silence; it allows for reading and studying in a classroom, interspersed with commentary, discussions, and exercises. The more the spoken voice of ANSELMVS recedes from the foreground, the more, perhaps, Anselm has to worry about being able to control its perception by others. But the difference is one of degree,

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50 Franz H. Bäuml, 'Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy', in *Speculum* 55 (1980), pp. 237–265; Rainer Warning, 'Staged Discourse: Remarks on the Pragmatics of Fiction', in *Dispositio* 5, no. 13–14 (1981), pp. 35–54; Michel Zink, 'Une mutation de la conscience littéraire: le langage romanesque à travers des exemples français du XIIe siècle', in *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale (xe–xiie siècles)* 24 (1981), pp. 3–27.

51 This, too, may be a practice that was more common than we realize because it would rarely have been put into writing and hence is largely hidden from our view. For a compilation of the scattered examples, see Jan Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry, 750–1150*, Philadelphia 1993, pp. 142–145.

not of substance. Anselm's performance is a strong indication that fictionality works in a wide range of oral, declaimed, and textual situations—although in each case the joke might be subtly different. We have long been familiar with the notion that with increasing textualization, with the absence of the author, the authorial *I* becomes fictional. What Anselm comically demonstrates is that this happens even if the author is physically present and lending his own voice to the text. The *scurrilitas* that has so astonished readers of the *Rhetorimachia* is Anselm's recognition that he is performing himself, whether in person or in writing. It is a vigorous, farcical acting-out of the playful as well as the unsettling dimensions of fictionality.

Manuele Gragnolati

Authorship and performance in Dante's *Vita nova*

At first glance, Dante's *Vita nova* may seem a puzzling choice for exploring the concept of performance in the Middle Ages. While performance appears in many guises in medieval culture and offers interesting insights for investigating numerous medieval texts, it seems to be absent from Dante's *libello* and the Italian lyric tradition from which it stems. The most obvious type of performance that is absent in Dante's *Vita nova* is the tight union of music and text that is a salient characteristic of Occitan poetry and is related to its oral performance in front of a large, aristocratic audience in the court. Critics have not yet explained the exact role of music for Italian lyric poetry in the thirteenth century, but the separation between text and music in the *Vita nova* is not only suggested by the text's own self–representation as a written record of its author's memories, but also confirmed by the work's prosimetric structure, which organizes 31 poems, for the most part certainly written before, within a unitary prose narrative.[1]

Another typical feature of Occitan poetry, which is also related to its oral performance in the court and would seem to be absent in the *Vita nova*, may be called the performance of a 'social I' connected to the repetition and re–enforcement of the courtly conventions and ethos which the public would have recognized as its own. Whether or not this kind of performance continued to be a feature of Sicilian poetry, an individual voice asserts itself more strongly over the collective, social 'I' as

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1   The prose can be divided into 'ragioni', which describe the events that inspired the poems, and 'divisioni', which comment upon their structure. On the relationship between the *Vita nova*'s prosimetric character and the separation between poetry and prose, 'che era stato sino ad allora soltanto possibile o probabile', see Claudio Giunta, *Versi a un destinatario. Saggio sulla poesia italiana del Medioevo*, Bologna 2002, pp. 386–387, who makes reference to Nino Pirrotta, *Musica tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, Turin 1984; *Poesia, musica e altri saggi*, Florence 1994, pp. 1–21. For the meditative character that lyric poetry acquires in Italy, see Paul Oppenheimer, *The Birth of the Modern Mind. Self, Consciousness, and the Invention of the Sonnet*, Oxford 1989, pp. 1–40; and Michelangelo Picone, 'Traditional Genres and Poetic Innovation in Thirteenth–Century Italian Lyric Poetry', in *Medieval Lyric: Genres in Historical Content*, ed. by William Paden, Urbana, Chicago 2000, pp. 146–157.

lyric poetry moves, after the death of Frederick in 1250, to Tuscany and Central Italy, first with the Tuscan poets and then with the Stilnovisti and especially the *Vita nova*. Indeed, by presenting itself as transcribing from the author's book of memory the story of how his love for Beatrice renewed his life, Dante's *libello* is autobiographical and its narrative refers to a specific, historical individual.[2]

If there is neither evidence of a literal performance situation—the author reciting or singing in front of a live audience—nor of the collective, generic 'I' that such a public performance produces, how can one think of performance in the case of the *Vita nova*? What I would like to propose is that as a more autobiographical content and subjective character replace the social function of Occitan poetry, the *Vita nova* deploys another kind of performance: not the performance of a social 'I', but the 'performance of an author'.

A first aspect of this complex operation, which conveys several layers and aspects of performance, can be inferred by some essays written by Michelangelo Picone on the *Vita nova*. Picone explored the ways in which the text presents itself as discovering and reconstructing the past of the protagonist–*actor* as a spiritual and poetic development corresponding to his development towards becoming an *auctor*, that is, with Alistair Minnis's words, someone who is 'at once a writer and an authority, someone not merely to be read but also to be respected and believed'.[3] In particular, Picone argues that unlike the *Convivio*, where Dante attempts to gain

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2   On the individuality of the 'I' in the *Vita nova*, no matter how partial when compared to contemporary notions, see Charmaine Lee, *La soggettività nel Medioevo,* Rome 1996, pp. 5–44; Peter Dronke, *Verse with Prose from Petronius to Dante: The Art and Form of the Mixed Form*, Cambridge, Mass. 1992, pp. 84–114, especially 107–114. Recently Giunta has proposed that in the late thirteenth century a subjectivization of love experience would take place that denotes a veritable shift in the Western lyric and culminates in Dante's *libello*, which would thereby represent the beginning of a 'poesia soggettiva … qualitativamente non diversa da quella che oggi noi siamo abituati a leggere' (*Versi a un destinatario*, p. 428). In particular, Giunta distinguishes between 'un testo in cui il soggetto che parla *non è il poeta* e un testo in cui il soggetto che parla—per quanto camuffato, per quanto la sua voce ci giunga filtrata da luoghi comuni—*è il poeta*… [L]a prima forma di lirica si avvicina al teatro, perché mette in scena personaggi ed eventi fittizi ed esemplari. La seconda si accosta, invece, […] all'autobiografia' (pp. 384–385). See also Olivia Holmes, *Assembling the Lyric Self: Authorship from Troubadour Song to Italian Poetry Book*, Minneapolis 2000.

3   The definition of *auctor* is given by Alistair J. Minnis, *Medieval theory of authorship. Scholastic literary attitudes in the later Middle Ages*, Aldershot 1988, p. 10. For Michelangelo Picone's essays, see 'Strutture poetiche e strutture prosastiche nella *Vita Nuova*', in *MLN* 92 (1977), pp. 117–129; 'La *Vita Nuova* tra autobiografia e tipologia' in *Dante e le forme dell'allegoresi*, ed. by Michelangelo Picone, Ravenna 1987, pp. 59–69; 'La teoria dell'*Auctoritas* nella *Vita nova*', in *Tenzone* 6 (2005), 173–191.

authority by placing emphasis on the encyclopaedic nature of his work,[4] the *Vita nova*'s strategy to grant authority to itself consists of applying to its own poems the exegetical practices that were at first applied to reading and commenting the Sacred Scriptures and then were also used for the texts of classical *auctores*.[5]

Picone, who bases his analysis upon Minnis's scholarship on medieval authorship[6] and develops further some insights by Charles Singleton,[7] focuses on the initial paragraph of the *Vita nova*, where Dante indicates his *modus operandi* for writing the the *libello*:

> In quella parte del libro de la mia memoria dinanzi a la quale poco si potrebbe leggere, si trova una rubrica la quale dice: *Incipit vita nova*. Sotto la quale rubrica io trovo scritte le parole le quali è mio intendimento d'assemplare in questo *libello*, e se non tutte, almeno la loro sentenzia (I.1 [1.1]).[8]

> In that part of my book of memory before which there would be little to read is found a charter heading which says: 'Here begins a new life'. It is my intention to copy into this little book the words I find written under that heading–if not all of them, at least their significance.

Picone shows that the authorial figure of *Vita nova* presents his activity as interpreter of his own past through a series of different and progressive

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4   For a different reading, which highlights instead the influence played by medieval commentaries on the *Song of Songs*, see Zygmunt Baranski, 'Il *Convivio* e la poesia: problemi di definizione', in *Contesti della 'Commedia'. Lectura Dantis Fridericiana 2002–2003*, ed. by Francesco Tateo, Daniele M. Pegorari, Bari 2004, pp. 9–64.

5   'La teoria dell'*Auctoritas* nella *Vita nova*'. On Dante's assumption of authority in *Vita nova*, *Convivio* and *De vulgari eloquentia*, and on the evolution of the concept of 'authorship' in Dante's oeuvre, see the recent book by Albert R. Ascoli, *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author*, Cambridge 2008, as well as three previous articles by Ascoli: 'From *auctor* to author: Dante before the *Commedia*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. by Rachel Jacoff, Cambridge 2007, 2nd edn, pp. 46–66; 'The Vowels of Authority (Dante's *Convivio* IV, vi, 3– 4)', in *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. by Kevin Broownlee, Walter Stephens, Hanover, NH 1989, pp. 23–46; '"Neminem ante nos": Historicity and Authority in the *De vulgari eloquentiae*', in *Annali d'italianistica* 8 (1990), pp. 186–231. See also Thomas C. Stillinger, *The Song of Troilus. Lyric Authority in the Medieval Book*, Philadelphia 1992, pp. 44–117; Zygmunt Baranski, 'Dante Alighieri: Experimentation and (Self)– Exegesis', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. by Alastair Minnis, vol. 2, Cambridge 2005, pp. 561–82.

6   Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*. See also *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100– c.1375. The Commentary Tradition*, ed. by A.J. Minnis, A.B. Scott, Oxford 1988, pp. 373–394.

7   Charles Singleton, *An Essay on the Vita Nuova*, Cambridge, Mass. 1986, pp. 25–54.

8   I quote Dante's *libello* from Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, ed. by Domenico De Robertis, Milan, Naples 1980, which uses the text by Michele Barbi (Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, Florence 1932). The indication of the text according to its traditional subdivision into forty–two chapters is followed by its indication according to the subdivision into thirty– one paragraphs proposed by Gugliemo Gorni (Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nova,* ed by. Guglielmo Gorni, Turin 1996). Translations from the *Vita nova* are taken from Dante, *Vita Nuova*, trans. by Mark Musa, Oxford 1992.

operations: 1) that of a *scriptor*, the copyist transcribing from his own book of memory the poems written to celebrate his love for Beatrice as well as the memories connected with writing these poems; 2) that of a *compilator*, who does not only copy the poems and the memories connected with them, but also selects them and organizes them according to a meaningful, teleological order; and 3) that of a *commentator*, who comments upon his poems and memories and not only confirms the literal meaning carried by the words transcribed but also reveals the allegorical one: 'sentenzia' in the last quotation indicates the 'significance', that is, the ultimate and definitive meaning ('il … significato ultimo e definitivo') of the narrated poems and memories—a meaning that was not necessarily evident when the poems were originally written or the events took place but that would now be authorized by the heavenly vision described in the last sonnet, where Dante's 'spirit' goes to Heaven and contemplates Beatrice.[9]

As a result of these operations, which are presented as the means to discover and convey the real meaning of the past events, an *auctor* asserts himself who has not only obtained the same artistic value as the classical authors but who also can indicate his own trajectory as a lover as an example for the other poets forming the public to which the text is addressed. The *Vita nova* can thus be seen as a performance both in the sense that it is performed by an *auctor* and in the sense of a *Selbstinszenierung*, a *mise en scène* of the author's own development in his poems in conformity with an ideal development from uncertain and wrong beginnings to the discovery of a correct way of loving and writing about it.

This *Selbstinszenierung* is an important aspect of the author's performance in the *Vita nova*, but I would like to suggest that the *Vita nova* performs the author also in a stronger, performative sense that goes beyond discovering, re–constructing, and re–presenting the author's journey according to an ideal pattern, and involves rather the creation of an author through language. Making an analogy with John Austin's original distinction between constative and performative utterances – that is, between utterances simply describing something and utterances 'doing' something, between utterances affirming facts and utterances producing them –, and referring to Jonathan Culler's discussion of the performative character of literature and the 'active, creative functioning of language', one could indeed say that in my reading, the *Vita nova*'s operation is not constative but, rather, performative, and must therefore be judged not

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9   'La teoria dell'*Auctoritas* nella *Vita nova*', pp. 177–181 and Michelangelo Picone, 'Leggere la *Commedia* di Dante', in *Lectura Dantis Turicensis*, ed. by Georges Güntert, Michelangelo Picone, vol. 1: *Inferno*, Florence 2000, pp. 13–25 (quotation on p. 16).

from the perspective of its truth but of its success:[10] Dante's *libello* does not discover or describe the true meaning of the poems originally written as free–standing *rime*, but rather creates new poems which did not exist before and now exist alongside the originals. In particular, I am interested in how an author comes into being as the poems that Dante had originally written as independent and free–standing *rime* are staged in the *Vita nova* through the operations of selection, order and commentary. That is, my perspective is not on how these operations participate in the discovery of an ideal meaning for Dante's poetic past but, rather, on how they create a new author, who is different from the one of the past.

My collaboration with Teodolinda Barolini on an edition of Dante's *Rime* has proved very important for elaborating this critical perspective.[11] Something that Barolini highlights in her introductions to the individual poems and that has struck me while writing the commentaries in the footnotes for them is what different texts one often encounters when reading them as free–standing *rime* or as a part of the *Vita nova*. Some of the differences between the poems as *rime* and as part of the *Vita nova* have already been pointed out by Domenico De Robertis in his volume *Il Libro della Vita Nuova* (1961 and then 1970) and in his 1980 commented edition of the *Vita nova*, where De Robertis has also indicated that some textual variants were introduced into some poems when they were placed into the *Vita nova*.[12] Yet, although some very important contributions have indicated the models for the *libello*'s prosimetric nature, the temporally–double perspective characterizing the *Vita nova*'s operation has not been

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10 John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, ed. by J. O. Urmson, Oxford 1962. For a discussion of Austin's theory and its significance for literary and cultural criticism, see Jonathan Culler, 'Philosophy and Literature: The Fortunes of the Performative', in *Poetics Today* 21 (2000), pp. 503–519; quote on p. 506. For a discussion of Austin's role in contemporary performance theory, see Uwe Wirth, 'Der Performazbegriff im Spannungsfeld von Illokution, Iteration und Indexikalität', in *Performanz. Von Sprachphilosophie zu den Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. by Uwe Wirth, Frankfurt a. M. 2002, pp. 9–53; and Erika Fischer–Lichte, *Ästhetik des Performativen*, Frankfurt a. M. 2004, pp. 31–57.

11 Dante Alighieri, *Rime giovanili e della 'Vita Nuova'*, ed. by Teodolinda Barolini; with notes by Manuele Gragnolati, Milan 2009. The volume contains sixty–two poems (fifty–seven by Dante Alighieri and five by Dante da Maiano). See also Teodolinda Barolini, 'Saggio di un nuovo commento alle *Rime* di Dante. 1. *La dispietata mente che pur mira*: l'io al crocevia di memoria e disio; 2. *Sonar bracchetti e cacciatori aizzare*: l'io diviso tra mondo maschile e mondo femminile; 3. *Guido, i' vorrei che tu e Lippo ed io*: l'io e l'incanto della non–differenza', in *Dante: Rivista internazionale di studi danteschi* 1 (2004), pp. 21–38.

12 Domenico De Robertis *Il libro della 'Vita Nuova'*, 2nd edn, Florence 1970; Dante, *Vita Nuova*, ed. by De Robertis. These variants have now been systematized and often commented upon in the latest editions of Dante's rime edited by De Robertis: Dante Alighieri, *Rime*, ed. by Domenico De Robertis, 3 vols., Florence 2002; Dante, *Rime*, ed. by De Robertis, Florence 2005.

the object of major attention by critics, who seem to have devoted their analysis to exploring the 'sententia', the 'significance', presented in the *Vita nova*, that is, to analyze the meaning that the poems have within the *libello* and that is presented as the *true* one finally discovered and outlined.[13]

In an article on Dante's *rime*, for instance, Picone stresses that the poems have a different meaning whether read independently or in the *Vita nova*,[14] but claims that once a *rima* has been introduced in the *Vita*

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13 As Teodolinda Barolini recently pointed out, 'the divergence between the prose and the poems is striking and understudied' ('Editing Dante's *Rime* and Italian Cultural History: Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca … Barbi, Contini, Foster–Boyde, De Robertis', in *Lettere italiane* 56 [2004], pp. 409–442; then in Teodolinda Barolini, *Dante and the Origins of Italian Literary Culture*, New York 2006, pp. 245–278 and 433–441, from which I quote; the quotation is on p. 439). A similar point had already been made by Mario Marti, '"L'una appresso de l'altra maraviglia" (*V.N.*, XXIV, 8): Stilnovo, Guido, Dante nell'ipostasi vitanovistica', in *La gloriosa donna de la mente*, ed. by Vincent Moleta, Florence 1994, p. 152: È singolarmente strano e mi è difficilmente comprensibile il fatto che gli studiosi di Dante sappiano bene come sono andate le cose circa la intellettualistica 'costruzione' della *Vita Nuova* da parte dell'autore pressoché al di là del giovanile Stil nuovo […], e poi all'atto pratico considerino l'opera come se invece fosse nata di getto, tutta d'un pezzo, senza far conto alcuno della sua peculiare genesi e della sua interna storia editoriale, e quindi del senso originario dei testi poetici, piegati vistosamente da Dante alle nuove e diverse conclusioni e magari ai nuovi proponimenti progressivamente insorti, chiariti e formulati'. Also Stefano Carrai indicates that 'l'interazione tra le due componenti del testo è un aspetto di primaria importanza per comprenderne il significato. Eppure esso non sembra avere attratto granché l'attenzione degli studiosi. Pochi in effetti sono i lavori specifici che si registrano sulla complementarità fra prosa e poesie e sulla loro diversa funzionalizzazione' (*Dante elegiaco. Una chiave di lettura per la 'Vita nova'*, Florence 2006, p. 77). However, Carrai focuses mainly on the harmony between prose and poetry (especially in the context of the elegiac narrative and mode), and even when he claims he does not want to fall into Dante's trap, he largely believes that some poems may have been written especially for the *Vita nova*. In addition to the works mentioned by Carrai (Ignazio Baldelli, 'Sul rapporto fra prosa e poesia nella *Vita Nuova*', in *Rassegna della letteratura italiana* s. VIII, 80 [1976], pp. 325–337; Picone, 'Strutture poetiche e strutture prosastiche'; 'La *Vita nova* come prosimetrum', in *Percorsi della lirica duecentesca. Dai Siciliani alla 'Vita nova'*, Florence 2003, pp. 237–248; Giorgio Petrocchi, 'Il prosimetrum nella *Vita Nuova*, in *La selva del protonotario. Nuovi studi danteschi*, Naples 1988, pp. 17–31), a significant exception is represented, from my perspective, by two essays by Roberto Leporatti, 'Ipotesi sulla *Vita Nuova* (con una postilla sul *Convivio*)', in *Studi italiani* 7 (1992), pp. 5–36; '"Io spero di dicer di lei quello che mai non fue detto d'alcuna" (*V.N.*, XLII, 2): la *Vita Nuova* come *retractatio* della poesia giovanile di Dante in funzione della *Commedia*', in *La gloriosa donna de la mente*, pp. 249–291. See also Justin Steinberg's discussion regarding the shift of the canzone *Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore* from free–standing *rima* to part of the *Vita nova* (*Accounting for Dante. Urban Readers and Writers in Late Medieval Italy*, Notre Dame 2007, pp. 61–92). I have also found helpful Stillinger, *The Song of Troilus*, pp. 1–22 and 44–117; Steven Botterill, '"Però che la divisione non si fa se non per aprire la sentenzia de la cosa divisa" (*V.N.*, XIV, 13): the *Vita Nuova* as commentary', in *La gloriosa donna de la mente*, pp. 61–76.

14 'Ha … ragione Barbi nel ritenere essenzialmente diversa una lirica letta nel contesto della *Vita Nuova* o del *Convivio* dalla stessa lirica letta invece singolarmente. Una rima accompagnata o meno dal commento dell'autore non viene insomma recepita allo stesso

nova or the *Convivio*, it acquires its proper meaning: 'Ritengo infatti che una lirica, una volta che è stata inclusa nella *Vita nuova* o nel *Convivio*, ha perduto il suo carattere di prova estemporanea, per entrare a far parte di una totalità letteraria e di un ingranaggio compositivo dai quali soltanto riceve il suo significato' (174). On this assumption, Picone draws the conclusion that the lyrics included in the *Vita nova* or the *Convivio* lose their status as *rime* and should therefore not be published among the *rime*. In an article on the theoretical principles informing the editions of Dante's *rime* from Barbi's to De Robertis's, Barolini discusses Picone's argument in some detail, showing the tensions between his view that 'the *Vita nova* and *Convivio* poems deserve their own space within the lyric tradition' and his conclusion that they should not be included in an edition of Dante's rime. Barolini argues that this conclusion is conditioned not only by the 'need to respect Dante's will as the *auctor* of the *Vita Nova*', but also by Petrarch's eventual decision to transcribe his poems in a unified and organic book. Barolini objects that in this way 'a lyric tradition in which no stigma attaches to the free and uncollected lyric is viewed through an inappropriate lens that describes it in terms of what it is not'.[15] She therefore includes every lyric poem written by Dante in her edition of the *rime*, and her commentary maps the history of 'how Dante became Dante', tracing Dante's intellectual development as well as the connections between his lyric poems and the *Commedia*.

By exploring the *Vita nova* from a performative perspective, the question of the *rime*'s true meaning becomes secondary to the question of how the *Vita nova* succeeds in creating new meanings that are so compelling that they can appear to erase any previous meaning. As I mentioned before, textual variants are sometimes introduced in the original poems at the moment of their insertion into the *Vita nova*, but often it is the *mise–en–scène* of the poems in the *Vita nova* that effectively re–writes the poems, endowing them with a new meaning that they did not originally have. While there is no relation of truth between the old and the new poems (in the sense that a poem, once inserted in the *Vita nova*, becomes a new poem and it is not that one is truer than the other), the critics' claim that, once inserted in the *Vita nova*, a poem loses its status as *rima* attests to the success of the *Vita nova*'s performance. What my following analysis will attempt to explore is how this success works, that is, how the *Vita nova* succeeds in creating new meanings and presenting them as the 'true' meanings of the original lyrics.

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modo dal lettore' ('Dante rimatore', in *Lettere classensi* 24 [1995], pp. 171-188; quotation on p. 174).

15 'Editing Dante's *Rime*', p. 268.

The transformations and the new meanings that the lyric poems acquire in the *Vita nova* are many, but in this paper I will focus on the episodes staging the author's spiritual and poetic journey with respect to the figure of Guido Cavalcanti. It will thus be possible to appreciate the ambivalent way in which the *Vita nova* can be defined as an 'act of independence': on the one hand, the *Vita nova* is addressed, if not dedicated to, Cavalcanti, refers to him as an authoritative poet and presents him as Dante's 'first friend', who introduced him to poetry and helped him to affirm himself as a poet; but, on the other hand, the *Vita nova* re–presents the past of its author as a progressive and ideal ability to distance himself form the wrong way of writing à la Cavalcanti that had been a significant part of his poetic and spiritual apprenticeship, and to find a new, correct way of loving and writing about it.[16] In particular, it is in the *Vita nova* that some of the perspectives begin to emerge that will structure the more mature and complex way in which the *Commedia* stages the relationship of its author with Cavalcanti, such as the philosophical competence of Guido, the relationship between love and reason, and Beatrice's similarity to Christ. But it will be especially possible to appreciate the way in which, through the operations of selection, order and commentary, a new author emerges in the *Vita nova* who is different—often substantially different—from the one who had written the *rime*.

The first sonnet of the *libello* already represents a good example of how in the *Vita nova* previously written poems become new poems.

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16 The phrase 'act of independence' is taken from Robert Harrison, *The Body of Beatrice*, Baltimore 1988, p. 84. See also Teodolinda Barolini, *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the 'Comedy'*, Princeton 1984, pp. 123–153, especially 136–138. After the publication of Enrico Malato, *Dante e Guido Cavalcanti: il dissidio per la 'Vita Nuova' e il disdegno di Guido*, Rome 1997 (2nd edn 2004), a harsh debate originated about the temporal relationship between Dante's *Vita nova* and Cavalcanti great philosophical canzone *Donna me prega*. This question does not concern my analysis directly, but I would like to stress that there is no 'objective' element that allows us to maintain the antecedence of either text; see Teodolinda Barolini, 'Dante and Cavalcanti (On Making Distinctions in Matters of Love): *Inferno* 5 in its Lyric Context', in *Dante Studies* 116 (1998), pp. 60–63; and Giorgio Inglese, 'Per Guido Cavalcanti', in *L'intelletto e l'amore. Studi sulla letteratura italiana del Due e Trecento*, Florence 2000, pp. 12–52; Mario Marti, 'Da "Donna me prega" a "Donne ch'avete": non viceversa', in *Da Dante a Croce: proposte consensi dissensi*, Galatina 2005, pp. 7–15. I would tend to believe that the *Vita nova* follows *Donna me prega*, and I wonder whether many of the re–writings that, as we shall see, have been performed in the *Vita nova* are actually to be understood as a reply to Guido's doctrinal canzone. For an updated bibliography on the relationship between Dante and Guido, see Zygmunt Baranski, '"Per similitudine di abito scientifico": Dante, Cavalcanti and the Sources of Medieval 'Philosophical' Poetry', in *Literature and Science in Italian Culture: From Dante to the Present Day*, ed. by Pierpaolo Antonello, Simon Gilson, Oxford 2004, pp. 44–45, n. 21.

Originally, *A ciascun'alma presa e gentil core* is a mere poetic riddle similar to Dante da Maiano's *Provedi, saggio, ad esta visione*, to which the very young Dante replied with *Savete giudicar vostra ragione*. As a free–standing rima, *A ciascun'alma presa e gentil core* offers an obscure description of a dream, which was sent to other poets, some of whom are 'famosi trovatori', famous poets (including Guido Cavalcanti and Dante da Maiano), so that they can decipher its opaque meaning. Through this envoy, the young Dante wanted to establish a dialogue and a relationship with other fellow poets. This aim was achieved, and we have three extant replies to the sonnet. Of these replies the *libello* mentions only that by Guido Cavalcanti, *Vedeste a mio parere onne valore*, indicating that this poetic exchange was the beginning of the friendship between the two poets.

The *Vita nova* changes the meaning of Dante's sonnet, which becomes the account of a vision prophesizing Beatrice's ascent to heaven, which the poet had after the second meeting with her at the age of eighteen. There is nothing in the sonnet itself that indicates that the lady held by Love in the vision is Beatrice, and it is only in the *libello*, which is centred on Beatrice's death and opens and closes with the image of her glory in heaven, that the dream described in the sonnet can represent a premonition of the lady's death. The creation of this new meaning is achieved by two details added in the *Vita nova*: while the sonnet ends with image of Love's departure ('appresso gir lo ne vedea piangendo'), the prose not only specifies that Love leaves still keeping her in his arms ('con essa'), but also adds that he goes to heaven ('verso lo cielo') – a detail that would otherwise be absent in the sonnet. This addition is noted by commentators, who generally interpret it as an anticipation of Beatrice's death. With Picone, I would rather think that, as lines 9–11 of Cavalcanti's reply had already mentioned the hypothesis that the dream may refer to Beatrice's death, in the *Vita nova* the dream is actually not a premonition of Beatrice's death but of her glorious destiny in heaven.[17]

While Picone stresses that this detail also refers to the glorious destiny of Beatrice's poet and to the fact that in the course of the *Vita nova* he will able to turn *eros* into *caritas*, I am rather interested in pointing out that in the *Vita nova* the meaning of the sonnet changes: while originally the sonnet was an 'open' riddle, in the *Vita nova* it acquires a definitive and evident meaning. The *Vita nova* settles the case, indicates the meaning that the poem really had, and adds that the true meaning ('verace giudizio') of the dream was not understood by anybody but is now evident even to the most simple people: 'non fue veduto allora per alcuno, ma ora è

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17   'La *Vita nova* come romanzo', in *Percorsi della lirica duecentesca*, p. 254.

manifestissimo a li più semplici' (III 15 [2.2]). Usually commentators indicate that the dream's true meaning is revealed by Beatrice's death, but I would rather say that this meaning is created by the way in which this sonnet is placed and commented upon in the *Vita nova*. In other words, as it is unlikely that this sonnet referred originally to Beatrice,[18] it is not Beatrice's death that allows the author and everybody to understand what it really meant. On the contrary, the sonnet's new meaning is a textual *performance* of the *Vita nova*, which relates the text to Beatrice for the first time, inserts it in a context centred on her glorious destiny, and adds some significant details. This performance is so successful that after it has taken place, it is difficult to go back and see the open meaning that the poem had as a free–standing *rima* and that does not refer either to the lady's death or even to Beatrice.

While *A ciascun'alma presa* was originally written by Dante as a bravura piece and circulated among poets to create a friendship and a dialogue with them, in the *Vita nova* it has a different aim and becomes a text endowed with a providential meaning conferring authority to its author. Moreover, as we have seen, it explicitly states that Guido Cavalcanti is one of the poets who did not succeed in understanding that which is now indicated as the true meaning of the poem. In this way, exactly at the moment when the *Vita nova* describes its author's entrance into the party of the 'Fedeli d'Amore' and attests to his official acceptance through the indication of his friendship with Cavalcanti, it is also possible to detect a first instance of the critique that the *Divine Comedy* will level against Guido's interpretative faculties.[19]

The *Vita nova*'s performative success continues with the episode of the so–called 'screen–ladies', where some previously–written poems become new poems dealing with the love that the protagonist pretends to feel for two ladies with the purpose of making them 'schermo de la veritade' ('a screen for the truth'; V 3 [2.8]) and thereby hiding and protecting his beloved's true identity. The author says that in order to make people even more convinced of his simulated love for the screen–ladies, he wrote 'certe cosette per rima' ('certain trifles for her in verse'), of which, though, he transcribed in the *libello* only those containing a clear praise for Beatrice (V 4 [2.9]). When read without the prose, the *Vita nova*'s poems about the screen–ladies do not convey any of the meanings that they have in the *libello*. For instance, as a free–standing *rima*, the sonnet *O voi che per la via d'amor passate* is a 'canto dell'abbandono' (De

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18   See *Dante's Lyric Poetry*, ed. by Kenelm Foster, Patrick Boyde, vol. 2, Oxford 1967, p. 23.

19   See Zygmunt Baranski, 'Dante and His First Readers', in *Guido Cavalcanti tra i suoi lettori*, pp. 149–176; '"Per similitudine di abito scientifico"', pp. 13–52.

Robertis, *Il libro*, 56), a conventional lament for the loss of a love that was reason for happiness and joy, and it is only in the *Vita nova* that it becomes a text written to show the sorrow felt for the first screen–lady's departure to another town, and inserted in the *libello* because it also refers to Beatrice.[20]

With the second sonnet of the episode, *Cavalcando l'altr'ier per un cammino*, Dante begins to criticize Cavalcanti in a more substantial way. In particular, as Barolini shows in her introduction to the poem, Dante uses the Cavalcantian concept that love is so intense that it needs some mediation in order to denounce the traditional courtly values and in particular the strategy of 'simulato amore' (IX 6 [4.6]). What I would like to underline is that the context of the *Vita nova* makes *Cavalcando l'altrier* a different text, in this case radically different, from what it is as a free–standing rima. While in itself the sonnet is about falling in love with a new lady, the *Vita nova* says that it was written after the departure of the first screen–lady: as the protagonist travels in the area where she had gone, Love appears to him and tells him that now that she has moved away, he must find a new screen–lady in order to continue to cover Beatrice's identity (IX 5 [4.5]). In this way, a sonnet that, as a free–standing rima, describes love's fickleness and the inconstancy of desire, in the *Vita nova* becomes a text celebrating the protagonist's loyalty and fidelity to Beatrice. It is an audacious operation but the performance is successful, as is demonstrated by recent hypotheses claiming that the text was especially written for the *Vita nova*.[21]

A similar, successful operation also concerns *Ballata i' voi che tu ritrovi Amore*. As a free–standing *rima*, the poem is a conventional exercise in the Occitan genre of the *escondig* in which the poet–lover refutes the negative lies circulating about him, while in the *Vita nova* it is addressed to Beatrice and becomes a text written to tell her that he has never ceased loving her. As in the case of *Cavalcando l'altrier*, these new meanings are also meant to criticize Cavalcanti's idea that love's intensity needs mediation. For this critique, I refer the reader to Barolini's introduction. Here, what I would like to stress about the new meanings that the *libello* creates for the texts related to the screen–ladies, is that this performative operation is so successful that it has even created new texts *in absentia*: while the screen–ladies exist only within the linguistic and poetic operation of the *Vita nova*,

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20 For a detailed analysis of this sonnet as well as the others for the screen ladies, see Manuele Gragnolati, 'Trasformazioni e assenze: la *performance* della *Vita nova* e le figure di Dante e Cavalcanti', in *Dante the Lyrical and Ethical Poet*, ed. by Zygmunt Baranski, Martin McLaughlin, Oxford 2010.

21 See for instance Carrai, *Dante elegiaco*, pp. 107–112.

the indication that only some of the 'certe cosette per rima' were included in the *libello* has pushed critics to try to identify which *rime* not included in the *libello* were written for the first screen–lady and which for the second. In other words, given my interpretation that there are no poems originally written for any screen–lady, the *Vita nova* succeeds in giving new meanings not only to the poems it includes but also to those that it leaves out!

After the episode of the screen–ladies, the re–presentation of the protagonist's spiritual and poetic journey continues with the so–called episode of the *gabbo*, which takes place after Beatrice is offended by the intensity of the love that Dante shows towards the second screen–lady, and withholds his greeting from him. This episode, which lasts from chapter XIV (7) until the discovery of the 'matera nuova e più nobile che la passata' ('a new theme, one more lofty than the last') in chapter XVII (10), continues to reflect on the limitations of past lyric modes. In particular, the loss of Beatrice's greeting, which is not mentioned in any poem, becomes the motif around which the *Vita nova* exemplifies a wrong way of loving that is irrational, narcissistic, and based on the traditional idea of expecting something back from the lady. The *libello* cites here some old poems written in a clearly Cavalcantian manner and thereby makes an explicit association between this wrong way of loving and Cavalcanti's poetry. With respect to the poems as free–standing *rime*, it also adds, or at least it makes it explicit, that this way of loving is irrational and goes against the guidance of reason.[22]

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22   This is clear, for instance, in *Ciò che m'incontra nella mente more* (XV [8]), which is openly written in a Cavalcantian style and describes the poet–lover's fainting in front of the lady. While the poem is centred around the motif that the lover does not follow Love's advice to flee from the lady's presence ('Fuggi, se 'l perir t'è noia' ['Run the other way if you fear death'; 4]) but continues to desire to see her although she is the reason for his 'death', the prose recalls the motif introduced in II 9 (1.10) and IV 2 (2.4), and adds that, in giving his advice, Love is 'counselled by reason' ('consigliato da la ragione'; XV 8 [8.8]). In this way, the *libello* creates an opposition between one way of loving that is guided by reason and another, associated with Cavalcanti, that is not. The contrast between Cavalcanti's concept of love, which stresses the opposition between love and reason, and the *Vita nova*, which affirms the connection between them, is an important aspect usually noticed by critics (see, for instance, Natascia Tonelli, 'Fisiologia dell'amore doloroso in Cavalcanti e Dante', in *Guido Cavalcanti laico*, ed. by Rossend Arqués, Alessandria 2004, pp. 81–82). What I find interesting to point out is that the issue of reason, usually absent in the poems (with the exception of the simile in l. 4 of the sonnet *Amore e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa*), is created by the prose. Here begins the journey that will lead to the great meditations on desire in *Inferno* 5 (for which see Barolini, 'Dante and Cavalcanti', 31–63) and *Purgatorio* 16-18 (for which see Roberto Antonelli, 'Cavalcanti e Dante: Al di qua del Paradiso', in *Dante: Da Firenze all'aldilà*, ed. by Michelangelo Picone, Florence 2001, pp. 289–302, especially 295–296; Donatella Stocchi Perucchio, 'The Knot of Cavalcanti in the *Commedia*: A Few Threads', in *Guido Cavalcanti tra i suoi lettori*, pp. 213–240), and on the human soul in *Purgatorio* 25, where Statius's embryological theory enters into a polemic with that of Avveroes connected to Cavalcanti. I have dealt with the Scholastic debate informing Statius's embryology in

Rather than being concerned with giving new meanings to old poems, the episode of the *gabbo* aims at both staging a Cavalcantian phase of its author that is retrospectively presented as wrong and corrected in the following discovery of the 'stilo della loda', and at constructing the figure of Cavalcanti as a poet uniquely 'doloroso', narcissist and irrational. Thus, the 'stilo della loda', which consists in placing one's happiness not in the lady's greeting (as before) but in praising the lady's beauty and virtue without expecting any reciprocation back from her, can appear as a departure from Cavalcanti more than it has actually been.[23]

The author's ideal journey towards finding his own voice and distancing himself from Cavalcanti reaches its first culmination with the analogy that chapter XXV (15) creates between Beatrice and Christ and that is carefully prepared and made possible by what the *libello* stages before and after that chapter. On the one hand, Dante does not include in the *Vita nova* some poems previously written that would disrupt the ideal journey portrayed in the *libello*, such as the sonnet *Ne le man vostre, gentil donna mia*—where the poet is compared to the suffering Christ in a way that recalls Cavalcanti's tragic concept of love—or the canzoni *Lo doloroso amor* and *E' m'incresce*–where Beatrice's miraculous character is combined with a lethal and mortal power that also recalls Cavalcanti's poetry.[24] On the other hand, the *Vita nova* continuously creates a connection—otherwise absent in the poems—between Beatrice and the number 9, which is explicitly linked to the Trinity.[25] Moreover, the *libello* amplifies Beatrice's miraculous and beneficial effects, thereby turning the beloved from a 'donna angelicata' similar to the ones of other *Stilnovo* texts into an almost divine being similar to Christ.

An interesting instance of such a transformation is represented by *Ne li occhi porta la mia donna amore* (XXI 2–4 [12.2–4]). This sonnet, which recalls several images from Guinizzelli's poetry and shares the metrical

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Experiencing the Afterlife. Soul and Body in Dante and Medieval Culture, Notre Dame 2005, pp. 53–76. The presence of Cavalcanti's *Donna me prega* as a polemic intertext of *Purgatorio* 25 has recently been shown by Baranski, '"Per similitudine di abito scientifico"', pp. 29–36

23   See Leporatti, 'Ipotesi sulla *Vita Nuova*', p. 14.

24   For instance, in *Lo doloroso amor*, Dante writes 'Per quella moro c'ha nome Beatrice' (14), 'Through her I die, whose name is Beatrice'—a sentence that could not enter the *Vita nova*, where Beatrice brings life, not death. On *Lo doloroso amor* and *E' m'incresce*, discussed at length by Barolini in her edition of Dante's *Rime*, pp. 267-279 and 285-291, see also her observations in 'Dante and the Lyric Past', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, pp. 27–28; and in 'Editing Dante's *Rime*', pp. 270–271.

25   See Robert Harrison, 'Approaching the *Vita Nuova*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, p. 37, and Carrai, *Dante elegiaco*, pp. 46–49. For a detailed analysis of number 9 in the *Vita nova*, see Carlo Vecce, '"Ella era uno nove, cioè un miracolo" (*V.N.*, XXIX, 3): il numero di Beatrice', in *La gloriosa donna de la mente*, pp. 161–180.

scheme as well as four rhyme–words and the phrase *fa tremar* with Cavalcanti's *Chi è questa che vèn, ch'ogn'om la mira*, is similar to other Stilnovo poems celebrating the lady's powers. Staged within the *Vita nova*'s sacred and glorifying context, these powers increase and acquire the possibility to generate love even where there's no potency for it, thereby coinciding—as several critics including De Robertis and Gorni have noticed—with a faculty that Scholastic philosophy attributes only to God. This divine faculty, however, is only present in the *Vita nova* and is created by the placement of the sonnet right after *Amore e 'l cor gentile sono una cosa*.[26]

As mentioned above, *Io mi senti' svegliar dentro a lo core* in chapter XXV (15) represents a first point of arrival for this divinization of Beatrice and creates an explicit analogy between Beatrice and Christ. There is no sign of Christ in the sonnet as a free–standing *rima*, which is a description of the poet feeling the power of love at the arrival of Beatrice—here referred to as 'monna Bice'—accompanied by 'monna Vanna', Guido's beloved. On the other hand, in the *libello* the sonnet acquires a Christological meaning that aims at outlining the relationship between Dante and Cavalcanti. The prose interprets 'Primavera' in line 13 as 'prima verrà' and creates the analogy Giovanna : Beatrice = John the Baptist : Amore (Christ). In the divinized context of the *Vita nova*, it in almost necessary for the reader to extend this analogy, explicitly indicated by the prose, to the association between Beatrice and Christ. Moreover, the whole analogy also implies John the Baptist : Christ = Cavalcanti : Dante, indicating in this way that Cavalcanti's poetry is only a preparation for Dante's poetry.[27]

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26 By placing *Ne li occhi porta* after *Amore e 'l cor gentile*, the *libello* can refer to the Scholastic lexicon introduced in the 'divisione' of the former sonnet (which explained love's origin in terms of act and potency), and indicate—probably upon the suggestion of line 9, 'nasce nel core a chi parlar la sente'—that 'per lei [Beatrice] si sveglia questo Amore, e […] non solamente si sveglia là ove dorme, ma là ove non è in potenzia, ella, mirabilmente operando, lo fa venire' ('it is through her that Love is awakened and […] she not only awakens him there where he sleeps, but also […] she, miraculously working, brings hi minto existence there where he is not'; XXI 1 [12.1]). Subsequently, the whole 'divisione' continues to use Scholastic terminology to confirm and amplify the lady's divine faculties.

27 In the case *Io mi senti' svegliar dentro a lo core*, there are no textual variants testifying to its double existence, but the fact that in some manuscripts the sonnet is attributed to Cavalcanti, to whom it was originally addressed, has been considered by Barbi–Maggini (and subsequently by Foster–Boyde) as proof that the sonnet had circulated also before the *Vita nova*. In this case, the difference between the meaning of the poem read as a free–standing *rima* and that acquired within the *libello* is so significant that it seems to confirm Barbi–Maggini's hypothesis. In the 'ragione' of *Io mi senti' svegliar dentro a lo core* it is possible to notice a certain awareness of this *décalage* and almost an attempt to justify it and thereby fill it: before 'copying' the sonnet, the author warns the reader that some details explained in the 'ragione' are absent in the poem ('tacendomi certe parole le quali pareano da tacere'; XXIV 6 [15.6]).

Thus, as was already dramatized in the previous episodes, the new meaning that the *Vita nova* audaciously gives to *Io mi senti' svegliar dentro a lo core* indicates that the author's Cavalcantian phase was merely a preparation for a new and correct way of writing that is better and superior than that of his 'first friend'.[28] Moreover, the *Vita nova* also adds the detail that when the author wrote the sonnet, he did not know that Guido had stopped loving Giovanna, and composed the poem in the belief that Guido was still in love with her ('che ancor lo suo cuore mirasse la bieltade di questa Primavera gentile'; XXIV 6 [15.6]). In this way, the *libello* associates with Guido the negative theme of the mutability of desire that will be an important element of the episode of the 'donna pietosa', where it is staged as a conflict between keeping the loyalty to Beatrice after her death and yielding to the attraction towards a noble and beautiful young lady ('gentile donna giovane e bella molto'; XXXV 2 [24.2]) who had shown some compassion towards the protagonist's sorrow.[29]

Here I shall not explore the details of the episode of the 'donna pietosa' and shall only mention that by giving new meanings to old poems, the *libello* stages the protagonist's new attraction as a relapse into a Cavalcantian way of loving that is narcissistic and irrational.[30] Thus, the return to Beatrice, with which the *Vita nova* concludes the account of its a*(u)ctor*'s ideal journey, also represents the final victory over the temptation of Cavalcanti's poetry. The last chapters of the *Vita nova* also re–state Beatrice's Christological character, which chapter XXIV had already explicitly connected with overcoming Cavalcanti, and, here as well, Beatrice's analogy with Christ is a performance undertaken by the *Vita nova*, achieved through the way in which it orders the poems and comments upon them.

For instance, in the penultimate sonnet of the *libello*, *Deh, peregrini, che pensosi andate*, Dante addresses some pilgrims passing through the 'città dolente', that is, Florence suffering for the death of Beatrice (XL 9 [29.9]), and tells them that while their aspects indicate that they do not know that

28 On this point, see Marti, "L'una appresso de l'altra maraviglia", pp. 141–160; Enrico Fenzi, *La canzone d'amore di Guido Cavalcanti e i suoi antichi commenti*, Genova 1999, pp. 23–25; Robert Durling, 'Guido Cavalcanti in the *Vita nova*', in *Guido Cavalcanti tra i suoi lettori*, pp. 177–186.

29 See Harrison, 'Approaching the *Vita Nuova*', pp. 42–43. On the mutability of desire in Cavalcanti's concept of love, see Enrico Fenzi, '"Costanzia de la ragione" e "malvagio desiderio" (*V.N.*, XXXIX, 2): Dante e la donna pietosa', in *La gloriosa donna de la mente*, pp. 209–211; and Elena Lombardi, 'The Grammar of Vision in Guido Cavalcanti', in *Guido Cavalcanti tra i suoi lettori*, pp. 83–92.

30 For the details, see Gragnolati, 'Trasformazioni e assenze'.

Beatrice died, if they stopped a little and listened to some of his poems, they could not help but cry. While the sonnet only indicates that the 'pilgrims' come from afar ('da sì lontana gente' [3]), the prose goes to great lengths to explain – in a very complicated way that has often puzzled critics – that the sonnet uses the term 'peregrini' in a broad sense and what it actually meant is 'Romei', that is, the particular kind of pilgrims on their way to Rome. The prose also adds that the pilgrims addressed by the poet were going to Rome 'per vedere quella imagine benedetta la quale Iesù Cristo lasciò a noi per essempio de la sua bellissima figura' ('to see the blessed image that Jesus Christ left us as a copy of His most beautiful face'; XL 1 [29.1]), that is, to see the Veronica, the imprint of Christ's face which Christ left on a veil during his passion on the Calvary.

The reason for these additions becomes clear in the following and last sonnet of the *Vita nova*, *Oltre la spera che più larga gira*, which narrates that Dante's mind is able to pass through the nine material heavens, arrive at the Empyrean, and contemplate Beatrice in glory (XLI 3; [30.3]):

> Quand'elli è giunto là ove disira,
> vede una donna che riceve onore,
> e luce sì, che per lo suo splendore
> lo peregrino spirito la mira (ll. 5–8).

> When it has reached the place of its desiring, / it sees a lady held in reverence / splendid in light, and through her radiance / the pilgrim spirit gazes at her being.

In l. 8 the expression 'peregrino spirito' recalls the 'peregrini' going to Rome and seeing the Veronica in the previous chapter. This is a connection noticed by several commentators of the *Vita nova*. For instance, Gorni writes, on the subject of 'peregrino', that 'questa qualità dello spirito congiunge strettamente questo paragrafo al precedente'. What does not seem to have been noticed is that this connection is made possible by the fact that the two sonnets are placed one after the other and, especially, that all the prose commentary about the Veronica creates a further Christological analogy recalling that encountered in *I' mi seniti svegliar dentro a lo core*: if there the analogy was Giovanna: John the Baptist : Cavalcanti = Beatrice : Christ : Dante, at the end of the *Vita nova* the analogy is 'peregrini' : 'spirito peregrino' = Veronica (i.e., Christ's image) : Beatrice, stressing once more the similarity between Christ and Beatrice.

This essay has indicated only some of the examples of the textual strategies that the *Vita nova* deploys to bring into being new poems out of the old material with which it is written. While, as we have seen at the beginning of this paper, the *Vita nova*'s narrative represents an important step towards the constitution of a poetic 'I' that presents itself as an individual and historically determined subject, the element of performance remains important in the *libello*. The re–writing that it creates for poems

originally conceived of as independent *rime* can be considered a 'performance of the author' in two senses: not only in the sense that it is performed by a multi–faceted *auctor* who stages his own past as an ideal spiritual and poetic journey; but also–and this is especially what I have tried to outline–in the sense that through very same act of narrating a new author emerges in the *Vita nova*. It is through this performance that the *libello* creates a different author from the one who had originally written the *rime*, and replaces him. Thanks to their autobiographical and at the same time temporally–double character, the *Vita nova*'s poems represent a special case of poetic 'workshop' or 'laboratory' that can open interesting perspectives onto the way in which Dante constructs his identity in his works. If considered from this perspective, the *Vita nova* is not constative but performative of its author: it does not describe or discover him, but creates him.

The author of the *Vita nova* is not only new with respect to the author of the rime, but by combining the authority of the *auctor* and a character that begins to be personalized and individualized, he also represents a new kind of author. As Albert Ascoli has recently written, it is precisely the insertion of what he calls 'personality' into the largely impersonal and ahistorical category of the medieval *auctor* that makes the *libello* one of the first instances in which an author begins to emerge who is similar to that of modern texts.[31] Recalling Roland Barthes's famous essay on the 'Death of the Author',[32] one could indeed speak in the *Vita nova* of the 'birth of the author', albeit in an initial state. But what I would like to stress is once more that the birth of this author is performative and not constative. From the perspective of my analysis, the author emerging from the *Vita nova* does not pre–exist his text but is performed by it.

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31   'From *Auctor* to Author'; see also Toby Levers, 'The Image of Authorship in the Final Chapter of the *Vita Nuova*', in *Italian Studies* 57 (2002), pp. 6–10.

32   Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image–Music–Text*, ed. by Stephen Heath, London 1977, pp. 142–148.

Almut Suerbaum

Paradoxes of performance:
Autobiography in the songs of Hugo von Montfort
and Oswald von Wolkenstein

1

Performance and its status in medieval lyric has been the subject of lively scholarly debate in the last few years.[1] From a position in which literary interpretations were solely concerned with the transmitted words as texts, scholarly consensus of the last decade has shifted towards regarding words as mere dry bones, highlighting that music and gesture were an integral part of the poetic oeuvre. Yet the centrality of the non-linguistic elements of such works poses methodological problems, and any assessment of the status of courtly lyric within a semi-oral culture is difficult,[2] because much about the external circumstances remains unknown and perhaps irrevocably unknowable. Some facts about the works with which we are concerned here can nevertheless be stated: courtly love lyric in Germany was, for the most part, 'performed' in the literal sense, at least initially, so that we are dealing with texts intended to be sung, and indeed performed, to an audience. They were therefore, it seems, conceived as an ensemble of words and music, realized by a singer in front of an aristocratic audience. At the same time, most courtly love lyric employs a lyric 'I' which is not normally named or identified, thus offering a generic 'I' which is in principle open to all listeners, while at the same time

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1   For the debate in Germany, the volume *'Aufführung' und 'Schrift' in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller, Stuttgart 1996, remains central; cf. Timo Reuvekamp-Felber, 'Fiktionalität als Gattungsvoraussetzung. Die Destruktion des Authentischen in der Genese der deutschen und romanischen Lyrik', in *Text und Kultur. Mittelalterliche Kultur 1150-1450*, ed. by Ursula Peters, Stuttgart 2001, pp. 377-402, for a review of positions. Mireille Schnyder, 'Minnesang (um 1200)', in *Literarische Performativität. Lektüre vormoderner Texte*, ed. by Cornelia Herberichs, Christian Kiening, Zurich 2008, pp. 121-136, notes that in this debate, visual phenomena have been neglected, and argues for the significance of visualization in assessing elements of self-staging in courtly loves songs from around 1200.

2   The term 'semi-oral' to describe the characteristic feature of medieval textuality was introduced by Paul Zumthor, *La lettre et la voix: De la littérature médiévale*, Paris 1987*;* cf. Reuvekamp-Felber (n. 1), pp. 377 f.

maintaining a distance from a collective form of identity, often through acts of overt criticism of the audience. This strategy of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion necessitates a complex negotiation between singer and listener on the one hand, and between author and implied audience on the other.

German courtly love lyric nevertheless poses a specific problem: for most of the poets of the thirteenth century, melodies do not survive, so that we depend on the metrical construction of the strophes as a reminder of their musical shape. This does not, however, change the theoretical requirement to consider them as set in their performance situation, just like their Romance counterparts and models.[3] Recent studies of performance and performance situation have often referred to the methodological dilemma of having to consider a cultural context about which we know so little, particularly with respect to crucial details such as the shape of the melody, the nature of the musical performance, and the relationship between author and performer. Yet this is where a concept of the 'performative' may be useful, because performance in the sense of Austin is more than just the musical realisation of a song.[4] Performatives are intrinsically linked to acts of speech, and it is through these that a transformation of listeners into singer takes place. Hence, elements of ritual are embedded in the very language of courtly poetry, and it is these linguistic elements which will be the focus of the present study. In asserting the singer's intention of offering love service to the lady, courtly love songs can be seen as an illocutionary act: in the singing of the song, they perform the very service they declare.

More importantly, though, courtly love songs incorporate textual signals which, in asserting the singer's intention of offering love service to a lady, perform that very service. Statements of singing are therefore by their very nature not constative or declarative, but performative: they constitute the very action to which they refer. If understood in this sense, the significant aspect of courtly love lyric is not its hypothesized link with actual performance, but rather its interpretation of the poetic as a ritual act.[5]

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3   On the relationship between words and music as a formal construction, cf. Robert Guiette, 'D'une poésie formelle en France au moyen âge', in *Questions de littérature*, ed. by Robert Guiette, Ghent 1960, pp. 9-18; Paul Zumthor, 'De la cricularité du chant (à propos des trouvères des XIIe et XIIIe siècles)', in *Poétique* 1 (1970), pp. 129-140; Michel Zink, 'Musique et subjectivité. Le passage de la chanson d'amour à la poésie personelle au XIIIe siècle', in *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 25 (1983), pp. 225-232.

4   John L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words: The William Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, ed. by J. O. Urmson, Oxford 1962, pp. 14 f.

5   For a discussion of the connection between courtly love lyric and ritual, cf. Jan-Dirk Müller, 'Ritual, pararituelle Handlungen, geistliches Spiel. Zum Verhältnis von Schrift und

Such connections between courtly love lyric and ritual emphasize the openness of the speaker's role, in that like most ritual acts, courtly love songs rely on establishing a sense of collective.[6] This changes with the introduction of autobiographical elements into a form which, at least in the German literary situation of the thirteenth century, had been regarded as inherently collective. Autobiographical elements, referring to an identifiable and unique 'I' outside textual reality, require radically different forms of negotiating and staging the self, since they allow for tension between the collective 'I' of courtly lyric on the one hand, and autobiographical subjectivity on the other.

2

When considering late medieval German poetry, it looks at first sight as if the situation were radically different from that prevailing in the thirteenth century, in that for poets like Hugo von Montfort or Oswald von Wolkenstein, we possess not only a textual transmission which is close to the authors, but also manuscripts containing the actual melodies. The transmission therefore suggests that these were seen as songs composed for musical performance in the literal sense, and although we know very little about the actual audience or indeed the performance practice of these songs, they are presented as texts in which it is possible to analyse music and words as mutually complementary structures, as texts moreover in which both authors exercise close control over the material form in which the ensemble of music and words is transmitted in manuscripts.[7]

Performanz', in *Audiovisualität vor und nach Gutenberg. Zur Kulturgeschichte der medialen Umbrüche*, ed. by Horst Wenzel, Winfried Seipel, Gotthart Wunberg, Vienna 2001, pp. 63-71, esp. pp. 65 f.; cf. Thomas Cramer, *'Waz hilfet âne sinne kunst'? Lyrik im 13. Jahrhundert. Studien zu ihrer Ästhetik*, Berlin 1998, esp. pp. 9-48. Yet this association with ritual practice is not unproblematic, as it downplays the degree to which lyric texts consciously play with variation, thus reflecting on the stylized nature of literary texts in a way that cultural rituals do not; see Reuvekamp-Felber (n. 1), pp. 379 f., for a critical review of the use of 'ritual' or 'para-ritual' in the context of courtly love lyric.

6   Rainer Warning, 'Lyrisches Ich und Öffentlichkeit bei den Trobadors: Wilhlem IX. von Aquitanien "Molt jauenz, mi prenc en amar"', in Rainer Warning, *Lektüren romanischer Lyrik. Von den Trobadors zum Surrealismus*, Freiburg i. Br. 1997, pp. 45-84, analyses the significance of this in early Provencal lyric; cf. Reuvekamp-Felbert (n.1), pp. 386 f., on the same song. Both authors highlight the fact that here, as in other songs by Guillaume IX, the use of a variety of differentiated first-person roles signals that these are not reflections of 'authentic' speech, but highly stylized and inherently fictional in nature.

7   Both aspects are obvious in the manuscript transmission; the main manuscript of Hugo's oeuvre (Heidelberg UB, Cod. pal. germ. 329) was commissioned by the author himself, whose crest is inserted in the manuscript on f. 54r; cf. Hugo von Montfort, *Das poetische Werk. Texte, Melodien, Einführung*, ed. by Wernfried Hofmeister, Berlin, New York 2005,

Voice, as the trace of the body within language, is still not tangible to us immediately, yet the manuscript transmission at least contains a written reminder of its presence.[8]

In Hugo von Montfort's oeuvre, elements of staging a self within the text of the songs are prominent. He refers to his own life as an amateur poet:

> so han ich vil geticht in weldern und in awen
> und dartzu geritten;
>
> dis buch han ich gemachen
> den sechßten tail wol ze rosesn,
> darum sol nieman lachen,
> ob es ist als gentzleich nicht beslossen,
>
> als ob ich es hett
> mitt sitten aussgemessen
> und wer gesessen an ainem bett:
> so hett ich zwar dest minder ichts vergessen. (31, 147-156)[9]

> I did much composing of poetry while riding through fields and woods. More than a sixth of this book was composed on horseback, which is why no one should laugh if it is not as polished as if I had properly arranged it sitting on a bed—in which case I might have overlooked fewer mistakes.

In broad outline, these statements appear to conform with what we know of Hugo von Montfort from historical sources: he was indeed a member of the aristocracy and appears to have treated the composition of poetry

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here pp. xxiv-xxvii, and the digitized facsimile of the manuscript available at http://www-gewi.uni-graz.at/montfort-edition. For Oswald von Wolkenstein, the two main manuscripts, though clearly not autographs, were almost certainly commissioned by and for Oswald; one was given to the library of Duke Albrecht of Austria during Oswald's lifetime, the other remained in the ownership of the family (UB Innsbruck, no shelfmark; digitized at http://iubk.ac.at/ub/dea/projekte/alo_2005.html); cf. Erika Timm, *Die Überlieferung der Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, Lübeck, Hamburg 1972 (Germanische Studien 242), Anton Schwob, 'Beobachtungen zur Handschrift A Oswalds von Wolkenstein', in *Entstehung und Typen mittelalterlicher Liederhandschriften. Akten des Grazer Symposiums 13.-17. Oktober 1999*, ed. by Anton Schwob, András Vizkelety, Berne 2001 (Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik; Reihe A: Kongressberichte 52), pp. 243-254, and Johannes Spicker, *Oswald von Wolkenstein. Die Lieder*, Berlin 2007 (Klassiker Lektüren 10), pp. 13-19.

8   The notion of 'performance' as the constitutive difference between voice and language is central to Paul Zumthor, *Introduction à la poésie orale*, Paris 1983, p. 9ff.; cf. Sybille Krämer, 'Sprache - Stimme - Schrift: Sieben Gedanken über Performativität als Medialität', in *Performanz. Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaft*, ed. by Uwe Wirth, Frankfurt a. M. 2002, pp. 323-346, esp. p. 340.

9   Here and in the following, quotations are from Hugo von Montfort, *Das poetische Werk. Texte, Melodien, Einführung* (n. 7), giving the number of the song and line references as well as references to the strophes in Roman numerals where applicable. Translations are my own.

as a pastime.[10] Yet this seemingly autobiographical piece of information is part of a more elaborate strategy of self-staging throughout the entire song. This is obvious from the opening lines, which introduce a dream vision: the poet narrates how he is confronted by a priest who challenges him with having spent all his time praising women, chastising him for a lack of wisdom in esteeming the world and worldly love above God.[11] What appears at first to be a straightforward relativising of secular love in the context of love of God acquires a more overtly literary note when the priest engages in a detailed critique of the style in which such praise of women has been offered. The priest criticizes the ornate style and tendency toward 'blüemen' (31,5), a standard piece of poetological vocabulary with which a whole generation of learned poets describe their own activity. Although the poetic voice appears to concur, moving toward an abandonment of earlier poetic ambitions, the song paradoxically culminates in a reassertion of self as poet, in that the closing strophes offer a comprehensive catalogue of Hugo's known oeuvre, listing not just the total number of songs composed over his lifetime, but also differentiating them by genre.[12] Yet at the same time as asserting his authority as a poet, he abrogates responsibility for composing the music, which is the work of a professional composer commissioned by him for the purpose:

> die weysen zu den liedern,
> der han ich nicht gemachen:
> ich wil euch nicht betreigen,
> es hat ein ander getan froleich und auch lachen.
>
> ob ich euchs sagen wolt,
> so seit ich euchs zwar recht:

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10   For a summary of biographical evidence about Hugo's life, see Burghard Wachinger, 'Hugo von Montfort', in *VL* 4 (1983), cols 243-251, esp. cols 243-245. The link established between body and writing in the tradition of late medieval religious writing is explored by Urban Küsters, 'Narbenschriften. Zur religiösen Literatur des Spätmittelalters', in *Mittelalter. Neue Wege durch einen alten Kontinent*, ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller, Horst Wenzel, Stuttgart 1990, pp. 81-109; cf. also Urban Küsters, 'Der lebendige Buchstabe. Christliche Traditionen der Körperschrift im Mittelalter', in *Audiovisualität* (n. 5), pp. 107-117, and the volume *Schrift*, ed. by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, Karl Ludwig Pfeiffer, Munich 1993.

11   On the siginificance of *revocatio* within the context of courtly love lyric, see Albrecht Haussmann, *Reinmar der Alte als Autor. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung und zur pragmatischen Identität*, Tübingen, Basle 1999, pp. 132-136.

12   Most significantly, the catalogue distinguishes between 'liet' in strophic from, and couplet verse forms which are referred to as 'rede': 'zehen lieder han ich gemachen, /als sy hie geschriben stan' (31,173f.; 'I have composed ten lyric songs, which are written down here'); 'der reden sint sibentzehen' (31,165; 'there are seventeen didactic pieces').

>   die weysen hat gemacht Burk Mangolt,
>   unser getrewer knecht.
>
>   ze Pregentz ist er gesessen
>   und dient uns gar so schon.
>   vil weys hat er gemessen
>   mit lobleichem don. (31,177-188)

>   I did not make the tunes to these songs myself. I don't want to deceive you;
>   someone else composed them merrily and with laughter. If I am to tell you, I'll
>   tell you properly: Burk Mangolt composed the tunes, my faithful servant. He lives
>   in Bregenz and has served me well. He had composed many a tune with pleasant
>   sound.

Two things are significant about this song: it treats composition of words and composition of music as distinct tasks, clearly subordinating music to words. Authorial responsibility is exercised in the planning and composition of the song as a whole, but this does not include composition of the tune, which is instead considered the job of a subservient professional craftsman. Second, the song embraces what appear to be contradictory positions towards secular authorship, by combining rejection of worldly poetry, as advocated by the priest, with self-assertion as a poet. This is obvious in the handling of internal dialogue within the song: where initially, the voice of the priest as heard in the dream vision takes precedence, the final strophes of the song reassert the poetic 'I'.[13] Even in the act of rejecting secular pleasures and secular poetry, the song expresses its concern with preserving the authorial oeuvre as intact and wellordered. In the closing strophes, this act of composition is finally interpreted not just as an act of secular self-assertion, but as a possible path to salvation through the intercession of the song's listeners:

>   ich bitt euch all gemain,
>   wer das buch horet lesen,
>   das mir iegkleichs sunder ain
>   wunsch gelukch und dort das ewig wesen (31,253-256)

>   I beg of you, who have listened to my book being read out, to wish me success
>   on earth and eternal life.

The manuscript transmission moreover relativizes even such rejection as had been expressed on the surface of the song, in that the opening line of the following song announces the resumption of poetic activity:

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13   On the use of dreaming as a framing device for visions, see Annie Sutherland in this
     volume; dreaming as the moment of divine inspiration is moreover often associated with
     reflections on the status of poetry and human authorship: cf. Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in
     the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 1992, esp. pp. 130-140, on the self-reflexive nature of dream
     visions.

> Hie wider heb ich tichten an
> mit hilff gots, des werden herren (32,1 f.)

> Here, I resume my poetry with the help of God, our noble Lord.

Elements which appear at first sight to relate to the author's biography occur not just in references to the activity of composing poetry, but also in the inclusion of dates. Such references were extremely rare in earlier courtly love songs in German, and where dates occur at all they are invariably part of a scribal colophon and thus part of a later commentary on an author's songs.[14] Hugo on the other hand closes some of his songs with explicit datings:

> gemacht und geben ze Ensishain,
> nach Crist geburt drewzehenhundert iar
> (in ainem stublein, das was klain)
> im sech und nutzgosten—das ist war
>
> von mir, deim getrewen diener vest
> mit willen ane wenken. (23,37-42)

> Composed and dictated in Ensishaim in the year 1396—in a small chamber—by me, your faithful and unwaveringly loyal servant.

Thus, the love song performed in the presence of an aristocratic audience mutates into a love letter addressed to the beloved or wife, though it needs to be borne in mind that letters, even in late medieval Germany, are still a medium of semi-public performance, intended mostly for public recitation rather than private silent reading.[15] At the same time, these lines quite clearly refer to the formulaic language familiar from attestations at the end of chancery documents, thus relating the truthfulness of the stated facts to the medium of writing. In quoting the formula, the song appropriates claims for the validity of its statement about love in a context which had hitherto been reserved to actionable legal claims—the beloved is not just given verbal assurances of the singer's love, but granted a sealed letter confirming her claim. A variant of this strategy is found in song 34, which takes the form of a love letter to the poet's wife:

> gesigelt mit meinen rechten trewen,
> damit ich dir versprochen han.
> ich hoff, es tu mich niemer rewen,
> ich well mit gottes hilff bestan.

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14 The Würzburg manuscript E, transmitting songs by Walther and Reinmar, contains references to the burial of Walther in Würzburg; for a discussion of this as textual evidence for the reception of Walther and Reinmar as local poets, cf. Ricarda Bauschke, *Die 'Reinmar-Lieder' Walthers von der Vogelweide. Literarische Kommunikation als Form der Selbstinszenierung*, Heidelberg 1999 (Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift: Beihefte 15).

15 Cf. Christine Wand-Wittkowski, *Briefe im Mittelalter. Der deutschsprachige Brief als weltliche und religiöse Literatur*, Herne 2000, on the genre of letters in the Middle Ages and the significance of public reading.

> geben ze Wienn in der vasten
> nach Crists geburt viertzehenhundert iar
>
> (in selden mussen wir rasten)
> und in dem andern (das ist war)
>
> von mir—du waist wol, wer ich bin.
> ich bin dir holt mit eren;
> von gottes gnad han ich den sin—
> ich lass mirs nieman weren. (34,45-56)
>
> Sealed with my faith, as I had promised to you. I hope that I shall never repent of
> it, and hope to succeed with God's help. Written in Vienna during Lent in the
> year 1400 after the birth of Christ (may we rest in His grace) and also in the year
> 1402 (that is true) by me—you know who I am, and that I mean well by you.
> God has granted me my good sense, and I will not allow anyone to hinder me in
> this.

Despite such overt reference to the biographical reality of a given and specific time and place, it is significant that the 'I' refuses to name himself, reverting instead to the role of anonymity common in the earlier courtly tradition. At the same time, the anonymity of the poet is here made explicit and thus refunctionalized within the context of the relationship with a specific addressee who, it is claimed, will know the author without the need for explicit naming. Authorship is thus both public and private, simultaneously specific to a unique set of historical circumstances and persons, and open to a general readership.

What we see here is therefore part of a conscious self-staging of the author as aristocratic amateur. Johannes Spicker has stressed the significance of Hugo von Montfort's claims to authorship and literate control;[16] yet what his account perhaps underestimates is the significance of imagined poetic construction within this context. This is evident when Hugo inserts his own poetic enterprise into an illustrious literary context by referring to *Titurel*, Wolfram's poetic experiment of narrating the Grail story in lyric form, or more likely, the so-called *Jüngerer Titurel*, Albrecht von Scharfenberg's mammoth retelling of Wolfram's fragment, as his poetic model. Such references to *Titurel* are not simply to a book as source material, conferring authority through its status as written evidence, but rather to its metrical and musical form—Hugo's use of the complex *Titurel* strophe is obvious even in his metrical distortions. This suggests that while actual music-making may well be perceived as inferior and the task of subservient professionals, imaginary performance is still very much part

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16 Johannes Spicker, 'Singen und sammeln. Autorschaft bei Oswald von Wolkenstein und
    Hugo von Montfort', in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 126 (1997), pp. 174-192, who sums
    up: 'Hugos Selbststilisierung ist die Konstitution einer Autorfigur, die sich der höfisch-
    gesellschaftlichen Sängerfigur entgegenstellt' (p. 190).

of an aristocratic self-fashioning.[17] Authorship as presented here is therefore as much established through the act of archiving, exercising control over the collection of written words, as in the imagined realization, even though the image of composition on horseback is almost certainly no more autobiographical than the statements of Ovidian heroines who claim to compose their letters in prison or on their death-bed.[18]

The most prominent feature of Hugo's self-presentation therefore appears to be not his insistence on literate authorship, but an ideal of aristocratic life in which the composition of love-songs is as much part of Hugo's identity as his existence as a knight. The image conjured up in this way is of course a fiction, and one which is indebted to notions of courtly literature which by the late fourteenth century must have appeared old-fashioned. Yet in his programmatic opposition between the professional composer of tunes and the aristocratic composer of the lyric, Hugo revives the dichotomies established between the courtly love lyric ('Minnesang') as part of an aristocratic art of self-representation, and the didactic or political song ('Spruchdichtung', later also referred to as 'Meistersang') as the work of professional, and paid, servants.

This is obvious also in Hugo's handling of the love theme. In accordance with his self-presentation, the majority of his songs are love songs or love letters, yet it is equally clear that he modifies the conventions of earlier courtly love lyric by making the addressee of his songs explicit: from suggestions in many of the songs, it is apparent that they are addressed to his wife and not an unnamed lady. At the same time, Hugo combines singing of secular love with moral discourse on love of God. His oeuvre explores two distinct modes of introducing religious discourse: either in the form of overtly didactic strophes, intent on reminding the listener of moral truths, or in explicitly relativising the pursuit of worldly pleasure. This is evident in song 24 with its *revocatio* of love songs. Here, the catalogue of 'Weiberlisten', in which women, from Helen of Troy to Kriemhilt, are shown as leading men astray, associates love of women with temptation by the devil. Under the influence of learned books ('die buch, die geschriben sind / vor mangen hundert iaren' 24,125f.; 'books composed many hundreds of years ago'), love, which had

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17   Volker Mertens, 'Visualizing Performance? Music, Word and Manuscript', in *Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages*, ed. by Kathryn Starkey, Horst Wenzel, New York 2005, pp. 135-158, with reference to the so-called 'Dießenhofener Liederblatt'; cf. Eckart Conrad Lutz, *Das 'Dießenhofener Liederblatt': Ein Zeugnis späthöfischer Kultur*, Freiburg i. Br. 1994.

18   For an early modern adaptation of Ovidian self-stylization, cf. Almut Suerbaum, 'Ovidius Christianus. Helius Eobanus Hessus im Kontext der Heroides-Rezeption', in *Humanismus in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Nicola McLelland, Hans-Jochen Schiewer, Stefanie Schmidt, Tübingen 2008, pp. 89-103.

been praises as a source of joy and sweetness, is now discernible as a
potential source of temptation and destruction:

> 'gros sund macht den menschen blint.'
> Der tivel kan des varen,
>
> das er gesicht noch gehort
> und liept im schnod sachen;
> die guten sind dann zerstort—
> des tut der tievel lachen. (24,127-132)

> 'Grave sin turns man blind.' The devil is able to bring it about that someone no
> longer sees or hears [what is true] and falls in love with unworthy things. This
> destroys good people, which makes the devil laugh.

What had started as a secular love song has turned into an appeal to the
listener's conscience ('sint guter gewissen nicht ze lass, so tund ir recht—
das glaubent mir!', 24,135 f.; 'if your consceince is not too lax, you do well
—believe me!'). A similar shift in perspective is staged in more dramatic
form in Hugo's variations on the traditional dawn song, for example in
song 12. Here, the opening line ('Sag an wachter, wie was es tag', 12,1;
'Announce, watchman, how it could be day') evokes the literary genre of
the dawn song, in which the lovers articulate their lament at the prospect
of separation imminent because of the approach of daybreak.[19] Yet this is
swiftly turned into something quite different: the question refers not to
the uncomfortable speed with which the night of love-making turns into
day, but instead to the presence of God as the creator, omnipresent before
the existence of anything created, such as heaven and earth, and hence,
daybreak:

> 'Sag an wachter, wie was es tag,
> do himel und erd nit emphlag
> planeten zwar und aich dei element?'
>   'da luchtet weder sunn noch man.
> gott waz in der maiestat vil schon
> gewaltic ye und ist noch ewenklichen.
>   "gott ist das wort, das wort ist got".:
> damit gemacht an allen spott
> all sach vil schon nach irer aigenschefte.' (12,1-9)

> 'Announce, watchman, how it could be day when heaven and earth, planets and
> even elements had not yet been created?' 'Neither sun nor moon shone at that

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19   On the literary tradition of the dawn song, see Ralf Breslau, *Die Tagelieder des späten
     Mittelalters. Rezeption und Variation eines Liedtyps der höfischen Lyrik*, diss. FU Berlin 1987.
     Breslau mentions Hugo von Montfort in passing, p. 72, but excludes the religious dawn
     songs (e.g. X and XII) from his discussion; cf. Alois Wolf's introduction to the anthology
     Tagelieder des deutschen Mittelalters, ed. Martina Backes, Stuttgart 1992, pp. 11-81; André
     Schnyder, *Das geistliche Tagelied des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit. Textsammlung,
     Kommentar und Umrisse einer Gattungsgeschichte*, Tübingen, Basle 2004, esp. pp. 554-569, on the
     relationship between secular and religious dawn songs.

time. Yet God was resplendent in his majesty then, and is now, and will be evermore. "God is the word, and the word is God." Thus, he truly created all things beautifully and in accordance with their properties.'

The second strophe expands on the praise of the omnipotent as well as omnipresent creator God, yet culminates in a contrast established between man and the rest of creation: 'der mensch, der tut doch sunden' (12,18; 'yet man alone sins'). Faced with the certainty of human sinfulness, the singer turns to God in an appeal for mercy:

> mein sel, mein lip vir ubel bewar—
> ich ger genad, nit rechtes! (12,26f.)

> Save my soul and my body from evil; I appeal for mercy, not justice!

What had appeared like an invocation of human love and the erotic tension between intimacy and imminent separation is thus turned into a reflection on the unbridgeable gap between man and God; a gap which can be overcome not through any claim on the part of the human supplicant, but only through divine mercy.[20]

Appropriation of the role of preacher may appear to us an uncomfortable combination with the stance of the courtly lover, yet in Hugo's oeuvre, this element of his self-presentation provides a form of authorisation which stands in paradoxical contrast to forms of authentication through biographical detail and individual experience. On the one hand, the discourse of love is taken from generalizing role-play into an intimacy in which the universal beloved becomes the singer's wife—yet at the same time, a universal perspective is reclaimed by turning the experience of secular love into a discourse on sin and salvation. Thus, the life of the singer is both more and less defined than was apparent at first sight.

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With Oswald von Wolkenstein, such self-representation takes on a much more complex guise. Many of his songs stage the paradox of conflicting roles: the courtly aristocrat who experiences isolation as a result of political conflict; the husband who evokes images of domestic strife for

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20   The praise of the creator-God, expanded in the second strophe of the song, introduces oxymoronic imagery of the uncreated Creator who sustains the earth in its depth without bottom and the immeasurable height, and evokes phrases from Psalm 103 which resurface in Oswald's more complex praise of the creator in K 31 'Was oben swebt'; cf. Almut Suerbaum, 'Selbstinszenierung und literarische Tradition: Oswalds Lied K 31 "Der oben swebt"', in *'mit clebeworten underweben. Festschrift für Peter Kern zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Thomas Bein et al., Frankfurt a. M. 2007, pp. 65-76.

the amusement of a small circle of listeners; the worldly lover whose wooing song transmutes into praise of the Virgin Mary. Three examples will be used to illustrate aspects of the paradoxical in Oswald's constructions of self in his songs.

Unlike earlier authors whose lives are familiar to us solely through the —unreliable—medium of statements about themselves in their songs, Oswald is a historical figure in his own right whose life has left a documentary trail on more than one level: relations with his family, especially his brothers, are manifest in the extensive correspondence concerning the disputed inheritance of the castle Hauenstein after the death of Oswald's father; his activity in imperial service is documented, from his association with the Austin canons at Neustift to his relations with the diocese of Brixen, and missions for the imperial court; his marriage to Margarete of Suabia is recorded.[21] Yet Oswald differs from earlier poets not in the extent to which we have access to externally verifiable information about his life, but in the extent to which his life becomes a feature of his poetry, in that a significant part of Oswald's oeuvre relies on autobiographical statements about the life of the 'I' in order to construct a persona. Some, but by no means all of these statements can be verified against historical records, and there are significant discrepancies between the contours of the person we know, or can reconstruct, from historical sources, and the persona created within the songs. This is evident in one of Oswald's most famous autobiographical songs, the catalogue of his journeys 'Durch Barbarei, Arabia' (K 44).[22]

The first strophe of the song orchestrates a contrast: syntactically, it consists of a catalogue of countries through which the singer has travelled, anaphorically linked by the prepositions 'durch' ('across') and 'bis' ('as far as'); yet these travels are firmly situated in the past of the singer, whose present is confined by his strained domestic circumstances at his castle at

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21 A summary of biographical information is provided by Burghart Wachinger, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', in *VL* 7 (1989), cols 134-169; see also Anton Schwob, *Oswald von Wolkenstein. Eine Biographie*, Bozen 1977 (Schriftenreihe des Südtiroler Kulturinstitutes 4), and the edition of historical document releting to Oswald's life in *Die Lebenszeugnisse Oswalds von Wolkenstein. Edition und Kommentar*, 3 vols, ed. by Anton Schwob, Vienna 1999-2004.

22 Quotations here and elsewhere are from *Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, ed. by Karl Kurt Klein, 3rd revised edn by Hans Moser, Norbert Richard Wolf, Norburga Wolf, Tübingen 1987 (ATB 55), here pp. 143-147, giving the number of the song in Klein's edition; English translations are my own. For a modern German translation and commentary on this song, see also *Lyrik des späten Mittelalters*, ed. by Burghart Wachinger, Frankfurt a. M. 2006 (Bibliothek des Mittelalters 22), pp. 546-607 (text and translation) and pp. 977-1022 (commentary), and *Oswald von Wolkenstein, Lieder*, ed. and trans. by Burghard Wachinger, Stuttgart 2007, here pp. 196-203 (text, music, and translation) and pp. 368-370 (commentary).

the foot of the Schlern mountain. The contrast is emphatic: home is a place of imprisonment and confinement, contrasted with the wide scope of earlier journeys. Even the syntactic construction underlines the sense of deprivation, in that the catalogue is presented not as a list of positive statements, but as a series of negations:

> Durch Barbarei, Arabia,
> durch Harmeaneu in Persia,
> durch Tartarei in Suria,
> durch Romanei in Turkia,
> Ibernia,
> der sprüng hab ich vergessen. (K 44, I, 1-6)

> Across the land of the Berbers and Arabia, across Armenia into Persia, across Tartary into Syria, across Byzantium into Turkey and Georgia—those jaunts are no longer familiar to me.[23]

or, in the west

> durch Flandern, Frankreich, Engellant
> und Schottenland
> hab ich lang nicht gemessen. (K 44, I, 10-12)

> Across Flanders, France, England and Scotland—it is a long time since I passed through them.

As far as can be ascertained, the historical Oswald did indeed travel though most of the countries named in these songs, and Ratzes as the place of residence fits both the historical evidence and statements made in another seemingly autobiographical song, 'Es fuegt sich, do ich was von zehen jaren alt' (K 18; 'Once, when I was ten years old').[24] To a contemporary audience, the references a castle at the foot of the Schlern, situated on a round hill surrounded by forest ('auf einem kofel rund und smal / mit dickem wald umbfangen') must have identified the singer as Oswald von Wolkenstein, whom they knew to live in a castle called Hauenstein. Oswald's residence there had been the cause of twenty years of legal battle between Oswald and his brother, and given the fact that many of the local families were drawn into the dispute on both sides, the association between Hauenstein and Oswald must have been obvious for a regional audience.[25]

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23 'Romanei' here means the Byzantine Empire, 'Ibernia' is likely to refer to classical 'Iberia' south of the Caucasus (i.e. Georgia), cf. Wachinger, *Oswald von Wolkenstein* (n. 22), p. 369.

24 For a discussion of the biographical detail, see Ulrich Müller, *'Dichtung' und 'Wahrheit' in den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein. Die autobiographischen Lieder von den Reisen*, Göppingen 1968 (GAG 1), esp. pp. 76-86; Anton Schwob, "'hùssorge tuot sô wê". Beobachtungen zu einer Variante der Armutsklage in der mhd. Lyrik', in *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 1 (1980/82), pp. 11-97, esp. pp. 91-97.

25 In 1400, Oswald had inherited a—heavily mortgaged—share in the castle, together with his brothers Michael and Leonhard, though this was the cause of a long drawn-out and

Nevertheless, the poetic significance of the song does not rest on its autobiographical identification of the singer with Oswald, since it is equally obvious that the shape of the strophes is very highly stylized, focusing on the contrast between the wide open world of the singer's youth, and his imprisonment at home. The song derives its poetic tension from the juxtaposition of three facets of the lyric 'I': it is simultaneously the experienced traveller, the downtrodden husband oppressed at home, and the outcast, isolated from friends and neighbours alike. All three of these facets of the lyric 'I' can be related to the historical Oswald, yet all three also refer to poetic roles which have significance beyond the individual autobiography. This is most obvious in the role of the long-suffering husband and its play with role inversions: the husband and head of the household portrays himself as plagued by the noise of children, driven to the limits of his patience, and in constant fear of his wife:

> vor angst slach ich mein kinder
> offt hinhinder.
> Dann kompt ir mueter zue gepraust,
> zwar die beginnt zu schelten
> (es gäb mir eins mit der faust,
> des müesst ich ser engelten),
> si spricht: 'wie hast du nu erzaust
> die kind zu ainem zelten!'
> Ab irem zoren mir da graust,
> doch mangel ich sein selten,
> scharpf mit spelten. (Kl 44, II,20-30)

> Frightened, I often beat my children and drive them into a corner. Then, their mother comes running and chides me. If she were to beat me with her fist, I'd really feel that. She cries: 'How you have beaten the children to a pulp!' Her rage terrifies me, yet I rarely escape it, sharp and splitting as it is.

Both the complaint about household noise and disruption, and the fear of the belligerent wife, are topical elements which serve to highlight an image of a world out of joint.[26] Here, as in the first strophe, the emphasis is on the present, which comparison with an idealized past reveals as deficient. As in the first strophe, semantic and syntactic structuring underline this contrast: delights have been ruined ('köstlicher ziere sinder', II,14), servants have deserted him ('den ich e bot, / die lassent mich ellende',

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acrimonious dispute between the brothers which was not resolved until 1427. Cf. Anton Schwob, *Oswald von Wolkenstein. Eine Biographie*, Bozen 1977 (Schriftenreihe des Südtiroler Kulturinstitutes 4), pp. 27-29; Wachinger (n. 21), cols 134-169, esp. cols 135 f..

26 Schwob (n. 24), pp. 77-97. On the comic inversion of family idyll, see Elisabeth Lienert, 'Bilder von Kindheit bei Oswald von Wolkenstein', in *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 9 (1996/97), pp. 111-120.

II,11 f.), no red lips offer the comfort of love ('tröst mich niena mündlin rot', II,10).

This culminates in the paradox of the third strophe with its strong biblical undercurrents. The singer presents himself as troubled by the commotion of his crowded home, and tormented by a constant cacophony of sounds: children scream, the wife chides, asses bray and peacocks scream (III,2; 'neur esel gsang und pfaun geschrai'), and the noise of the nearby stream makes his head explode (III,4 f.; 'vast rausch der bach in hurlahai / main haupt enzwai'). Yet these are not biographical details so much as pieces of a literary mosaic, since each piece of disturbed and disturbing present reality points also to the ideal of courtly harmony, in which courtly companionship and poetic harmony were achieved in the form of courtly song. Yet the same singer who appears to crave quiet and solitude simultaneously laments his social isolation, in which he has been forsaken by his lord and his friends:

> Mein landesfürst der ist mir gram
> von böser leute neide. […]
> Mein freund die hassen mich über ain
> an schuld, des muess ich greisen. (III,13-23)
>
> My feudal lord is angry with me, because evil people don't get on with me [...].
> My friends all hate me without reason, which is what makes me age.

Old age is no longer the result of a natural process, to be deplored but endured, but the result of social isolation in which the singer finds himself as the crier in the wilderness. Yet here, as in other songs, lament is not a statement of fact but has a performative function, in that it urges the audience to reverse the stated reality. In analogy to the identity of the psalmist who laments his desolation in the confident hope that God will rescue him from his enemies, the song addresses itself explicitly to the righteous and wise amongst its listeners who may be able to save the persecuted singer from the wolves. Here, the reference to two quite distinct literary models, courtly love song on the one hand, and psalm on the other, helps to shape the identity of the singer who indirectly asserts the power of his own song, in that it is the desired community with his audience which may release him from political isolation.

A different facet of this sense of poetic identity is discernible in one of Oswald's parodic songs: 'Stand auff, Maredel!' (K 48; 'Arise, Maredel!'). Here, the literary play with his audience is both more overt and more complex, because it involves the musical presentation as well as the words. Manuscript A transmits the song in a four-part setting, though triplum and countertenor are not textualized; manuscript B offers a two-part

setting;[27] in both versions, tenor and descant represent the voices of mistress and servant-girl who are engaged in dialogue, or rather dispute. The song pits the voice of the chiding mistress, calling her servant to work and rebuking her for her idleness, against the rebellion of the servant who prefers love to work on the farm. The opposition between these two is clear, and a musical performance in which the mistress's tenor sounds simultaneously with the servant-girl's descant highlights this opposition. Yet it is clear also that just as the figures represent a social hierarchy, so the treatment of their utterances requires a hierarchical structure: in setting down the words of the two speakers on a manuscript page, the simultaneous action of the polyphonic setting needs to be reduced to a linear structure. Here, the two main manuscripts disagree in their ordering, indicating a problem of interpretation as faced by the scribes. Both manuscripts open with lines 6 to 13 ascribed to the descant, thus giving the servant girl the first speech: 'Frau, ich enmag, wann es ist ferre gen dem tag' ('Lady, I can't, because day is still so far away'). Yet the negated modal verb 'ich enmac' suggests that in syntactic terms, this makes sense only as a response to the order of the mistress, a demand which the servant girl refuses: 'Stand auff, Maredel! Liebes Gredel, zeuch die rüben auss!' ('Get up, Maredel, dear Peggy, pull out the turnips!'). There are several reasons why scribes might have reversed what appears to modern editors the only logical ordering of command and refusal.[28] One is musical: by the mid-fifteenth century, the descant rather than the tenor may have been considered the 'lead' part of a composition.[29] The other is literary: it is the descant part which most openly points to the genre of the dawn song to which the composition playfully alludes. In juxtaposing the morning wake-up call to work with the need to make the most of the night, the text establishes a literary framework of reference which is mapped out by models such as Neithart and the Mönch von Salzburg. The signals toward the well-known and popular genre of the dawn song are clear: the treatment of the song as dialogue between two voices, the setting of the dialogue at day-break, the association between night and

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27   Four-part setting in A; two-part setting in B; cf. Erika Timm, *Die Überlieferung der Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, Lübeck, Hamburg 1972 (Germanische Studien 242), pp. 139-143; Ivana Pelnar, *Die mehrstimmigen Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, 2 vols, Tutzing 1982 (Münchner Veröffentlichungen zur Musikgeschichte 32), here vol. 2, pp. 4-6, highlights that these differences reflect the variation common in the transmission of polyphonic settings, where tenor and descant from the fixed framework. According to Pelnar, this indicates that the differences between A and B represent differences in recording musical settings rather than differing musical interpretations.

28   Note, though, that the otherwise excellent recording by the 'Kreis alter Musik' performs these in the order of the manuscript transmission (i.e. descant before tenor).

29   Cf. Pelnar (n. 27), pp. 4 f. on the prevalence of tenor songs in Oswald's oeuvre.

love-making. Yet the literary parody is equally overt: here, it is not the courtly couple taking leave form one another in an erotically charged moment, but the peasant-girl reminiscing with explicit sexual references about her lover who is forced to leave at the insistent chiding of the mistress.[30]

There can be little doubt that this is literary parody, yet the fact that we are also dealing with a musical parody reminds us of the need to differentiate between medieval and modern uses of parodic reference: Oswald refers to and appropriates the dawn song introduced into German courtly poetry in the thirteenth century, yet he also appropriates the musical form of his song in using the four-part setting of the French rondeau 'Jour à jour la vie', in this case without incorporating any discernible reference to the text of the French composition.[31] It seems that his manner of musical adaptation is a contrafacture, using an existing four-part setting and putting it to different use.

In contrast to the tenor song 'Aus Barbarei, Arabia' (K 18), the dialogue song 'Stand auff, Maredel' (K 48) does not contain autobiographical references and indeed lacks an explicit authorial 'I'. Nevertheless, an authorial presence is asserted behind the voices of the dialogue, not despite, but precisely because of the nature of the song as contrafacture. The use of an existing musical source may not have been evident to contemporary listeners, yet for the experience of listening, it is secondary whether the composition is Oswald's own or appropriated from another source. What it highlights is the way in which two voices and, embodied within them, two positions on love, are pitted against each other in a confrontation which is the result of careful planning on the part of the author of the words. His strategy is comparable to that employed

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30   Cf. Lambertus Okken, Hans-Dieter Mück, *Die satirischen Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein wider die Bauern. Untersuchungen zum Wortschatz und zur literarhistorischen Einordnung*, Göppingen 1981 (GAG 316), pp. 121-156; Pelnar (n. 27), pp. 87 f. comments on the effect of individual catchphrases being discernible in the polyphonic texture, and emphatically rejects realisations in which tenor and descant are sung sequentially, each with instrumental accompaniment, arguing instead in favour of simultaneous singing of different texts, as in the form of the motet.

31   The French *rondeau* is transmitted only in two manuscripts, but almost certainly with incomplete text, since both manuscripts contain only one strophe, whereas rondeaus are characterised by repetition; see Timm (n. 27) pp.139 f. A further two manuscripts contain the musical setting in a contrafacture with religious texts. On Oswald's use of polyphonic French settings for tenor songs, see Rainer Böhm, 'Entdeckung einer französischen Melodievorlage zum Lied "O wunniklicher, wolgezierter mai" (Kl. 100) von Oswald von Wolkenstein', in *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 13 (2001/02), pp. 269-278; see also Franz-Josef Holznagel, Hartmut Möller, 'Ein Fall von Interregionalität. Oswald von Wolkenstein "Wach auf, mein hort" (Kl 101) in Südtirol und in Norddeutschland', in *Regionale Literaturgeschichtsschreibung. Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie (Sonderherft)* 122 (2003), pp. 102-133.

by Josquin in his motets: the authorial presence makes itself felt when the composition is realized as a performance, either in actual singing, or, in Oswald's case, a simultaneous reading of textual passages relating to each other.[32]

One final group of poems may help us to understand the specific features of Oswald's self-assertion as author: his variations on the genre of the dawn song. Two of these are part of a group of four songs transmitted together in manuscripts A and B, and the rubric in B notes that all four are to be sung to the same melody.[33] The opening song of the group, 'Ain tunckle farb von occident' (K 33; 'A dark colour arising in the west') evokes the tradition of the dawn song, yet does so through a deliberate inversion: dawn here is signalling the beginning of the night, since the observed phenomenon is not dawn heralding imminent daybreak and therefore the separation of the lovers, but instead the falling of night, which is a time of pain and suffering for a singer who finds himself alone in his bed. Significantly, the song dispenses with the objectivising framework common to the majority of dawn songs, in that the change from day to night is narrated not by an external voice such as that of a watchman, but by the singer himself.[34] Yet these inversions also retain central features of the genre, especially the self-reflexive element of most dawn songs: the song not only articulates the physical suffering of the man whose desire for his beloved has long been frustrated, but is itself affected by the intensity of a pain which cannot remain hidden:

> Die mich zu vleis mir ermlein weiss und hendlin gleiss
> kan freuntlich zu ir smucken,
> Die ist so lang, das ich von pang in meim gesang
> mein klag nicht mag verdrucken. (K 33,5-8)

> She who could draw me close to her with her white arms and her radiant hands is so far away that my fear does not allow me to suppress the lament in my song.

The paradox of the lover who laments the intense physical pain of his loneliness, but does so in graphic language and in a public format, is heightened in the final strophe of the song. Here, the singer jubilantly addresses his audience 'auf hohem stuel', an expression which in later

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32   See Owen Rees in this volume.

33   Ms. B, f. 15ᵛ: 'Nota die vorgeschriben drew lieder Es leucht durch graw, vnd die andern zway darnach etc. singent sich jnn der weyse Ain tunckle farb etc.' ('Note: the three songs copied before this note, i.e., "Es leucht durch graw", and the two songs following it, are sung to the tune of "Ain tunckle farb"').

34   On the 'alba' or dawn song as a 'genre objectif', see Wolf's introduction in the anthology by Backes (n. 19), pp. 44-67; Christian Kiening, 'Poetik des Dritten', in Christian Kiening, *Körper und Schrift. Texte vor dem Zeitalter der Literatur*, Frankfurt a. M. 2003, pp. 157-175, stresses the paradoxical construction of the watchman as the third voice present in many dawn songs.

periods may mean the chair of the 'Meistersinger', but is likely here to have connotations of both 'throne', evoking the image of the singer as king in his own heart, and 'cathedra', the chair from which a university teacher makes pronouncements and speaks with authority.[35] It is the proximity of the beloved which causes his mood of exultant joy where in the first strophe he had expressed lament. Here, the beloved is named: she is 'Gret', the name of the historically attested wife, suggesting that the 'ich' in turn is Oswald.[36] Thus the dawn song, traditionally a medium in which the consummated love between man and woman can be expressed in a courtly context because it is kept at a distance, as something narrated and thus objectivised, is here staged as the intimate encounter between husband and wife. Yet the construction of the singer's role remains paradoxical: as the reference to the throne in the third strophe suggests, the act of singing is seen as inherently public, taking place before an audience. Moreover, the song is not declarative, narrating or stating how things are, but part of an elaborate strategy of persuasion of the kind that is common in the wooing song. Gret, the wife, we learn, is no more real than the abstract concept of the lady in the conventional dawn song; indeed, she is present only in the heart of the singer. The final strophe therefore does not perform the simple act of pointing towards the wife who may have formed part of the 'real' audience when this song was first performed, and it is not straightforwardly deictic. The strophe mirrors the first in returning to the nature of the poet's singing; as in the opening strophe, he claims to articulate 'unverporgen' ('openly', 'unconcealed'), yet the woman is present only in the singer's heart, and even the anticipated joy of the final lines is one which, despite the graphic imagery of gnawing rats and creaking bed-boards, exists only in the poet's imagination:

> wenn daz mein herz bedenket,
> und mich hoflich mein schöener puel
> gen tag freuntlichen schrenket. (K 33, 3,10-12)

> when I consider in my heart how my beautiful beloved would embrace me in most courtly manner at day-break.

Whereas the reference to a reality outside the song in K 33 is achieved through the use of the name Gret which only those like the contemporary family audience, or modern readers who have studied the commentaries,

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35 For an example of the chair signifying the role of the scholar, see Alastair Matthews on the Shrovertide play *Hie hebt sich ain spil an von mayster Aristoteles* in this volume.

36 Christian Berger, Tomas Tomasek, 'Kl 68 im Kontext der Margarethe-Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein', in *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 9 (1996/97), pp. 157-178, esp. pp. 163 f., highlight the significance of such namings even in songs which are regarded as 'purely' conventional.

are able to relate to the historical figure of Oswald von Wolkenstein,[37] the final song in manuscript B, 'Wol auf und wacht' (K 118) presents another variation on the genre of the dawn song, using a lyric 'I' who in the penultimate strophe refers to himself as 'mich Wolkenstainer' (K 118,3,7).[38] The song opens as a religious wake-up call, admonishing a collective and initially unspecified general audience to wake up spiritually and repent of their sins. Night, in the spiritual allegory, is the time of sin ('eur fräveleiche sünde'; K 118,1,4), thus inverting the connotations of the courtly dawn song in which night rather than day is associated with love and pleasure.[39] The second strophe, addressed to an individual companion ('gesell'), continues the warning, juxtaposing the temptations of the devil with the need to strive instead for the highest flowers, i.e. spiritual perfection. Here, as in the first strophe, the vocabulary deliberately evokes scenes of courtly love-making and pastimes by referring to the chivalric fight against the lion and the flowers, but these are re-contextualized in the third strophe, which identifies the 'kron' ('chaplet', 'crown') as the crown of thorns and thus establishes the christological framework in which the rest of the song now moves: what individual listeners should strive for is repentance and remembrance of Christ's suffering. It is in this context that the voice of the singer becomes the focus of attention, since the effectiveness of his call will depend on his authority, and here, the singer names himself:

> ir horcht mich fain
> rain ich eu main,
> neur ja und nain
> beschaid ich uns der mere
> getreulichen an gevere.
> unsre wort, werck und gepäre
> mich Wolckenstainer verseret,
> durmub das sich teglich meret

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37 Cf. Berger /Tomasek (n. 36), p. 164, for another example of hidden self-reference in song K 68; Berger and Tomasek argue that the complex process of decoding textual as well as melodic effects points towards an audience not only well-versed in courtly love lyric, but also familiar with Oswald's oeuvre.

38 The song is not transmitted in manuscript A; it forms the last entry in B, which suggests that it may be late; cf. Werner Marold, *Kommentar zu den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, rev. and ed. by Alan Robertshaw, Innsbruck 1995 (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft; Germanistische Reihe 52), pp. 276 f. Spicker (n. 7), p. 90, discusses the possibility that it may deliberately have been placed at the end of the collection because of its 'signature', as a pendant to the opening song K 1, which also contains a self-reference.

39 The spiritual wake-up call here reverts to the associations of night with sin and danger, and day with light and virtue, which is much more common in the European literary tradition than the inversion celebrated in the courtly dawn songs; cf. *Eos. An Enquiry into the Theme of Lovers' Meetings and Partings at Dawn in Poetry*, ed. by Arthur Hatto, London 1965; Schnyder (n. 19), pp. 317-320.

alles, das die werlt enteret.
geret wert neur, was uneret,
falscher rat die untreu leret,
pös in pös sich nicht verkeret.
dorumb fürchtet gotes zorn ergan. (K 118,4,1-13)

> You hear me well, and I mean well by you. I only say 'yes' and 'no' and tell it as it is, faithfully and without danger. Our words, works, and gestures cause me, Oswald von Wolkenstein, harm, because that which dishonours the world increases day by day. Only that which causes dishonour is honoured; false advice teaches disloyalty, evil does not turn into good. Therefore fear the wrath of God!

Whereas Spicker suggests that this use of the name highlights the didactic tone of the song, as common in later *Spruchdichtung*,[40] the literary self-stylization may be more complex than such generic labels as that of the 'didactic' and its connotations of objectivity suggest. From the imagery of the strophe, it is clear that the singer deliberately adopts the stance of Old Testament prophet, warning about the need for reformation and repentance, and thus claiming authority. Yet it is indicative that unlike Old Testament prophets, the singer does not position himself in opposition to his listeners, as the one who has already achieved what he advises them to consider, but rather as one who is himself affected by the fear which his warning is designed to generate in the listeners. Thus, the self-reflexive turn of the fourth strophe highlights the performative nature of the whole song: it articulates aspects of Christian faith not as statements, but as a present that can be experienced, with fear, in the performance of the song. Use of the name is therefore paradoxically both a reference to the authority of the known literary authority, author of previous songs and therefore in a position to warn others objectively, and the voice of the concerned individual, who is personally affected by his own warning.

<div align="center">4</div>

What the examples discussed here demonstrate is that both Hugo von Montfort and Oswald von Wolkenstein refer to much more complex strategies of negotiating a textual 'I' than simple autobiography. Hugo, in casting many of his songs in the form of love letters, uses conventional form to articulate a shift in perspective: traditionally, letter forms in the Middle Ages are public forms of communication, intended for public reading or even recitation, and Hugo uses this form as a public declaration of love for his lady. Yet the letters also appear to claim authenticity as unique messages to a specific woman, in that they are inserted into a dated

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40   Spicker (n. 7), p. 90.

sequence and refer to his wife as the addressee, thus undercutting the lyric convention of praise for an unspecified lady whose role might be appropriated by any woman in the audience.

Oswald, in his songs, stages the paradox of conflicting roles: the courtly aristocrat who experiences isolation as a result of his political conflicts; the husband who evokes images of domestic strife for the edification of a small circle of listeners; the worldly lover whose wooing song transmutes into religious praise of the Virgin Mary. Yet unity on another level is achievable in these songs, and is achieved through poetic form. It is this new way of creating authenticity, staging a self that may be stylized and yet conveys real conflict, a sense of suffering at not being able to combine the different roles in his life, which goes beyond mere literary versatility in different genres or simple autobiography, and perhaps explains the fascination of his songs.

Both poets therefore stage their own work within a context of ritualized performance; but what marks their aesthetic interest is the way in which their reference is paradoxically both a means of inclusion, constructing the 'I' as part of a courtly audience and able to participate in performance as a courtly activity, and of exclusion, where the 'I' is set apart from this public by its experience of isolation, and by its ability to reflect on its own isolation.

Francesca Southerden

Performative desires:
Sereni's re-staging of Dante and Petrarch*

This essay seeks to interpret a specific moment in the history of Italian poetry in the context of linguistic notions of performance and the performative. Focusing on language as a medium for the constitution of selfhood, it looks at the intertextual dialogue that Vittorio Sereni stages with Dante and Petrarch in his 1975–76 poem 'La malattia dell'olmo' ('The Disease of the Elm'),[1] which looks back to the Earthly Paradise cantos of *Purgatorio* (especially 30–31) and *canzone* 126 of *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, 'Chiare, fresche et dolci acque' ('Clear, fresh, sweet waters').[2] Looking at how Sereni revisits and reworks the performative strategies at play in these earlier texts sheds light upon his poetic project and that of his predecessors, and demonstrates how what begins in Dante and Petrarch as a project of restoration (of self and Other, respectively) becomes, in Sereni's poem, a measure of his subject's undoing.

It may appear at first paradoxical to make a modern Italian poet the subject of a paper on performance in the Middle Ages, especially one whose work seems, on the surface at least, to move against tradition, establishing an alternative model of subjectivity that goes against the dominant, Petrarchan mode that had characterized Italian lyric poetry for several centuries when he began writing. Yet if the 'I' that Sereni's poetry stages in his later two collections—*Gli strumenti umani* (*The Human*

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1   In Vittorio Sereni, *Stella variabile* [*Variable Star*], Milan 1981, now in Vittorio Sereni, *Poesie*, 4th edn, ed. by Dante Isella, Milan 2000 (Meridiani), pp. 254–255. A selection of Sereni's poems is available in English translation, in *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Vittorio Sereni: A Bilingual Edition*, ed. and trans. by Peter Robinson, Marcus Perryman, Chicago, London 2006, including 'The Disease of the Elm', pp. 261–263.

2   The dual-language edition of Dante's *Purgatorio* to which I refer is *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Volume 2 Purgatorio*, ed. by Robert M. Durling, New York 2003; References to Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* are to *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The 'Rime sparse' and Other Lyrics*, ed. and trans. by Robert M. Durling, Cambridge, Mass., London 1976. Where I wish to draw emphasis to individual words or lines of poems, this will be rendered in italics in all cases.

Implements), 1965 and *Stella variabile* (*Variable Star*), 1981—seems at some remove from the traditionally static, monologic 'I' normally understood to inhabit the lyric universe, his choice to write a narrative, dialogic form of poetry that relocates his subject to a space outside of the securer domain of centralized lyric verse, does not occur in a vacuum. His textual innovations are in fact all the more radical for their taking place in active discourse with tradition and with a set of ideals that, whilst no longer tenable in the modern context, are nonetheless present as residues or fragments of a more complete poetic world he would seek to recreate. As Sereni explains in an interview on poetry he gave to secondary school students in Parma in 1979:

> Oggi, leggendo Dante, possiamo essere culturalmente interessati dal fatto che la sua posizione politica era quel che era in quel determinato momento, però non c'è dubbio che di fronte alla costruzione terrena e metafisica della *Divina Commedia* noi ci fermiamo su determinati punti, dove sentiamo che è la poesia che trionfa su tutto il resto. Ora dire che differenza c'è tra noi e Dante è un discorso inutile, perché noi facciamo una lettura particolare di Dante, di Petrarca, che li rende attuali; per cui sentiamo che certi aspetti della nostra sensibilità ed esperienza si rispecchiano perfettamente in loro. Quindi non c'è una poesia del passato e una poesia del presente, c'è una evoluzione. Di diverso tra noi e i poeti del passato c'è il nostro lavoro in formazione, che noi compiamo in quanto siamo soggetti diversi da quelli che c'erano prima.
>
> (Today, reading Dante, we can be interested culturally in the fact that his political position was what it was in that particular moment, but there is no doubt that when faced with the earthly and metaphysical structure of the *Divina Commedia* we focus our attention on specific points, in which we feel that it is the poetry that triumphs over everything else. Today, to say what difference there is between us and Dante is a senseless discourse since we undertake a particular reading of Dante and Petrarch which makes them contemporary, to the extent that we feel that certain aspects of our sensibility and experience are perfectly reflected in theirs. Consequently, there is not a poetry of the past and a poetry of the present but an evolution. What differs between us and the poets of the past is our project in the making, which we undertake insomuch as we are different subjects from those who existed before.)[3]

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3   'Vittorio Sereni', in *Sulla poesia: conversazione nelle scuole*, ed. by Giuliana Massani, Bruno Rivalta, Parma 1999, pp. 41–62 (pp. 43–44) – English translation is my own. The passage comes from a transcript of two interviews Sereni gave to students at the *Scuola media inferiore 'G. Pascoli'* and *Istituto tecnico industriale statale* in Parma on 12 December 1979, published together with contributions by other Italian poets including Bertolucci, Zanzotto, Porta, Conte and Cucchi. Sereni also wrote two important critical essays on Dante and Petrarch, in which he discusses the 'poetic' value of their work in further detail: 'Si può leggere Dante come un poeta puro?' ('Can Dante be Read as a Pure Poet?'), first publ. in *Milano Sera*, 23-24 October 1950, p. 3, now in Vittorio Sereni, *Sentieri di gloria: note e ragionamenti sulla letteratura*, ed. by Giuseppe Strazzeri, Milan 1996 (Piccola biblioteca Oscar 96), pp. 28–33; 'Petrarca, nella sua finzione la sua verità' ('Petrarch, in his Fiction his Truth'), first publ.

Intertextuality becomes, in this way, a key agent of revision of Sereni's poetic 'I', a means of constituting selfhood that puts the emphasis upon language and on a textual performance that is inevitably measured against what has come before. It also engenders a version of linguistic performativity that goes beyond the question of mere self-expression to encompass what, following Giuseppe Mazzotta's re-evaluation of Petrarch's poetic subject, we can term 'self-making', with all that this implies of an active, constantly renewed search for poetic identity, rooted in discourse.[4] Mazzotta argues that even when reading a text like Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* [henceforth *RVF*], which is undeniably constructed on the model of a dominant subjectivity (that of its author), we should not expect to find a unified or consistent self who pre-exists or somehow transcends the poems, but rather a subject understood as divided and fragmented, only graspable in and through the poems themselves. It is this more 'modern' explanation of how textuality functions to stage an 'I' in a not at all pre-determined fashion that I will draw upon in my own analysis of Sereni's 'La malattia dell'olmo' and its likely intertextual sources, Dante's *Purgatorio* 30–31 and Petrarch's *RVF* 126.

'La malattia dell'olmo'

Se ti importa che ancora sia estate
eccoti in riva al fiume l'albero squamarsi
delle foglie più deboli: roseogialli
petali di fiori sconosciuti
– e a futura memoria i sempreverdi
immobili.

Ma più importa che la gente cammini in allegria
che corra al fiume la città e un gabbiano
avventuratosi sin qua si sfogli
in un lampo di candore.

Guidami tu, stella variabile, fin che puoi...
– e il giorno fonde le rive in miele e oro
le rifonde in un buio oleoso
fino al pullulare delle luci.
                    Scocca
da quel formicolio

(in abridged form, with the title 'Sì dolce è del mio amaro la radice' ('So Sweet is the Root of my Bitterness') in *Corriere del Ticino*, 22 June 1974, now in *Sentieri di gloria*, pp. 127–146.

4   'Memory, imagination, and desire, the terms within which the poet's act of self-making is carried out, appear to be ambiguous instruments of the poetic project', Giuseppe Mazzotta, 'The *Canzoniere* and the Language of the Self', in *The Worlds of Petrarch*, Durham, London 1993 (Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 14), pp. 58–79 (p. 60).

un atomo ronzante, a colpo
sicuro mi centra
dove più punge e brucia.

Vienmi vicino, parlami, tenerezza,
– dico voltandomi a una
vita fino a ieri a me prossima
oggi così lontana – scaccia
da me questo spino molesto,
la memoria:
non si sfama mai.

È fatto – mormora in risposta
nell'ultimo chiaro
quell'ombra – adesso dormi, riposa.

                           Mi hai

tolto l'aculeo, non
il suo fuoco – sospiro abbandonandomi a lei
in sogno con lei precipitando già.

'The Disease of the Elm' // If it matters to you it's still summer / look here how on the river bank the tree / flakes its more tenuous leaves: / rosy-yellow petals of unknown flowers / – and to future memory the evergreens / motionless. // But it matters more the people step gaily, / the city rush to the river and a seagull, / ventured as far as here, be unleafed / in a flare of brilliant white. // Lead me, variable star, as long as you're able… // – and the day casts the banks in honey and gold / and recasts them in an oily dark / until the teeming of lights. // It darts / out from that swarm, / the humming atom, hits me / with unswerving aim / where it most stings and burns. // Come near to me, speak to me, tenderness, / – I say, turning back towards / a life until yesterday close to me / today so remote – drive out / from me the insistent thorn, / the memory: / it is never satisfied. // It's finished – that shadow / murmurs a reply / in the last light – sleep now, rest. // You've / removed the thorn, but not / its burning – I sigh as I give myself up to her / in dreams with her already falling.

'La malattia dell'olmo', like the earlier texts with which it is in dialogue, stages an Edenic moment that situates the quest for identity in the context of the poet's relationship to time and memory. The central themes are, as we might expect given the purgatorial context the poem evokes, the journey back through time, the recuperation of loss, and the desire to redeem the self, but they are embodied in such a way as to suggest that Sereni is both establishing the purgatorial journey as paradigm and reworking its final destination.[5] Sereni's moment of failed expiation,

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5   As Teodolinda Barolini points out, 'The very idea of a return to the beginning ('lo ritornare a lo principio'), of a progression forward to the past, finds its precise counterpart […] in purgatory, where forward motion is a way of recuperating and redeeming the past, of returning to lost innocence and our collective point of origin, the garden of Eden'. As she clarifies, this also involves an 'unmaking of memory' through memory, so that like the other souls of Purgatory, Dante-pilgrim is simultaneously called upon to remember and to

modelled negatively on Dante's much more successful scene of redemption in the Earthly Paradise, leads to what is effectively a linguistic or poetic version of a Fall. Where language in both Dante and Petrarch's texts is credited, in different ways, with the role of countering absence and loss, Sereni seems destined only to lose again what he is unsure of having possessed in the first place.

Discontinuity shapes the topography of Sereni's poem too and his Eden, coming as it does within a predominantly secular universe, is immediately set apart from Dante's by its solely terrestrial origins and its almost complete extraneousness from any sense of a higher reality. Moreover, like Petrarch in *RVF* 126, Sereni never properly seems to inhabit the locus amoenus before he is cast out again and his landscape seems corrupt from the start, with the decaying elm tree also an image of a self in disarray, with the two joined in the intermediary realm of the speaking voice that laments their common demise.

Memory in all three texts, as the medium through which the process of 'self-making' is attempted, establishes an ambivalent textual space in which the past fuses with the present, dividing the subject between two or more temporal domains and forcing him to choose between them. In the context of progressive purgation that each text evokes—in Sereni and Petrarch's case if only by association with Dante—the dangers of memory threaten to disrupt the evolutionary agenda, causing the subject to lose direction, leading him backwards more than forwards, away from what, following Petrarch, we can term the 'true image' ('imagine vera', *RVF* 126.60) towards its dangerous simulacrum.

Dante's 'memorie triste' ('memories of sin', or 'sad memories', *Purgatorio* 31.11), which the pilgrim is called upon to purge in the Earthly Paradise, are themselves an embodiment of this tension at the textual level. Bound up with the rebirth and re-evocation of Dante's desire for Beatrice, they are the central motif for understanding the way in which Eros is performed as memory or phantasm, and the potential dangers that ensue. Like other instances of a backwards looking desire that emerge through *Purgatorio*, they imply a momentary suspension of the journey, a temporary lapse or regression in desire, with (the poet's) discourse

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forget (*The Undivine 'Comedy': Detheologizing Dante*, Princeton 1992, p. 101). 'La malattia dell'olmo', like several poems in *Stella variabile*, evokes a purgatorial setting precisely in this context, but it soon cedes to a more limbic atmosphere as soon as the poet proves unable to purge himself of the dangers of memory, causing him to become trapped in the circle of a purely backwards-looking desire, which ends progression altogether.

responsible for correcting the moment of indirection, reinstating forward motion and ultimately the journey itself.[6]

As Sereni's comments on Dante's *Commedia*, cited earlier, make clear, it is indeed a question of the power of poetry—in this case, to counter an original loss—that is at stake in the poetic quest. In *Purgatorio* 30–31, language not only has the power to 'return' the past to the subject but also to 're-turn' it, rewriting and redeeming previously transgressive discourse (in the more negative sense of what led astray) as a necessary but false path on the journey to salvation.[7] Petrarch's poem, on the other hand, with its repeated motifs of textual indirection, gives errant desire free rein. Emphasis is less on the penitential force of words than on their imagistic value—their power to evoke and to sustain a vision (of Laura).

The world that Petrarch constructs to recuperate his beloved merely 'turns about' the same point so that his textual performance, whilst undoubtedly modelled on Dante's, also constantly departs from it, foreshadowing Sereni's reworking of the same scene. The familiar elements are present: the wood of memory, the beloved who emerges shrouded in a veil of flowers ambiguously re-clothed by the poet's memory before his sight is able, the feeling or knowledge that she is descended from Heaven, a place from which the poet has been exiled and to which he hopes now to return. But they circulate endlessly, without progression, in the same way that Petrarch's discourse, though all directed towards a single goal (the restoration of Laura's image, as she was on the first day he saw her), can be integrating of the Other but problematically dispersive of the self.[8]

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6   The meeting with Casella on the shores of Purgatory in *Purgatorio* 2 is another key example of this, where nostalgic desire (embodied in Casella's song), which causes the souls to delay their ascent up the Mountain, is corrected by Cato's rebuke. This episode is discussed in detail by Teodolinda Barolini in *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the 'Comedy'*, Princeton 1984, pp. 31–40.

7   My analysis here borrows from Barolini's excellent discussion of the essential difference between Petrarch and Dante's relationship to time, where Petrarch's 'capacity for turning without ever converting' dramatically underscores the differences in the role of memory as a vehicle of restoration of the 'I' or its object. See Teodolinda Barolini, 'The Making of a Lyric Sequence: Time and Narrative in Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*', in *MLN* 104/1, Italian Issue (January 1989), pp. 1-38 (pp. 11–12).

8   As is well known, there is a scarcity of biographical detail in the *RVF* that makes it difficult to determine where, if at all, Petrarch first saw the woman he calls 'Laura'. In a letter (*Familiares* 2. 9) to his friend Giacomo Colonna, defending Laura as a real woman against doubts that she was merely an allegory of the poetic laurel, Petrarch places the first sighting of his beloved in the church of St Clare in Avignon but within the poetic universe of the *RVF*, Petrarch often transposes the vision to Vaucluse, which is privileged as the locus of the original encounter with the beloved, as in 'Chiare, fresche et dolci acque' analysed here. For further discussion of the elusive quality of the 'history' of Petrarch's love for Laura see

Sereni's female figure too (in his case, definitively a phantasm), though initially sought out for her redemptive potential, soon slides towards her reality as a 'shade', infernal perhaps more than purgatorial, less a true Other than a fractured self-image restored ambiguously to the present, to which the poet finally 'abandons himself' when his hoped for purgation does not occur. In the context of the quintessentially transitional agenda that characterizes Dante's Eden, Sereni's inability to progress is indeed damning, with the culminating, downward trajectory of his poem consolidating his distance also from Petrarch who, in refusing to move anywhere at all, preserves something of his experience intact in the intermediate realm of the poem, however dubious its effects.

The difference in outcome in the three poems is however, I believe, linguistic more than topographic, less a result of whether the subject can 'move' himself from place to place in physical terms, than a question of what language can achieve on a similar plane. Already this suggests that the 'success' of each performance depends fundamentally upon the poet's ability to make language do as he desires or, better, upon the extent to which desire (errant or otherwise) can be brought under control through the medium of speech. Beginning with Dante, and with a notion of discourse that can be 'transformative' as much as 'performative' of the 'I' and the world on which it depends, capable of restoring presence from absence and even of resurrecting the dead, we can trace the 'fortunes of the performative' through Petrarch to Sereni, mapping the evolution taking place at the level of language that sees a progressive attenuation in its presencing force.[9] The speech act, as the moment in which identity is affirmed or denied and desire fulfilled or frustrated, proves central to each poem's dynamic, and implies that something more than mere speaking is going on.

Any discussion of performance in these terms inevitably leads us into dialogue with theories of the philosophy of language and, in particular, John Austin's work on 'the performative utterance'. In his essay, 'Preliminary Isolation of the Performative', Austin explains that performatives are those in which a subject 'does' more than 'says', where 'the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action', and unlike the constative statement, are prescriptive more than descriptive.[10] Whilst he

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Peter Hainsworth, *Petrarch the Poet: An Introduction to the 'Rerum vulgarium fragmenta'*, London 1988, pp. 108–118, and Durling's introduction to *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*, pp. 4–7.

9   I borrow the phrase 'fortunes of the performative' from Jonathan Culler's very useful article, 'Philosophy and Literature: The Fortunes of the Performative', in *Poetics Today* 21/3 (Fall 2000), pp. 503–519.

10   John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, Oxford 1962 (William James Lectures 1955), pp. 6–7.

limits his investigation to 'the product of ordinary circumstances', and specifically precludes literary discourse from his analysis saying that 'a performative utterance will be in a *peculiar way* hollow or void if said by an actor on a stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy', he does recognize the ambiguities to which linguistic performance is open, something which is merely heightened when we are dealing with a textual performance and a speaking voice that may or may not coincide with a real figure, in a concrete situation.[11] As Émile Benveniste clarifies:

> Le performatif n'a pas de valeur de description ni de prescription, mais, encore une fois, d'accomplissement. [...] Bref, il est événement parce qu'il crée l'événement. [...] Cela conduit à reconnaître au performatif une propriété singulière, celle d'être *sui-référentiel*, de se référer à une réalité qu'il constitue lui-même, du fait qu'il est effectivement énoncé dans des conditions qui le font acte.

> (It [the performative utterance] does not have the value of description or prescription but, once again, of performance. [...] In short, it is an event because it creates the event. [...] This leads us to recognize in the performative a peculiar quality, that of being *self-referential*, of referring to a reality that it itself constitutes by the fact that it is actually uttered in conditions that make it an act.)[12]

If performatives set out to 'accomplish the act that they designate' then the implication is that they can do so more or less successfully depending on how effectively the performative utterance is articulated and received.[13] Austin's 'doctrine of the *infelicities*' which deals with performatives that mis-fire or go astray seems to acknowledge this aspect of performance, especially when he talks of a 'mis-invocation of procedure' that leads to a particular speech act becoming null and void.[14] The question of the 'illocutionary' force of the utterance—the ability of the speaker to transform the locutionary act (mere speaking) into an act of 'illocution' (that which is accomplished or performed by speaking) —will be of particular importance when analysing Sereni's use of the performative.[15]

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11   *ibid.*, p. 22. Italics in the original.

12   Émile Benveniste, 'La philosophie analytique et le langage' ('Analytical Philosophy and Language'), in *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, 2 vols, Paris 1966-1974, I (1966), pp. 267–276 (pp. 273–274). English translation taken from Émile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. by Mary Elizabeth Meek, Coral Gables, Fla 1971 (Miami Linguistics Series 8), p. 236. Italics in the original.

13   'The notion of the performative—an utterance that accomplishes the act that it designates —was proposed by the philosopher JL Austin to describe a type of utterance neglected by philosophers', Culler, 'Fortunes of the Performative', p. 503.

14   Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, pp. 16–17. Italics in the original.

15   For a very clear account of the distinction between the three dimensions of the performative utterance—locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary, see Culler, 'Fortunes of the Performative', p. 506: 'He [Austin] distinguishes the locutionary act, which is the act of speaking a sentence, from the illocutionary act, which is the act we perform by

By reducing the illocutionary force of language as a vehicle of construction of the 'I', Sereni turns an utterance designed to create a new state of affairs or to bring about change in the subject entirely on its head by the altered circumstances of its use.

As soon as the performative function is asserted, the notion of the static author dissipates, to be replaced by a much more dynamic conception of the relationship between the writer and his written self. Petrarch's *RVF* is a prime example of this kind of performativity, with each 'fragmenta' staging a new subject, the same and yet different from what has come before. Taken to its logical conclusion, all identity becomes textual, able to be read as well as articulated at the level of discourse, 'identité est un *fait* immédiatement saisi—accepté ou refusé, au niveau de l'énonciation' ('identity is a *fact* immediately grasped—accepted or refused, at the level of enunciation').[16] Or to put it another way, 'the basic problem of the performative is the question, yet to be resolved, of whether there can be a harmonious fusion of doing and saying or whether there is an ineluctable tension […] that governs and undermines all textual activity'.[17]

The performative utterance thus has a profound influence also on the question of autobiography and its relationship to the individual who appears to be speaking through the medium of the speech act, but whose identity may in fact be a product of what he says. As Paul de Man argues in his essay, 'Autobiography as De-facement':

> Autobiography seems to depend on actual and potentially verifiable events in a less ambivalent way than fiction does. It seems to belong to a simpler mode of referentiality, of representation, and of diegesis. It may contain lots of phantasms and dreams, but these deviations from reality remain rooted in a single subject whose identity is defined by the uncontested readability of his proper name […]. But are we so certain that autobiography depends on reference, as a photograph depends on its subject or a (realistic) picture on its model? We assume that life *produces* the autobiography as an act produces its consequences, but can we not suggest, with equal justice, that the autobiographical project may itself produce and determine the life and that whatever the writer *does* is in fact governed by the technical demands of self-portraiture and thus determined, in all its aspects, by the resources of his medium?[18]

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16   speaking this sentence, and from the perlocutionary act, which is an act accomplished (effects secured) by performing the illocutionary act'.

16   Philippe Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique*, Paris 1975 (Poétique), p. 35. English translation taken from Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, ed. by Paul John Eakin, trans. by Katherine Leary, Minneapolis 1989 (Theory and History of Literature 52), p. 21. Italics in the original.

17   Culler, 'Fortunes of the Performative', p. 518.

18   De Man, Paul, 'Autobiography as De-facement', in *MLN* 94/5, Comparative Literature (December 1979), 919–930 (p. 920). Italics in the original.

When De Man also raises, with regard to Wordsworth, the 'question of autobiographical discourse as a discourse of self-restoration' (p. 925), he further highlights the problematic relationship between language and identity, reaffirming the text's value to confer a face on what is merely a voice (in the example he gives of *prosopopoeia*—that which makes the dead or absent 'speak') but also the 'latent threat' (p. 928) of language that also carries something of the face away with it, 'Language, as trope, is always privative' (p. 930). 'Trope', it should be noted, derives etymologically from the Greek 'to turn' and the language of literature (including that of poetry and autobiography) is thus figurative in a double sense: it 'figures', i.e. 'brings into shape' an 'I' but also 'disfigures' it, turning that 'I' towards and away from itself in a complex dialectic that all the texts I am looking at—Sereni's in particular—evoke at the level of the performative.

This dialectic is apparent above all in the interplay of voice and image, with Dante's text providing the performative or, if we like, 'figurative' ideal that enables him to construct and to restore, through a language of tropes, not only the past but also Beatrice herself. The motif of the 'revestita voce' ('re-clothing of the voice'), introduced in *Purgatorio* 30.15, in the context of the procession that marks the advent of Beatrice, functions I believe as a mise-en-abyme of the linguistic or textual operation that is in play in both this canto and the next. It is what Martinez and Durling term a 'daring trope' with 'a rich ambiguity of meaning'; literally meaning 'to be clothed again', or 'to be clothed over', it appears to be a metonymy for the resurrected body that will be restored to all souls at the Last Judgement.[19] However it also takes on a unique value when applied to Beatrice, who is herself a form of 'revestita voce', brought back to life in these cantos even more forcefully by what she says than by the traits of her physical appearance:

> così, dentro una nuvola di fiori
> che da le mani angeliche saliva
> e ricadeva in giù dentro e di fòri,
>   sovra candido vel cinta d'uliva
> donna m'apparve, sotto verde manto
> *vestita* di color di *fiamma viva.*
>   E lo spirito mio, che *già cotanto*
> *tempo* era stato ch'a la sua presenza
> non era di stupor tremando affranto,
>   sanza de li occhi aver più conoscenza,
> per occulta virtù che da lei mosse
> *d'antico amor sentì la gran potenza.*
>   *Tosto che* ne la vista mi percosse
> l'alta virtù che *già* m'avea trafitto

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19   Durling, Martinez, Notes to *Purgatorio* 30, pp. 519–520

prima ch'io fuor di püerizia fosse,
   volsimi a sinistra col respitto
col quale il fantolin corre a la mamma
quando ha paura o quando elli è afflitto,
   per dicere a Virgilio: 'Men che dramma
di sangue m'è rimaso che non tremi:
conosco i segni de l'antica fiamma!'
   Ma *Virgilio* n'avea lasciati scemi
di sé – *Virgilio*, dolcissimo patre,
Virgilio, a cui per mia salute die'mi –,
   né quantunque perdeo l'antica matre
valse a le guance nette di rugiada
che, lagrimando, non tornasser atre.
   '*Dante*, perché Virgilio se ne vada,
non pianger anco, non piangere ancora,
ché *pianger* ti conven per altra spada'.
   Quasi ammiraglio che in poppa e in prora
viene a veder la gente che ministra
per li altri legni, e a ben far l'incora:
   in su la sponda del carro sinistro,
quando mi volsi al suon del nome mio,
che di necessità qui si registra,
   vidi la donna che pria m'appario
velata sotto l'angelica festa
drizzar li occhi ver' me di qua dal rio,
   tutto che 'l vel che le scendea di testa,
cerchiato de le fronde di Minerva,
non la lasciasse parer manifesta. (*Purgatorio* 30.28-69)

So, within a cloud of flowers that from the hands of the angels was rising and falling back within and without, / her white veil girt with olive, a lady appeared to me, *clothed*, beneath a green mantle, in the colour of *living flame*. / And my spirit, which *already for so long a time* had not known in her presence the awe that overcame it with trembling, / without having more knowledge through the eyes, because of hidden power that moved from her, *felt the great force of ancient love*. / *As soon as* my sight was struck by that high power that had transfixed me before I was out of boyhood, / *I turned to the left* with the appeal with which a little boy runs to his mama when he is afraid or when he is hurt, / *to say* to Virgil: 'Less than a dram of blood is left me that is not trembling: I know the signs of the ancient flame!' / But *Virgil* had left us deprived of himself – *Virgil*, most sweet father, *Virgil*, to whom I gave myself for my salvation –, / nor did everything our ancient mother lost suffice to prevent my check, though cleansed with dew, from turning dark again with tears. / 'Dante, though Virgil depart, *do not weep yet, do not weep yet*, for you must *weep* to another sword'. / Like an admiral who comes to stern and prow to see the people who serve on the other ships, and heartens them to do well: / on the left side of the chariot, *when I turned at the sound of my name*, which of necessity is here set down, / I saw the lady who had just appeared to me veiled beneath the angelic welcome, directing her eyes towards me across

the stream, / although the veil that came down from her head, circled with
Minerva's foliage, did not permit her to appear openly.

The first image of Beatrice that is restored to Dante is thus a visual one, in
which her clothing is emphasized, but also the fact that, at this point, she
is still 'veiled' to him. This 'veiling' is important since with the pilgrim still
unready and unable to gaze upon Beatrice in the full glory of her 'seconda
etade' ('second age', *Purgatorio* 30.125), the emphasis quickly shifts from
her clothing to her voice which, in the absence of a clear and perfect
vision of her, mediates between them, becoming the instrument of
communication and ultimately of confession and absolution. When, in
Purgatorio 30.73, Beatrice declares 'Guardaci ben! Ben son, ben son
Beatrice' ('Look at us well! Truly I am, truly I am Beatrice'), it is the
uttering of her name that allows the pilgrim to perceive her true identity
long before she is physically 'unveiled' to him, and language in these
cantos is performative not only of the 'I' but also of his object,
dramatically restored to him from the past but also endowed with a
newness that derives from the full force of her direct speech.

Ultimately then it is the voice (both her own, and the poet's) that re-
clothes Beatrice, just as it is language that 'rewrites' or 'writes over' the
memory of the body (evoked, in 30.28–48, through a nostalgic register of
Dante's 'ancient love' that leads the poet and the reader back to the
earliest pages of Dante's 'book of memory', the *Vita nova*, and the image
of Beatrice as he first saw her), re-directing the pilgrim's gaze across the
water, to the opposite bank where the 'new' Beatrice resides in all her
[veiled] glory, ready to be [re]discovered by him beyond Lethe and beyond
death.[20] By textually privileging the present vision of the 'fiamma viva'
('living flame', l. 33), by having it appear first, Dante alerts us to the fact
that it will be—indeed must be—the dominant force in this encounter, yet
he also delays full recognition until the 'antica fiamma' ('ancient flame')
too has made itself felt, so that an uneasy tension persists. As Piero Botani
puts it:

> To the unforgettable experience of his adolescence Dante now leads us back, as
> he will again at the end of the canto (115–45) and in the following one, where his
> 'vita nuova' will be revisited with a new consciousness. The 'theophany' with

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20   Dante Alighieri, *Vita nuova*, ed. by Domenico De Robertis, Milan, Naples 1980. Available
     in English translation as Dante Alighieri, *The New Life*, ed. by E.V. Rieu, trans. by William
     Anderson, Harmondsworth, Eng, Baltimore 1964 (Penguin Classics). In *Purgatorio* 30.28–
     48, nostalgic desire for Beatrice is everywhere written into Dante's discourse and especially
     into the repetition of key words and phrases that replay in particularly intense fashion the
     first encounter with Beatrice when Dante was just nine years old (recounted in *Vita nova*,
     II, 1–10), redefining it, certainly, but also revisiting it almost frame by frame.

which the scene opened becomes 'recherche du temps perdu' and at the same time anagnorisis.[21]

In reanimating the past whilst at the same time articulating it as something different, with a new body and soul, Dante's own discourse becomes just another version of a 'revestita voce' ('re-clothed voice'). Having restored Beatrice from the dead, language takes on an even more profound role in a process of textual redirectioning that allows Dante to recuperate his 'temps perdu' ('lost time'), redeeming a poetic past as much as a real one. The rift in time (as well as space), represented by Lethe, will only be properly healed when the pilgrim crosses it. There is however a progressive movement in time, evident in the temporal markers that punctuate the text at this point, that prefigures and prepares for the definitive transition that will occur later on.

As Teodolinda Barolini explains, 'Only purgatory is the place where "tempo per tempo si ristora" (*Purg.* 23.84), where time is restored to us so that we can undo in time what we did in time', and this is a process that Dante's text recreates or performs through its own manipulation of time and memory.[22] The passage just quoted from *Purgatorio* 30 could not demonstrate this point any more clearly. Past time, restaged through memory, competes for space with present time, made evident in Dante's use of the adverbs 'già' ('already') (repeated twice), 'tosto che' ('as soon as'), 'ancora' ('yet'), and 'quando' ('when'), which all have a role in making or performing time anew. The dangers of regression are clearly present but, by progressively reaffirming the present frame of the encounter (which is also the more immediate frame of direct speech), language redeems itself, literally turning time around, so that from facing his past, the pilgrim turns around to face his future.

Let us consider further how Dante achieves this. Both clauses dependent on 'già' ('already') designate an earlier period in Dante's desire for Beatrice that the text evokes as it rewrites it: the first, ll. 34–36, 'E lo spirito mio, che *già cotanto / tempo* era stato ch'a la sua presenza / non era di stupor tremando affranto' ('And my spirit, which *already for so long a time* had not known in her presence the awe that overcame it with trembling'), indicates the negative period of time when Dante 'turned away' from Beatrice after her death, a time spent in her literal and metaphorical absence from the world, from Dante's thoughts, and from his writing. The second, ll. 40–42, '*Tosto che* ne la vista mi percosse / l'alta virtù che *già* m'avea trafitto / prima ch'io fuor di püerizia fosse' ('*As soon as* my sight was struck by that high power that had transfixed me before I was out of

21   Piero Boitani, '*I know the signs of the ancient flame*: Dante's recognitions', in *The Tragic and the Sublime in Medieval Literature,* Cambridge 1993, pp. 142–176 (p. 164).

22   Barolini, *The Undivine 'Comedy'*, p. 101.

boyhood'), goes even further back in time to the moment that his 'ancient love' was born, indicating the endurance of a desire that has been present from Dante's earliest encounter with Beatrice and that makes itself felt again now, even more powerfully than before.

In both cases, the force of this 'ancient love' is potentially overwhelming and the pilgrim risks getting lost in it, evident in his turning back to the left, to what is familiar, and to Virgil. But Virgil is not there and the utterance that the pilgrim addresses to him (ll. 46–48) hovers in an uncertain textual space between speech and silence, desire and its vocalization: since his addressee is missing, the comfort or support the pilgrim seeks is not to be found in that direction. Loss is quite literally written into language, a loss for which only Beatrice can compensate, and only once the process of mourning (for Virgil, and everything he represents) has been carried out. The thrice repeated name of Virgil (ll. 49–51), which echoes the loss of Eurydice in the Orphic myth, and leads to the pilgrim's face 'turning dark' with tears is the first step in this process that Beatrice will complete, countering the three 'Virgils' with the three verbs meaning 'to weep' whose purpose is in fact to stop his crying—to delay it for the proper time (the confession)—when what he will be called upon to mourn is yet more important still. As John Freccero argues:

> The calling out to Eurydice is the culmination of Virgilian pathos, lamenting death that is stronger than poetry, as it is stronger than love and even than Rome. Dante's adversative *ma* records the loss, yet transcends it with an affirmation.[23]

The redirectioning of desire at this point therefore functions precisely through language—the language that Beatrice speaks but also the language of the text. Hearing Beatrice speak his name (l. 55), Dante 'turns away' from the hole left by an absent Virgil towards Beatrice, who he perceives as looking at him for the first time, beginning in earnest the dialogue that will direct the rest of their encounter. The 'quando' or 'when' of line 62, '*quando mi volsi* al suon del nome mio' ('*when I turned* at the sound of my name'), is indeed the pivotal moment or 'turning point' in determining the transition since, in 'turning back' to Beatrice, the pilgrim is also facing forward once more, and it also corrects the period of momentary regression that Virgil's disappearance had threatened, similarly countered in the turning away from absence to presence, from past to future, and from left to right.

The dynamic of speech and reply, so crucial in determining the performative and transformative qualities of Dante's text at this point, is thus also staged textually as a dialogue between the author and himself.

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23   John Freccero, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*, Cambridge, Mass., London 1986, p. 208.

The processes of '*figure*, figuration and disfiguration' that De Man posits at the heart of autobiography are also those we find in *Purgatorio* 30–31 in the different subject positions that Dante occupies as both author and character, particularly in the linguistic exchange with Beatrice at the moment of the confession.[24] In fact, as I now wish to demonstrate, the way in which Dante choreographs the scene at this point suggests that the confession and absolution that the text stages are for the benefit of the poet as much as for his character. What Dante's language 'performs' at this point is nothing less than the triple salvation of his character, that of his 'sacrato poema' ('sacred poem', *Paradiso* 23.62), and himself as its author.

Beatrice's discourse once again provides the key, absorbing as it does the power of the sacraments as well as an intensely personal register that relates to the very private and poetic nature of Dante's sin, and its redemption. Her embittered accusations, as well as her 'lesson', though undoubtedly designed to 're-turn' the pilgrim towards her as I have already shown, also redirect the poet and his desire towards God. When Dante is named by Beatrice in *Purgatorio* 30.55—the only occurrence of this in the whole poem—author and character momentarily coincide, as they do again when Beatrice addresses Dante through allusions to his youth and his earlier text, the *Vita nova*, when the single pronoun 'he' testifies to the power of Beatrice's discourse to reach and to affect both penitent subjects in turn (Dante poet, and Dante pilgrim):

> *questi* fu tal ne la sua vita nova
> virtüalmente, ch'ogne abito destro
> fatto avrebbe in lui mirabil prova. (*Purgatorio* 30.115-117)

> *he* was such in his new life, potentially, that every good habit would have produced a marvellous result in him.

> Sì tosto come in su la soglia fui
> di mia seconda etade e mutai vita,
> *questi* si tolse a me e diessi altrui: (*Purgatorio* 30.124-126)

> When I was on the threshold of my second age and changed lives, *he* took himself from me and gave himself to another.

The author is clearly implicated as well as his character at this point, not least because the subject designated by the 'questi' ('he') belongs to a temporal sphere that precedes the events narrated at the start of the poem. This multi-levelled discourse, in which the text once again exploits its status as a 're-clothed' version of a voice, also extends to canto 31 in which Dante's confession proper is voiced more emphatically by the text than by the pilgrim himself:

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24   De Man, 'Autobiography as De-facement', p. 926.

'O tu che se' di là dal fiume sacro,'
volgendo suo parlare *a me* per punta,
che pur per taglio m'era paruto acro,
   ricominciò, seguendo senza cunta:
'Dì, dì se questo è vero: a tanta accusa
tua confession conviene esser congiunta'.
   Era la mia virtù tanto confusa
che *la voce si mosse e pria si spense*
che da li organi suoi fosse dischiusa.
   Poco sofferse poi disse: 'Che pense?
Rispondi a me, ché le memorie triste
in te non sono ancor da l'acqua offense'.
   Confusione e paura insieme miste
mi pinsero un tal 'sì' fuor de la bocca
al quale intender fuor mestier le viste.
[...]
   Dopo la tratta d'un sospiro amaro,
a pena ebbi la voce che rispuose,
e le labbra a fatica la formaro:
   piangendo dissi: 'Le presenti cose
col falso lor piacer volser miei passi
tosto che 'l vostro viso si nascose'.
   Ed ella: 'Se tacessi o se negassi
ciò che confessi, non fora men nota
la colpa tua: da tal giudice sassi! (*Purgatorio* 31.1-39)

'O you who are beyond the sacred river', *turning toward me* the point of her speech, whose mere edge had seemed sharp to me, / she began again, continuing without delay: 'say, say if this is true: to so great an accusation your confession must now be joined.' / My strength was so confounded that *my voice began but gave out before it was released from its organs.* / She endured this briefly, then she said: 'What are you pondering? Answer me, for your memories of evil have not yet been erased by the waters'. / *Confusion and fear mixed together drove such a 'Yes' out of my mouth that to hear it one needed eyes.* [...] / After heaving a bitter sigh, I hardly had the voice to reply, and my lips formed it with difficulty; / weeping I said, 'Present things with their false pleasure turned my steps as soon as your face was hidden'. / And she: 'If you were silent or denied what you confess, your guilt would be no less remarked: by such a judge is it known! (Purgatorio 31.1–39)

We remember that the pilgrim has already been declared by Virgil to be 'free and upright' of will at the end of *Purgatorio* 27 when the last *P* of sin has been erased from his forehead.[25] The relapse into a state of darkness and confusion is thus all the more startling for taking place at this point

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25 'Non aspettar mio dir più né mio cenno: / libero, dritto e sano è tuo arbitrio, / e fallo fora non fare a suo senno. / Per ch'io te sovra te corono e mitrio' ('No longer await any word or any sign from me: free, upright and whole is your will, and it would be a fault not to act according to its intent. Therefore you over yourself I crown and mitre'), *Purgatorio* 27.139–42.

and yet I believe also entirely logical if we accept that the backwards looking, melancholy desire that must be purged is ultimately the author's own and that this is *his* response, to Beatrice, through the medium of the text. Borges, when recounting the details of what he terms this 'aching scene', concludes (quoting Theophil Spoerri) that 'undoubtedly Dante himself had envisioned this meeting differently. Nothing in the preceding pages indicates that the greatest humiliation of his life awaits him there', as though the text somehow 'performs' the shaming and redemption of its author in a way that exceeds his own intentions on the matter.[26] Bernard Stambler too, when he discusses the dialectic of author and text, is drawn to the specifically textual properties of the confessional event:

> […] While remaining within the framework of his poem in these six cantos, Dante is so to speak relaxing his narrative exposition of the afterworld and bringing in a new mode of discourse—one which mixes direct expression (in which something close to the purely literal is the only sense) and symbolic expression (in which the thing-said exists for the thing-meant, as in the figures of the pageants). The Pilgrim's journey, and the allegory depending on it, are partly suspended while certain things are said (by Dante of course) to Dante the Poet, rather than, as regularly elsewhere, to Dante the Pilgrim.[27]

The reticence of the pilgrim at this point can thus be interpreted as a textual strategy or poetic device that leaves room for the poet to speak (to himself and Beatrice), whilst the difficulties of articulation at the level of the narrative contaminate the author's discourse too so that the painfulness of the process that has brought Dante to self-knowledge and to the conviction of his own sin is mirrored linguistically in the figuring and disfiguring of the voice. In turn the text, endowed with a new body and soul, corrects the sin that poetry itself, as a unique version of a voice, represents. When Dante's text intercedes to utter the reply to Beatrice that the pilgrim's voice articulates only fragmentarily or incompletely, the author's words are not mere glosses to the action but actually perform the exorcism of the poet's own 'memorie triste' or 'memories of sin' which, since Beatrice made her reappearance, have been the most dangerous threat to the process of salvation:

> Sotto 'l suo velo e oltre la riviera
> *vincer pariemi più sé stessa antica,*
> *vincer che l'altre qui, quand'ella c'era.*
> *Di penter sì mi punse ivi l'ortica*

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26   Jorge Luis Borges, 'Nine Dantesque Essays: 1945-1951', in *The Total Library: Non-Fiction 1922–1986*, ed. by Eliot Weinberger, trans. by Esther Allen, Suzanne Jill Levine, Eliot Weinberger, London 2001 (Penguin Classics), pp. 265–305 (p. 299). The quotation from Theophil Spoerri comes from *Einführung in die Göttliche Komödie*, Zurich 1946.

27   Bernard Stambler, 'The Confrontation of Beatrice and Dante: *Purgatorio* XXX', in *Italica* 42/1 (March 1965), pp. 61–97 (p. 63–64).

che *di tutte altre cose* qual mi torse
più nel suo amor, *più mi si fé nemica.*
   Tanta riconoscenza il cor mi morse
ch'io caddi vinto; e quale allora femmi
salsi colei che la cagion mi porse.
   Poi, quando il cor virtú di fuor rendemmi,
la donna ch' io avea trovata sola
sopra me vidi, e dicea: 'Tiemmi, tiemmi!'
   Tratto m'avea nel fiume infin la gola,
e tirandosi me dietro sen giva
sovresso l'acqua, lieve come scola.
   Quando fui presso alla beata riva,
'*Asperges me*' sì dolcemente udissi
che nol so rimembrar, non ch' io lo scriva.
   La bella donna ne le braccia aprissi;
abbracciommi la testa e mi sommerse
ove convenne ch' io l'acqua inghiottissi.
   Indi mi tolse e bagnato m'offerse
dentro a la danza de le quattro belle,
e ciascuna del braccio mi coperse. (*Purgatorio* 31.82-105)

   Under her veil and beyond the river she seemed to me to surpass her former
self more than she surpassed other women here, when she was here. / The nettle
of repentance so pricked me then, that whatever other thing had most turned me
toward its love, now became most hateful to me. / So much recognition bit my
heart that I fell overcome, and what I then became, she knows who was its cause.
/ Then, when my heart gave me back my external powers, the lady whom I had
found alone I saw above me and she was saying: 'Hold me, hold me!' / She had
drawn me into the river up to my throat, and, pulling me after her, she was
walking on the water as light as a boat. / When I drew near the blessed shore,
'Asperges me' was heard so sweetly that I cannot remember, let alone write it. /
The beautiful lady opened her arms, embraced my head, and submerged me, so
that I had to swallow some of the water. / Then she took me and, drenched as I
was, inserted me into the dance of the four beauties, and each of them covered
me with her arm.

Thus, as the 'ancient' ('antica') register of desire resurfaces in these cantos,
Dante must once again mourn the loss of his earthly passion, gaining in its
place a language of plenitude (or more-than-plenitude), embodied in the
poetics of fullness and heightened sensory perception we find in lines 82–
90, which in turn highlights the insufficiencies of the earlier syntax of
desire that has been definitively superseded. Like the Casella episode in
Purgatorio 2, which as Barolini tells us 'functions as a lapse, a backward
glance', this episode's 'redemption is implicit in its occurrence' and there is
no doubt from this perspective that the pilgrim will emerge as a newly
born soul on the other side.[28] With this dramatic moment Dante succeeds

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28   Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, p. 40.

in uniting in a unique dimension all the paths that have been trodden to bring the pilgrim and the poet to this point, redeeming them all (even the wrong turns, 'the sum total of personal falls, little deaths, other paths')— rewriting every journey, and every transgression with this one.[29]

In 'Chiare, fresche et dolci acque' ('Clear, fresh, sweet waters'), Petrarch, on the other hand, uses his return journey to rewrite transgression only in a more negative sense, seeking to live it again (as it happened before) rather than to change or alter its course. The locus of his original vision of Laura—Vaucluse, conjured up as a kind of *hortus conclusus*, as Mazzotta notes—is at once the origin and destination of desire, a space for the cultivation of the poet's love, where the primordial image of the beloved might be reproduced and preserved exactly as it was at their first encounter.[30] Like the *hortus conclusus* so often associated with the Virgin in medieval iconography, the vision of Laura is destined to remain untouched, but, in Petrarch's poem, also unchanged and untranscended.

Thus, where Dante's performative strategies are used linguistically to stage a new version of the self and to redefine the boundaries of poetic discourse, giving the language of the *Commedia* the redemptive power of the sacraments, Petrarch's language is used instead to cultivate his pleasure in the sin of recollection, which the poem 'performs' without ever 'transforming' the 'I'. As Durling suggests, canzone 126 does indeed exhibit a 'memory […] transfigured by desire',[31] but more importantly it establishes Petrarch's desire as inherently mnemonic, and problematically so, directed almost entirely toward the past, which is both too fixed and yet not substantial enough to be a truly satisfactory compensation for the empty present. The power of poetry is thus asserted, but so are its dangers—everything for which Petrarch will ultimately feel the need to repent but here rejoices in, for there may be nothing else, or nothing beyond words:

> S' egli è pur mio destino
> e' l cielo in ciò s'adopra,
> ch'Amor quest'occhi lagrimando chiuda,
>   qualche grazia il meschino
> corpo fra voi ricopra,
> et torni l'alma al proprio albergo ignuda;
>   la morte fia men cruda
> se questa spene porto
> a quel dubbioso passo:

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29 *ibid.*, p. 56.
30 Mazzotta, *The Worlds of Petrarch*, p. 172.
31 Durling, 'Introduction' to *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*, p. 24.

ché lo spirito lasso
non poria mai in più riposato porto
né in più tranquilla fossa
    fuggir la carne travagliata et l'ossa. (ll. 14-26)

> If it is indeed my destiny and Heaven exerts itself that Love close those eyes
> while they are still weeping, / let some grace bury my poor body among you and
> let my soul return naked to this its own dwelling; / death will be less harsh if I
> bear this hope to the fearful pass, for my weary spirit could never in a more
> restful port or a more tranquil grave flee my labouring flesh and my bones.

Where Dante presents his dream as 'true', Petrarch prizes his own dream
for what it is—an act of wilful self-delusion or 'vago errore' ('lovely
wandering' / 'beautiful error', l. 51), a site of absence more than presence,
and the outlet for a death-oriented desire which transforms that absence
into a chamber for Laura and the self but only through a process of self-
alienation that is ultimately as unsettling and divisive an experience as
Dante's is edifying. As Peter Hainsworth writes of sonnet 157, though his
comments could apply equally well to *canzone* 126:

> Ontologically there is a question surrounding the very nature of the thing that is
> read. Nor can it be otherwise: Petrarch has accepted fully the consequences of his
> rejection of any system of thought that pretends to objectivity, to designate what
> is real. The subjectivity of the experience alluded to and the subjectivity of the
> poem go hand in hand, the reader being put into a position of having to decide
> whether anything worthy of the name has happened at all. The senses are not
> excluded, but we are inside a special area that can only be thought of as poetic,
> though Petrarch can never designate it as such.[32]

Typically, in *RVF* 126, Laura begins as an absent universe that the poet is
trying to reconstruct, and the poem as a whole sees Petrarch trying to
mimic the miracle of Dante's language in *Purgatorio* 30–31 in order to
restore her to presence, as she was on the very first day he saw her.
However, in order to figure his ideal version of the afterlife, in which he
would be free to roam imaginatively in the Earthly Paradise, Petrarch is
forced to prematurely consign himself to the grave, imagining that only
once he is dead and buried could Laura conceivably return to look for
him. Not only does this reverse the central dynamic established between
the (living) pilgrim and (the resurrected) Beatrice, but also suggests that
Petrarch's poem is to be an encounter *manqué* since he must absent
himself from the scene in order for Laura to come back in. As Nancy
Vickers suggests, 'Dante's text, like Petrarch's, imposes the association
eros-mortality, and at least momentarily, presents us with a lover trapped
in a middle space, neither Hell nor Heaven, by his ambivalent perception
of a beloved', but as forcefully as Dante commits to transcending that

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32   Hainsworth, *Petrarch the Poet*, p. 124.

state, Petrarch embraces it.[33] Purgatory is for Petrarch a condition of writing; it is synonymous with poetry. He can no more escape it than he can the self.

Thus although Petrarch undoubtedly models his 'vision' of Laura on the beatific vision of Beatrice in *Purgatorio* 30–31, he also continually departs from that model, rewriting Dante's progressive discourse of desire as one of suspension or regression, privileging a backwards look that will become the dominant index of desire also in Sereni's poem, which follows a similar melancholy trajectory, in which desire becomes blocked. Whereas Dante overwrites the memory of Beatrice's 'belle membra' ('lovely members', *Purgatorio* 31.50) with her voice, alerting us to the changed nature of his desire and the reconciliation and exaltation of the human within the divine, Petrarch is fixated solely with Laura's body and the hole left by her physical absence from the place—Vaucluse—whose landscape his poem recreates:

> Chiare fresche et dolci acque
> ove *le belle membra*
> pose colei che sola a me par donna,
>   gentil ramo ove piacque
> (con sospir mi rimembra)
> a lei di fare al bel fianco colonna
>   erba et fior' che la gonna
> leggiadra ricoverse
> co l'angelico seno;
>   aere sacro, sereno,
> ove Amor co' begli occhi il cor m'aperse:
> date udienzia insieme
>   a le dolenti mie parole estreme. (ll. 1-13)

> Clear, fresh, sweet waters where she who alone seems lady to me rested her *lovely body*, / gentle branch where it pleased her (with sighing I remember) to make a column for her lovely side / grass and flowers that her rich garment covered along with her angelic breast, sacred bright air; / where Love opened my heart with her lovely eyes: listen all together to my sorrowful dying words.

Laura never speaks and this renders the image of her, when she does reappear, in one sense more malleable, in another less certain or substantial than that of Beatrice. Though clearly 're-clothed' from memory as Beatrice is, Laura is not so much 'clothed anew' as merely 'clothed (over) again' and she is definitively not a 'revestita voce' ('re-clothed voice'), leaving Petrarch's performance problematically one-sided, centred on the self more than the Other, and unable to recuperate Laura except fragmentarily or incompletely. More problematically, since Laura is still

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33 Nancy Vickers, 'Re-membering Dante: Petrarch's "Chiare, fresche et dolci acque"', in *MLN* 96/1, Italian Issue (January 1981), pp. 1–11 (p. 9).

alive at this point, the association of her with a dead Beatrice betrays Petrarch's funereal strategy for her repossession, as well as foreshadowing his realization that 'only when reclassified as dead, i.e. immortal, will she cease to impede his voyage toward certainty, stability, and peace, and instead promote it'.[34]

Petrarch's subject and his memory are not in process as they are when Dante writes his text, but establish themselves rather as reified, static objects that are designed to freeze time, and thus counter temporality. But the confusion of eternity with a suspended, frozen moment that is in fact a heightened moment caught *in time* (the contingent, historical instant when he first saw Laura), as opposed to a timeless one, indicates how Petrarch's own version of an absolute can only come through a temporal distortion.

This process of distortion is rendered most clearly in the central performative phrase of the fourth strophe, 'qual con un vago errore / girando parea dir: "Qui regna amore"' ('this one [flower], with a lovely wandering, turning about seemed to say: "Here reigns Love"'), which momentarily conflates the poet's voice with that of the vision, yielding a remarkably substantial image of his beloved, albeit one shrouded in a 'loving cloud' that conceals as much as reveals who lies beneath:

> Da' be' rami scendea
> (dolce ne la memoria)
> una pioggia di fior sovra 'l suo grembo,
>   et ella si sedea
> umile in tanta gloria,
> coverta già de l'amoroso nembo;
>   qual fior cadea sul lembo,
> qual su le treccie bionde
> ch' oro forbito et perle
>   eran quel dì a vederle,
> qual si posava in terra et qual su l'onde
> qual con un vago errore
>   girando parea dir: 'Qui regna Amore'. (ll. 40-52)

> From the lovely branches was descending (sweet in memory) a rain of flowers over her bosom, / and she was sitting humble in such glory, already covered with the loving cloud; / this flower was falling on her skirt, this one on her blond braids, which were burnished gold and pearls to see that day; / this one was coming to rest on the ground, this one on the water, this one, with a lovely wandering, turning about seemed to say: 'Here reigns Love'.

As an instance of direct speech in the present tense, the quintessentially performative phrase 'Here reigns Love' certainly appears to establish Love's kingdom more than describe it, creating a seat for Laura within the

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34   Barolini, 'The Making of a Lyric Sequence', p. 36.

poem, which is also a space in which to seat her phantasm. However, there is a tension or ambiguity with regard to tense and to person that suggests things may not be so straightforward, casting doubt on the unity of the vision and the poet's status within it.

The 'Here' in particular, as the culmination of a textual strategy that Petrarch has used since the beginning of the poem in order to locate Laura despite her absence, rooting the phantasms of memory in the landscape, carries an implicit doubleness, appearing as it does at the heart of that same performative phrase. If it is meant to stand for the miraculous assimilation of past and present in a single location, through the medium of the poem, it could also imply their disjunction. Depending on whether or not we believe that Petrarch has managed to establish a harmonious relationship between the landscape of memory (evoked through the imperfect tense, aligned with the flower) and the landscape of dream (evoked through the present tense, aligned with Love and the kingdom), this is either the moment that Petrarch gets closest to Laura or the moment at which he is furthest from her.

We should also remember that it is the flower, and not the 'I', that is credited with uttering the words that constitute the creative force of the vision. Already, this implies a dissociation of the poet from his own voice and a loss of ownership of the dream as well as the memory in which it originates. The speech act is also tempered further by the verb of doubt which suggests that the flower only '*seemed* to say' those words, or perhaps only seemed to be speaking at all. Since, in performative terms, the existence of the world and of Laura depends upon the success of the utterance, whether or not it actually took place is of prime importance. Mediated as it is through the *prosopopoeia* that gives the flower (itself mediated through memory) a voice, the vision implies a doubleness that attests to the duplicity of the poem itself—at one moment capable of making even flowers 'speak', at another it deprives the poet of his own voice in order that the image of Laura, somewhat suspect in its own right, can come to the fore.

On the one hand, the flower 'turning about itself', perpetuates and commemorates the memory and image of Laura cyclically, in a pose of circularity which resembles that of liturgy. Petrarch wants to transform the single historical moment at which he first saw Laura into an eternally repeatable event. However, if the liturgical framework is present it is undeniably distorted with regard to the subject since the filter of memory always remains in place and there is no suggestion that Petrarch entirely succeeds in making Laura truly present in the way that medieval concepts of 'memoria' as anamnesis could, through the performance of a rite,

restore a moment from the past and allow it to be experienced properly anew, as though for the first time:

> Clearly, the passage [The Institution Narrative of the Eucharist] chronicles an event that took place only once. Yet when the celebrant touches the bread and wine as he repeats the words 'he…took the bread', and 'he…took the cup', these actions become inexplicably contemporary, without being exactly mimetic. […] Each celebration is distant in history from the inaugural event, but at the same time, the induced proximity of the performance grants it a special kind of immediacy, as though it were happening for the first time.[35]

Petrarch tries to grant his vision of Laura this kind of immediacy but the parentheses that enclose his statements on memory in the first and the fourth strophes—'(con sospir mi rimembra)' ('(with sighing I remember)'), l. 5; '(dolce ne la memoria)' ('(sweet in memory)'), l. 41— show that he cannot entirely discount his perception of the fragmentation of time. Already at the start of the vision, there is an indication of errancy in the random pattern that Petrarch's flowers make as they fall which, if they spell the integration of Laura's image on the one hand (since they trace out her form), spell disintegration on the other (since that form is always partially hidden, only glimpsed between the flowers themselves). Moreover, whilst these flowers undoubtedly look back to the 'rain of flowers' that mark the advent of Beatrice's return in *Purgatorio* 30, they are less a sign of eternity or of the angelic nature of the beloved than of the synecdochic representation of Laura's body that looks back most strongly to the more negative image of Beatrice's 'lovely members […] scattered in earth' [*Purgatorio* 31.49–51].[36] As Mazzotta notes, 'in a poem such as this, in which there is an extraordinary awareness of her physicality—her body is cherished as 'le belle membra' (l. 2) —as well as a concern with the destiny of the poet's own body, the loss of Laura as a concrete image is not altogether a positive value'.[37]

Measured against the Dantean model of the speech act that Petrarch's poem reappropriates, the loss that the poet experiences with regard to his own poetic voice is possibly even more damning than the dissipation of Laura's image per se, though of course the two function interdependently to fracture the momentary harmony that seems to have been achieved at the end of strophe four, where the vision had earlier reached its height, 'Qui regna Amore' ('Here reigns Love'). The profound feeling of

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35   Bridget Nichols, *Liturgical Hermeneutics: Interpreting Liturgical Rites in Performance*, Frankfurt a. M. 1996, p. 110.

36   'Mai non t'appresentò natura o arte / piacer quanto le belle membra in ch'io / rinchiusa fui, e sono in terra sparte' ('Never did nature or art present to you such beauty as did the lovely members in which I was enclosed, and now they are scattered in earth').

37   Mazzotta, *The Worlds of Petrarch*, p. 178.

disorientation that he communicates suggests that by the end of the poem Petrarch occupies what is only a limbic space and not a properly purgatorial one (since he will never leave it, and it will have no ending), and he is exiled to an uncertain time and place that are no longer the space (or time) of the vision but are also not the space (or time) of reality:

> Quante volte diss'io
> allor, pien di spavento:
> 'Costei per fermo nacque in paradiso!'
> Così carco d'oblio
> il divin portamento
> e 'l volto e le parole e 'l dolce riso
> m'aveano, et sì diviso
> da l'imagine vera,
> ch' i' dicea sospirando:
> 'Qui come venn'io o quando?'
> credendo esser in ciel, non là dov'era.
> Da indi in qua mi piace
> Quest'erba sì ch' altrove non ò pace.
> Se tu avessi ornamenti quant' ài voglia
> poresti arditamente
> uscir del bosco et gir infra la gente. (ll. 53-68)

> How many times did I say to myself then, full of awe: 'She was surely born in Paradise!' / Her divine bearing and her face and her words and her sweet smile had so laden me with forgetfulness / and so divided me from the true image, that I was sighing: / 'How did I come here and when?' thinking I was in Heaven, not there where I was. From then on this grass has pleased me so that elsewhere I have no peace. // If you had as many beauties as you have desire, you could boldly leave the wood and go among people.

When Laura fails to speak or return the reciprocal gaze the poet sought in strophe three when he imagined her returning to look for him ('cercandomi', 'seeking me', l. 33), his discourse rebounds on itself so that all that is replayed back to him is the sound of his own voice. Whilst lines 53–55 rework something of the cyclicality of the flower's discourse in the preceding lines, the poet's words are but a paler reflection of what has come before and the performative phrase in line 55, distorted by the past historic that introduces it, does not have the same presencing force as its predecessor. The fact that the utterance must be repeated in order to have a chance of creating the required effect, and only indirectly instates Laura as present (through 'costei' / 'she'), focusing on an earlier period in her history and dispersing time more than unifying it, leaves us with the feeling that the lessening power of speech mirrors the waning force of the vision or, better, the 'I''s impending dissociation from it.

As line 61 makes clear, speaking for Petrarch coincides with 'sighing'. Whereas the 'sighs' that the pilgrim uttered at the moment of the

confession communicated his release from sin and the 'unblocking' of the soul from memory, Petrarch's sigh represents only the irreconcilability of desire and its object, and the eternalization of a process that takes the poet back full circle to the beginning of the poem—to dwell amongst the trees and the grass where Laura has been before and could be again. The tenacity of the poet at this point, and his continuing attachment to what can only be an incomplete and flawed experience but is regarded as absolute (since, as he tells us, he finds peace nowhere else) definitively mark Petrarch's distance from Dante. Unable to relinquish Laura and move into God, Petrarch cannot be like the pilgrim because he fails to adequately mourn the past, getting caught up instead in a spiral of desire whose ending is just the same as its beginning.

The traits of melancholia that Petrarch's text betrays—the impossibility of leaving the past behind, the preservation in fantasy of what has long since been lost in reality—are in turn carried through to Sereni's poem.[38] 'La malattia dell'olmo' and the diseased tree at its heart embody a kind of malady of the soul that cannot easily be rectified because it is felt by the poet to be innate, inevitable, and ultimately beyond his control. Sereni's subject is closest to Petrarch's morbid articulation of the self as dead or dying, and there is a similar emphasis on posthumous existence, which colours negatively the entire scene and puts the Other firmly in shadow (we remember that she is herself a shade), so that she barely materializes before dissolving again. The poet appears to desire restitution for some past transgression (associated, Dantesquely, with memory), and the focus is similarly on countering loss, but that loss is more intangible than either Dante's or Petrarch's (whose texts ultimately interrogate the loss of a named beloved), and thus more difficult to go about reversing or replacing.

Hence, where Petrarch was able to transform his hollow space (the landscape, his soul) into an enchanted wood of memory (the poem), both celebrating and denying absence through the medium of the poetic word, Sereni seems reconciled to loss. Any fantasy of plenitude has fallen away and Sereni's performance is neither as self-sufficient as Petrarch's nor as edifying as Dante's. Where the pilgrim's memories are remade, Sereni's subject is 'undone' by memory, and his speech act is even more profoundly alienating than Petrarch's insofar as the subject is split from the start and unable to make the two parts of himself join up.

Sereni's elm, like the one that marks the entrance to Hades in *Aeneid* VI, is 'shadowy and vast', from which 'false Dreams hold in throngs,

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38   My definition of melancholia here borrows from Esther Sánchez-Pardo's account in
     Cultures of the Death Drive: Melanie Klein and Modernist Melancholia, Durham, London 2003
     (Post-contemporary Interventions), p. 53.

clinging under every leaf'.[39] False dreams are those without meaning, that lead nowhere, or like Petrarch's 'vago errore' consciously misdirect the subject, leading him astray. Sereni's dream is also 'false'—entering into dialogue with the shade of his past life, he hopes he might be able to purge himself of the dangers of memory but instead they are intensified. Without the privilege of the Dantean perspective, he cannot distinguish between the true and the false path, or between the greater and the lesser good, and is literally plagued by indecision. Looking in too many directions at once he cannot decide which way to go, a disorientation compounded by linguistic indirection and the uncertainty of the outcome.

Already at the end of strophe two, any possibility of a spectacular denouement appears to be discounted with the wished for 'unleafing' or 'unfeathering' of the gull in a flare of brilliant white only hypothetical at best, destined like Sereni's 'variable star'—that gives the name to the collection from which this poem is from—to burn itself out before it has properly had a chance to exist. His textual performance is all in the gap or the shortfall performatively speaking, in what he cannot articulate, or what language fails to achieve or recuperate of a world that has been lost or damaged. His speech act is marked most of all by its inability to effect change or bring about a better future and returning to Austin's 'doctrine of the *infelicities*', we can say that Sereni's performance in a sense 'misfires', is staged incompletely or erroneously in respect to the model it appropriates, or to borrow a phrase from Benveniste, is 'frappé de nullité' ('rendered null and void'), struck or bordered on all sides by nothingness into which the subject and his poem fall at the end.[40]

He retains elements of the 'vision' (of Beatrice and of Laura) but does so whilst preventing any 'visionary' dimension in the strictest sense of the word making itself felt, recasting the 'rain of flowers' as the disintegrating process of the elm shedding its leaves, a sign of decay rather than as in Dante the advent of an eternal, angelic presence, or in Petrarch that which endures of the image of Laura on the first day he saw her. The lights ('La

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39 'In medio ramos annosaque bracchia pandit / ulmus opaca, ingens, quam sedem Somnia volgo / vana tenere ferunt, foliisque sub omnibus haerent', *Aeneid* VI. 282–284, in Virgil, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I–VI*, ed. and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, Cambridge, Mass. 1974, pp. 526–527.

40 'Tout l'essentiel de cet article porte sur les "malheurs" de l'énoncé performatif, sur les circonstances qui peuvent le frapper de nullité [...]' ('The most important part of this article deals with the "unhappinesses" of the performative utterance, with the circumstances which can render it null and void […]'), Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, p. 270 (*Problems in General Linguistics*, p. 233).

malattia', l. 14), also potentially of Dantean derivation [*Purgatorio* 29.62],[41] similarly do not herald the advent of a saviour figure; they are not the bright lights of the procession but only stars twinkling intermittently against the impending blackness of the sky.

Sereni's experience of desire, like Petrarch's, borders on self-annihilation but he enjoys few of the compensatory pleasures that Petrarch still finds in the material of poetry as a space for the celebration of desire and the beloved, however transitory or flawed the experience may be. Sereni's performance is also founded on absence but it is not the imaginatively favourable or creative absence of Petrarch, but more of a metaphysical absence, based on the feeling that there may be nothing more, or nothing beyond the self, and he stands at the extreme end of a line of poets for whom desire is the foundation of poetry, and its fulfilment the increasingly elusive goal:

> Over the course of a poetic process whose emblematic temporal extremes are Petrarch and Mallarmé, this essential textual tension of Romance poetry will displace its center from desire to mourning: Eros will yield to Thanatos its impossible love object so as to recover it, through a subtle and funereal strategy, as lost object, and the poem will become the site of an absence yet nonetheless draws from this absence its specific authority.[42]

Any possibility of transcendence (either of himself, or of his situation) seems to be closed off to Sereni from the start and a bathetic mode dominates that detracts from the horizon of expectation established by Dante and Petrarch's texts that the performative will be used to transform the subject or his situation, however successful or unsuccessful the attempt. Instead, Sereni writes into his performatives a concept of limit so that they constantly near a boundary (which he hopes to cross), but ultimately force him to recoil when things do not turn out as he had hoped, as though he is looking back retrospectively with the foreknowledge of what is to be (or has already been) lost.

This is reinforced through the poem as a whole in a series of adverbial phrases that cut short the poetic path before it has properly opened up, precipitating its demise as well as the impossibility of exceeding the framework of its more limited reality: 'ancora' ('still'—but not for long, l.1), 'sin qua' ('as far as here', l. 9), 'fin che' ('as long as', l. 11), 'fino a... fino a' ('until…until', l.14; l.21). A sense of constriction is also apparent in the restricted space given to the 'I' to speak directly, which limits his potential

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41   'La donna mi sgridò: 'Perché pur ardi / sì ne l'affetto de le vive luci, / e ciò che vien di retro a lor non guardi' ('The lady scolded me: 'Why do you burn so with feeling for the living lights, and do not look at what comes after them?'), *Purgatorio* 28.61–63.

42   Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, trans. by Ronald L. Martinez, Minneapolis, London 1993 (Theory and History of Literature 69), p. 129.

to exist as a subject, and confines him for much of the poem to the status of a passive object. His appearances are charted through the series of events that befall him, over which he has little or no control or from which he has abdicated all responsibility, more than through a conscious project of 'self-making', (i) 'Guida*mi* tu, stella variabile…' ('Guide *me*, variable star…'); (ii) '*mi* centra / dove più punge e brucia' ('hits me [...] where it most stings and burns'); (iii) 'scaccia / *da me* questo spino molesto' ('drive out *from me* the insistent thorn'); (iv) '*mi* hai tolto l'aculeo non il suo fuoco' ('you've removed [*from me*] the thorn but not its burning'). The speaker is very much on the outside, looking in, and his stock seems deficient at the linguistic level: he cannot sustain momentum. Like Petrarch he has no real audience except himself and yet his own version of the phantasm —the shade or 'ombra'—is too closely bound up with his interior life and with the memory he seeks to purge, to offer any hope of change or release.

Even when the 'I' does speak directly, as is the case in several of the examples cited above, the actions he tries to perform by speaking tend to become undone or unravel themselves before really taking effect. When the imperative form is used, as in example (i) and example (iii), the wish expressed remains unfulfilled or unverifiable, and when it is rendered in the past tense, as in example (iv), the 'I' loses all agency in the process and cannot properly insert himself into the performative realm (confined, strictly speaking, to the present tense indicative mood).[43] In turn, the fact that the main performative act poetic language is called upon to perform—the purging of memory—happens at the point of ellipsis between lines 25 and 26 and is identifiable only in the past tense 'È fatto' ('It's done'), l. 26, which eventually turns out not even to be true, reveals the full extent of the ineffectual nature of speech. Through its flawed articulation of a desire for redemption, language 'murmurs' ('mormora') its response as a sign of its incompleteness. Unable to redeem the subject or to assuage his memory, only the more negative traits of his desire persist.

More revealing still, to this extent, is Sereni's choice of compound verbs to designate the act of speaking as it relates to the 'I': 'dico voltandomi' ('I say, turning back') and 'sospiro abbandonandomi' ('I sigh, abandoning myself') which confirm that speaking carries for him an explicit danger, the same danger in fact that will culminate with the fall. Both verbs are combined with a gerundive phrase that indicates what happens to the subject while or as he is speaking; both highlight a disjunction between the subject's aims and his achievement that undoes

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43 Lecture V of Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* deals with the grammatical determinants of performative language, including, most importantly, the present tense indicative mood, pp. 53–66.

the force of his utterance or stops it in its tracks, so that it merely hangs there, once again merely the expression of a wish or desire that cannot be fulfilled.

In the first example (ll. 19–25), the poet, using the imperative form, requests that life come near to him, speak to him, and in speaking, purge him of the 'insistent thorn' of memory that harms him, undoubtedly a reworking of 'la puntura della rimembranza' ('the pricking of memory', *Purgatorio* 12.20) which, however is not countered, unlike for Dante the pilgrim, by any 'sting of the nettle of repentance' [*Purgatorio* 31.85–87] and so never succeeds in becoming productive. Speech is aligned with turning and more specifically with turning back. This is particularly ironic in the given context since the backwards look would appear to reinforce rather than to dispel the overwhelming force of memory, just as the 'shade' herself is problematically part of that memory, or only reachable through it.

This same backwards look, encoded in language, also inevitably carries something of Orpheus' banishing gaze on Eurydice that returns her to the underworld but, in Sereni's case, also carries the poet off too as the light fades and he too literally 'falls into shadow'. As the angel warns Dante-pilgrim in *Purgatorio* 9.132, '[…] di fuor torna chi 'n dietro si guata' ('[...] whoever looks back must return outside'): the backwards look precipitates the fall; Sereni is not yet strong enough to resist it. He has not advanced enough on his journey of self-knowledge to be able to look behind himself and carry on moving. Thus he 'abandons himself', the journey, and the poem all in one go. The 'sigh' that replaces or absorbs speech in line 30 looks back to the pilgrim's 'sighs' only negatively; as was the case in Petrarch's poem, sighing is not synonymous with the liberation from sin or memory, but with the realization that both will be perpetuated eternally in desire. Speaking and falling, in the last two lines of Sereni's poem, entirely coincide. The sigh neither loosens nor dissolves the knot, only strengthening the bond that ties the poet to the darkest part of himself, 'Mi hai / tolto l'aculeo, non / il suo fuoco – *sospiro* abbandonandomi a lei / in sogno con lei *precipitando già*' ('You've / removed the thorn, but not / its burning – *I sigh* as I give myself up to her / in dreams with her *already falling*').

Sereni's poem thus ends with the evocation of something like the linguistic equivalent of suspended animation, which slows life down without allowing it to stop completely. Death is already with the subject but there is no hope of termination. In a poem that like Petrarch's *canzone* already knows how it will end when it starts out, and could not have turned out differently, the final pernicious reference to a time that has already passed, but can also never move on— 'precipitando *già*' ('*already*

falling') —is the most damning indication of all that language itself may come too late to stop it. Where both Dante and Petrarch, in their different ways, seek a language that can counter death (be it the death of the Other —Dante, or the death of memory—Petrarch), Sereni seems to yield to it. In revisiting the performative strategies of the two medieval authors and making them entirely his own, he performs the most original of elegies, staging a memorial for a still living thing that is perpetually brought back to death as opposed to life.

As Judith Butler states, 'where melancholy is the refusal of grief, it is also always the incorporation of loss, the miming of the death it cannot mourn'—Sereni's performance incorporates loss, both the loss of the object and more fundamentally perhaps a loss of faith in the power of poetry to compensate for an original lack.[44] This marks dramatically Sereni's departure from Dante and dissociates him even from Petrarch who, despite his desire being similarly misplaced, still entrusts language with a project of restoration (of the self and his beloved).

For Dante, whose 'self-making' is staged through the triple collaboration of author, poem, and character, poetic performance is an edifying and redemptive experience that marks the birth of a new Christian subject on the summit of Mount Purgatory, and the coming together of desire and language in a way that was not possible before that moment. Dante's poem represents what, following Agamben's analysis, we can term a '*joi d'amour*', furnishing a '*stantia*' or chamber in which the beatitude of love is celebrated and in which:

> […] desire, supported by a conception that constitutes the sole coherent attempt in Western thought to overcome the metaphysical fracture of presence, celebrates, for perhaps the last time in the history of Western poetry, its joyful and inexhaustible 'spiritual union' with its own object of love, with that 'joy that never ends'.[45]

As we have seen, what is restored to Dante in Eden is also the possibility of a pre-lapsarian language—the return to a primordial state of unity and wholeness—which paves the way for the supra-linguistic realm of *Paradiso* in which language will be pushed to its furthest limits, and ultimately become redundant in light of the heavenly state of continuous understanding. Petrarch and Sereni, on the other hand, are stopped short of entering a truly paradisiacal dimension linguistically speaking, failing— through an excess of self-concern (Petrarch) or an absence of self-belief (Sereni)—to move beyond the language of the past, which can only partially compensate for the deficiencies of the present.

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44 Judith Butler, 'Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification', in *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Stanford, Calif. 1997, pp. 132–150 (p. 142).

45 Agamben, *Stanzas*, pp. 129–130.

In both Petrarch and Sereni's texts, faith in the Logos itself seems to have fallen away, and in entrusting the 'dreams' of their poems to figures of 'error', or chance, or potentially aimless 'wandering' ('errore'), they testify also to their deviation from a medieval symbolic order that Dante's more ordered universe creates and upholds at the level of discourse. Petrarch's poem may retain some shadow of fullness but it is only the ghost of memory or the beguiling force of the imagination, which veil more than compensate for the underlying absence at their heart. In Sereni's poem, performative language intensifies this absence yet further and he moulds his poetic landscape to a remarkably original articulation of a poetic 'I', which draws its material from the past as much as the present in order to measure the full scope of its decline.

If performance in literature resides above all in the power of the word to bring something into being or, in Heideggerian fashion, marks the moment at which something 'begins its presencing',[46] Petrarch and Sereni's modernity would seem to exist mainly in the 'absenting' power of their speech, which prefigures the deconstructionist view that:

> […] There is not a fall *from* full presence but, as it were, a fall *within* presence, an inability of 'presence' to fulfil its promise of being able to form a ground. Full presence […] is not a prelapsarian ideal or an eschatological hope, but an illusory goal—the illusion being that there is in fact something outside the sign system which can escape its determinations.[47]

Perhaps, in the end, what all these texts perform is the dialogue that language stages with itself.

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46 Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter, New York 2001, p. 152.

47 Kevin Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology and Philosophy*, Cambridge 1989, p. 14, cited in Nichols, *Liturgical Hermeneutics*, p. 39. Italics in the original. Hart is here summarizing Derrida's position on language, and his theory of deconstruction.

III. Embodied voice:

Reading and re-reading

Owen Rees

Singing Sweetly to the Virgin: Josquin's *Inviolata*

The period after 1500 was one of gradual change in how singers of polyphonic music approached the task of performance. At the beginning of the century, notation of such works was—by later standards—under-prescriptive, most strikingly in terms of pitch (i.e. the intervals to be sung). Trained singers reading from this notation were expected to apply their understanding of the conventional 'grammar' of good melody and counterpoint in order to produce a musically satisfactory result, in ways which will be outlined below.[1] To modern eyes and ears this process appears to be one of altering the notated piece through the addition of accidentals, but that is not how such performance decisions would have been viewed at the time; rather, they constituted intelligent treatment of a notational system which required informed interpretation. During the sixteenth century there was a tendency towards more explicit notation of intervallic content by composers, music publishers, and copyists, such that the types of musical context in which performers were still expected to 'intervene' (in modern terms) by choosing between intervallic interpretations became fewer. This tendency facilitated performance by the rapidly growing numbers of amateur singers of polyphony to whom, for example, the new music-publishing trade catered in significant part. It also reflected and allowed—in some repertories at least—composers' indulgence in (for example) chromatic writing and other degree-inflections of types which simply had to be specified or 'fixed' at the stage of composition.

Margaret Bent characterizes the relationship between composer and performer operating within the older system just described as follows: the singers were 'collaborators with the composer in making the music happen—realising it—within the limits of his intentions'.[2] The composer

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1   Such an application of the term 'grammar' is found in various writings of Margaret Bent, including 'The Grammar of Early Music: Preconditions for Analysis', in *Tonal Structures in Early Music*, ed. by Cristle Collins Judd, New York, London 1998, pp. 15–59.

2   Margaret Bent, 'Diatonic *ficta*', in *Early Music History* 4 (1984), pp. 1–48 (p. 13).

could so devise things that the music allowed for more than one (melodically/contrapuntally) different but equally correct interpretation of a particular passage.[3] But he might also steer the music such that only one correct interpretation existed. In this study, I should like to consider a case in which the composer concerned has directed a spotlight at a particular passage of a motet by exploiting this system. He has, I believe, 'played with' the singers, causing them almost certainly to go astray in their first attempt at performance, and then obliging them to work out a solution which belies the apparent simplicity and consistency of the passage as notated. The composer makes his singers work hard to determine his intentions and to achieve the best performed result, which is an imaginative and striking one: he is 'directing' them even if not present. All this, it seems, was in the service of the text being set. The composer concerned is the most famous musician of the early sixteenth century, Josquin Desprez (*c.* 1450–1521), and the work is his five-voice setting of the Marian sequence *Inviolata, integra, et casta es Maria*. First, the general system itself—of notation, and good polyphonic practice—will be briefly outlined, and then Josquin's deployment of it will be analyzed.

It is important, first, to note what the singers did (and did not) have before their eyes as they read and sang a piece of polyphonic music of this period. They were not reading from a score which showed the relationship between their own part and the other parts. Rather, the parts were set out separately on a single opening of a choirbook, or (increasingly often as the sixteenth century progressed) each part was in a different part-book. Looking, then, at their own vocal part, the singer brought to bear on that isolated melodic line presumptions about its intervallic content, some of which were not simply dictated by the clef, the key signature, and the pitch notation (as they are with modern notation), but reflected conventions of good melodic behaviour. Most particularly, the singer would seek an interpretation of their line which avoided intervals regarded as objectionable, such as augmented fourths (i.e. tritones, as between an F and the B natural above it). They would also be able to see from their part alone melodic clichés which suggested that their line was at that point forming a cadence with another voice, and the pitch interpretation there would thus be made according to conventions of cadence-formation. Such singers' presumptions might prove flawed when the piece was sung through and the other voices heard. Furthermore, an important additional category of good musical 'grammar' came into play as soon as the other

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3   That extent of likely diversity of solutions in practice is emphasized by Robert Toft in 'Traditions of Pitch Content in the Sources of Two Sixteenth-Century Motets', in *Music & Letters* 69 (1988), pp. 334–344. See for example pp. 336–337. One of the two pieces which Toft employs as a case study is Josquin's *Inviolata*.

parts were audible: the achievement of euphonious perfect consonances (fifths, octaves, and their compounds) between parts, and most especially between the lowest sounding part and the upper voices; or, to put it the other way round, the avoidance of such intervals as diminished fifths with the lowest sounding part. Sometimes during the first performance of the piece the requisite intervallic interpretation would become apparent to an alert singer before he reached the note concerned in his own melodic line; for example, the note in another part to which he would have to respond might be sounded before the crucial moment in his own part. But on many other occasions the necessary interpretation could not (or not easily) be anticipated, and an 'error' would result during the first sing-through, then to be corrected by agreement between singers before they next performed the piece.

The note most particularly affected by such differences between the musical practice of Josquin's period and ours is B. To put it crudely, a singer of Josquin's time stood ready to sing any B as either 'B natural' or 'B flat' in our terms, in response to the circumstances, although of course the likelihood of one or the other interpretation was influenced by such aspects as whether a B flat was shown in what would later become known as the 'key signature'. That singer is unlikely to have thought of this process of choice as, for example, 'flattening a B natural'. Rather, having worked out the desired intervallic structure of their line, they negotiated that structure by employing the system of hexachords: patterns of six notes rising from the lowest in the interval pattern tone–tone–semitone–tone–tone. The hexachords normally (i.e. within what was termed *musica recta*, as opposed to *musica ficta*) had as their lowest note C (the 'natural' hexachord), F (the 'soft' hexachord, with B flat), or G (the 'hard' hexachord, with B natural), and their six constituent notes were identified by solmization syllables: *ut* (rather than the modern *do*), *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, and *la*. Thus, if a singer saw that their line rose by step from an F to a B, they knew (all things being equal) that they should sing this melodic progression in accordance with the 'soft' hexachord, so that *ut* = F, *re* = G, *mi* = A, and *fa* = B flat. They thereby avoided the melodic tritone, F to B natural. In terms of the intervals formed simultaneously with another voice, solmization could also be deployed as a means of explaining correctness, in that one knew to avoid *mi contra fa* in the sense, for example, of one voice singing a B as *mi* while another voice sang its B as *fa* (in our terms, B natural and B flat sounding simultaneously, i.e. a false relation), or the vertical tritone B flat (B *fa*) to E natural (E *mi*).

To summarize: the modern scholarly consensus is that trained singers of polyphony in the time of Josquin were expected to interpret their melodic line in terms of its intervallic content, paying attention not only to

the shape of that line itself as they read it but also to the counterpoint formed with other voices as they heard it in performance. Their achievement of a satisfactory result involved three principal types of case which might require—in our terms—accidental alteration of the notated line. The first concerned the melodic line itself, and involved the avoidance of tritones (particularly if approached or quitted directly). A further convention growing in importance in the sixteenth century was sometimes related to this, and came to be remembered by way of the phrase (first attested in a German treatise of 1618) 'una nota super *la* semper est canendum *fa*' ('one note above *la* must always be sung as *fa*'). In practical terms, this meant that if the line rose from (most frequently) A to B and then returned to A, the B should be sung as B flat (i.e. 'fa' in the soft hexachord). The second type of case involved listening to the other parts, and ensuring that fifths, octaves, and their compounds were perfect, most especially those formed with the lowest sounding voice. The third type of case involved a combination of deduction from the shape of the singer's own line and listening to the other parts in performance, and consisted of making a correct approach to cadences, by ensuring that the cadencing voices moved to the cadential perfect consonance from the *nearest* imperfect consonance, so that (for example) these two voices should proceed from a *major* rather than a minor sixth to an octave at a cadence, with one of the two voices therefore moving by a semitone when making the cadence.

One theorist, Pietro Aaron (*c.* 1480–after 1545), writing shortly after Josquin's death, acknowledged the challenges faced by singers performing polyphony within this system of notational and musical conventions, and the discussion about good practice which this situation elicited:

> Si muove fra alcuni de la musica desiderosi, dubbii & disputationi circa la figura del b molle & diesis, utrum se de necessita gli Compositori sono constretti a segnare ne gli canti da loro composti, dette figure, cioe b molle & diesis: overamente se il cantore è tenuto a dovere intendere, & congoscere lo incognito secreto di tutti gli luoghi dove tal figure o segni bisogneranno.[4]

Aaron's own advice, which may be seen as reflecting the gradual dissolution of the old system, was that the intervallic intentions of the composer should be shown precisely (through what we call accidentals) where the notation would not otherwise allow the singer easily to

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4   Quoted in Bent (n. 2), p. 26. She translates the passage thus on p. 308 of her 'Accidentals, Counterpoint and Notation in Aaron's *Aggiunta* to the *Toscanello in Musica*', in *The Journal of Musicology* 12 (1994), pp. 306–344: 'Doubts and disputations are circulating among some lovers of music about the signs of b molle and diesis, whether composers are constrained to signal them in their compositions, or whether the singer ought to understand and recognize the hidden secret of all the places where these figures or signs are needed.'

anticipate the correct interpretation. He expressed this view in the 'aggiunta' to the 1529 edition of his *Toscanello in musica*:

> Now it will be considered whether the singer should or indeed can recognize at the first attempt the intent and secret of a composer, when singing a song he has not seen before. The answer is no, although among those who celebrate music there are some who think the contrary. They give the reason that every composer considers that his songs are to be understood by the learned and experienced, by a quick and perceptive ear, especially when imperfect fifths, octaves, twelfths and fifteenths occur. I say that only God is master of such things, and such silent intelligence belongs to Him only and not to a mortal man. For it would be impossible for any learned and practised man to be able to sense instantly an imperfect fifth, octave, twelfth or fifteenth without first committing the error of a little dissonance. It is true that it would be sensed more quickly by one than another, but there is not a man who would not be caught. For this reason I say that those who do not indicate the sign of B flat where it might naturally appear to be otherwise commit no little error, because an intention retained in the mind accomplishes nothing.[5]

One of the composers most frequently represented in Aaron's examples is Josquin Desprez. Josquin, however, did not always do the singers' work for them in the manner which Aaron desired. Rather, in the case to be examined here, we find the practice so well described by Margaret Bent thus: 'By a combination of compositional and notational indicators, the composer could tease the performer to fulfil, sidestep or frustrate expectations.'[6]

Josquin's setting of the Marian sequence *Inviolata, integra, et casta es Maria* is widely represented in both prints and manuscripts, including instrumental arrangements in tablature.[7] Its earliest appearances in (surviving) prints are in Petrucci's *Motetti de la corona, libro quarto* (Fossombrone 1519), the *Liber selectarum cantionum* edited by Ludwig Senfl (Augsburg 1520; discussed further below), and Antico's *Motetti libro primo* (Venice 1521). Among the manuscript copies is one in the famous 'Medici Codex': Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Acq. e doni 666. The motet is based on the chant melody associated with this text, laid out in the tenor part. A second vocal part is derived from the tenor through a

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5   Translation adapted from Bent (n. 4), pp. 315–316.

6   Margaret Bent, 'Musica ficta', in: *Grove Music Online*, http://www.grovemusic.com (accessed: 07.08.2007).

7   Twenty-eight sources are listed in *The Motet Database*, http://www.arts.ufl.edu/motet. A slightly shorter list of sources is provided in Toft (n. 3), p. 337, n. 18. Emulation of the piece is found in a number of later works, as discussed by Stephen Rice, 'Resonances of Josquin in Later *Inviolata* Settings', in *Canons and Canonic Techniques, 14th–16th Centuries: Theory, Practice, and Reception History. Proceedings of the International Conference, Leuven, 4–6 October 2005*, ed. by Katelijne Schiltz, Bonnie J. Blackburn, Leuven, Dudley, MA 2007, pp. 197–220.

canon. This part is not written out in some sources (such as the Medici Codex, and Antico's print, just mentioned), and in such cases was performed by singing the tenor part a fifth higher, beginning when the tenor reaches its fifth note.[8] (The temporal distance between the two parts in canon is reduced in each section of the piece, from three breves to two to one.) The use of the chant melody and the canon both have consequences for the presumptions which singers performing these two parts, and to some extent their fellows singing other parts, would have brought to the task. First, they would tend to sing the chant as they knew it in intervallic terms. Modally, the chant belongs to the 'tritus' category, the most important note (the 'final') being F. The melodic range is limited, extending upwards a fifth from this F to C, via B *fa* (B flat in our terms), and only towards the end dipping below the final to E. The singer of the tenor part would thus 'naturally' have read his melody (which only occasionally departs from the chant, for example through text repetition) using the soft hexachord, with F as *ut* and B (flat) as *fa*. This part is the canonic leader, or *dux*. The canonic follower, or *comes*, singing from this same notated line (in those sources which do not write this part out separately) but pitching it a fifth higher, would likewise have applied the natural tendency to preserve the intervallic shape of the chant-based line. Whatever the way in which the *comes* was envisaged by its singer, the musical effect is that this melodic line inhabits the natural hexachord, with C as *ut* and F as *fa*. The other singers, aware of the chant melody (which they imitate at the beginning of the piece), and observing that their initial 'key signature' correspondingly marks B as *fa*, will have begun the performance with a tendency to sing the note B thus, while alert to any need to depart from this depending on the melodic or contrapuntal context. However (and thinking of Aaron's advice), as the piece is presented in Petrucci's edition of 1519, Antico's of 1521, and the Medici Codex, for example, there is not a single 'accidental' sign. And indeed, for the first thirty-nine breves of the piece the singers performing it for the first time would have read and heard not a single instance of the need for the kinds of 'adjustment' summarized above.

The effect of Josquin's first requirement for a different solmisation of B is therefore made all the greater by this long wait, and the composer then uses other means (as explained below) to highlight the passage concerned. The relevant passage, setting the text 'O mater alma Christi

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8   For a discussion of this, and an illustration of the first opening of the piece in the Medici Codex, see Margaret Bent, 'Editing Early Music: The Dilemma of Translation', in *Early Music* 22 (1994), pp. 373–392 (pp. 378–381). A modern edition of the piece is in *The Medici Codex of 1518: A Choirbook of Motets Dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino*, ed. by Edward Lowinsky, Chicago 1968 (Monuments of Renaissance Music 4), pp. 231–240.

carissima', is shown in Example 1: Example 1a sets out (albeit in score) the melodic lines which singers using (for example) Petrucci's print of 1519 or Antico's of 1521 (or the Medici Codex) would have seen (i.e. without—in our terms—the 'accidental inflections' to be discussed below); Example 1b, anticipating the discussion to follow, shows through accidental signs the interpretation upon which singers would, I believe, in the end have settled if using one of these sources. In the tenor the relevant chant phrase begins on A, as a result of which its companion phrase in the *comes* (the part here labeled quinta pars) begins on E (at which point Josquin's tenor has reached G in its chant phrase). Josquin might have chosen to place a C in the lowest part at this point, but instead he gives the bassus E, and brings the altus to a B here. Furthermore, the altus descends stepwise from an E to this B. The altus singer would consequently expect to sing the B as B *mi* (B natural, in our terms), to avoid a melodic tritone (E to B flat), and the correctness of the B *mi* is reinforced by its sounding simultaneously with E in the bassus (and in the quinta pars, singing as the canonic *comes*), with which the altus is obliged to form a perfect (rather than diminished) fifth.

As just mentioned, Josquin then goes on to highlight the passage by other means: for the first (and only) time in the piece he repeats a chant phrase in the tenor (and hence in the quinta pars), namely the phrase for the superlative adjective 'carissima'; in addition, he pushes the superius down (unusually) to the very bottom of its range, as a result bringing the quinta pars – singing the repeated chant-phrase 'carissima' – into prominence at the top of the texture; finally, at the beginning of both of these quinta-pars statements of 'carissima' the G in the quinta pars is accompanied by E in the bassus (and altus, in the first case) which obliges the superius to sing B *mi* rather than the expected B *fa*. Here, it must be said, we have a different category of 'adjustment' than the first B *mi* in the piece, a few breves before, where—as explained above—the alert singer should have had no difficulty in deciding on B *mi* rather than B *fa*. For in this new case the singer of the superius part saw his line rise and fall in precisely the manner described in the rule 'una nota super la semper est canendum fa', that is, an ascent from A to B and then a return to A. Thus the singer strongly expected to sing B *fa* here, not B *mi*. More than that, he had just heard the tenor twice sing B *fa* (as part of the repeated chant phrase) and the bassus two breves previously sing a phrase apparently identical to his own, in which the bassus would certainly have sung B *fa* not B *mi*: not only did the 'una nota' convention encourage the bassus to do so, but he in turn had just heard the tenor (singing the chant phrase) sing B *fa* (at the beginning of b. 8 of Example 1), and—thirdly and finally—the bassus forms a cadence with the end of tenor's phrase,

making a B *fa* obligatory, ensuring as it does that the sixth approaching the cadence is major (a convention mentioned above). With all this written and aural evidence and pressure of convention influencing him, it seems certain that the superius singer when first performing this passage would have sung B *fa* in bar 10 of Example 1, and then realized that this was an error (since, as Aaron makes clear, the demands of ensuring perfect consonances with other voices take precedence over the demands of melodic convention).[9] To put it bluntly, the composer has tricked him (or 'teased' him, to use Bent's expression).

Robert Toft has studied the representation of pitch content in this passage in contemporary sources. He noted that in one printed version—in the *Liber selectarum cantionum quas vulgo mutetas appellant* (Augsburg: Grimm & Wyrsung 1520)—the B-flat signature is omitted in the free voices, from the third bar of Example 1 until the end of the *prima pars* of the motet, some thirteen breves after the end of Example 1.[10] (The signature is retained in the tenor throughout the *prima pars* of the motet.) This decision was presumably made by the volume's editor, the composer Ludwig Senfl, and reflects the need for the superius part to have B *mi* here, as discussed above. However, while it would thus have alerted the relevant singers to the possibility (or likelihood) that B should be sung as *mi* during this passage, it would hardly have removed all doubt in this respect:[11] if the singer of the bassus part, encouraged thus by the disappearance of the signature, opted for B *mi* in b. 8 of Example 1 (flying in the face of the 'una nota super la' convention), the result would be that he failed to make a cadence properly with the tenor between this bar and b. 9, since these voices will form a minor rather than major sixth in the second half of b. 8. In summary, Senfl has dropped a hint to the singers by removing the B-flat signature, but in the end they are still obliged to consider the proper interpretation of the passage, since the notation does not *oblige* them to sing all Bs as B *mi*. There is, however, another type of contemporary musical notation which leaves no room for doubt as to pitch content (i.e. which is entirely prescriptive), namely instrumental arrangements (for lute, for example) using tablature, where each letter of the tablature indicates a particular precise pitch, so that the player has

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9   See Bent (n. 4), p. 324.

10   Toft's description is not quite correct: he states that all voices except the tenor lose their B-flat signature at this point, but in fact the canonic *comes*, i.e. the quinta pars, keeps its B-flat signature for rather longer, until its next page-turn, at b. 8 of Example 1. On the 1520 print and its place in the dissemination of Josquin's music, see Stephanie Schlagel, 'The *Liber selectarum cantionum* and the "German Josquin Renaissance"', in *The Journal of Musicology* 19 (2002), pp. 564–615.

11   The removal of the signature is irrelevant, in fact, for the singer of the quinta pars, which does not have the note B during the relevant passage.

simply to be obedient to the notation. The four printed intabulations of this passage in Josquin's *Inviolata*, considered by Toft, reveal the challenge which it posed. All of them duly show a B natural in the altus in b. 4 of Example 1. Thereafter they vary in their treatment of the note B, and we can observe the conflicting pressures which Josquin's writing has generated, for example, in the reading within Sebastian Ochsenkun's *Tabulaturbuch auff die Lauten* (Heidelberg 1558): the first time that the superius part has 'carissima' (b. 9–11) Ochsenkun gives it as B flat, presumably because its phrase is identical to that of the bassus, and despite the resulting extraordinary (and contrapuntally unacceptable) effect of a simultaneous B flat and E natural below it; however, for the (immediate) repetition of 'carissima' the intabulation shows B natural. To what extent such intabulations for lute or vihuela can be used as evidence of how singers performed such a piece is, however, uncertain.

Other than probably causing the singers to err during the first performance, what is the effect of Josquin's manipulation of the counterpoint and harmony in this passage? I believe that it draws attention both to the repetition of the 'carissima' chant phrase and indeed to the canon which is the basis of the piece's construction. John Milsom has argued that the canon is 'concealed' from the listener: concerning the canon's notation (two parts derived from one notated part, according to written instructions), he observes that:

> eye and brain will delight in the neatness of the scheme. Not so the ear, however. The canon is assigned to two inner voices, and it moves in note-values that are generally so similar to those of the three free voices that its presence can easily be missed altogether. It is as if Josquin, having devoted considerable effort to creating the motet's structural backbone, then took pleasure in concealing it with three curvaceous accompaniments.[12]

However, while it may be true that the canon is relatively hidden during much of the motet, it 'rises to the surface' during the passage which I have been discussing, thanks to the sudden repetition of the 'carissima' phrase, the promotion of the quinta pars to the top of the texture, and the striking colouring provided by the replacing of B *fa* with B *mi* (or, if the singers 'get it wrong', by the equally striking clash between B *fa* in the superius and E *mi* in the altus). Indeed (as noted above with regard to Ochsenkun's intabulation), the superius sings B *mi* again (obliged so to do by the presence of E in the bassus, as before) at the opening of the fourth and final 'carissima' statement, emphasizing the repetition.

The other passage in *Inviolata* during which Josquin apparently 'teases' his singers is his setting of the words 'tua per precata dulcisona nobis

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12   John Milsom, 'Motets for Five or More Voices', in *The Josquin Companion*, ed. by Richard Sherr, Oxford 2000, pp. 281–320 (pp. 300–301).

concedas veniam per sæcula'. The composer's approach here may have been prompted in the first instance by the word 'dulcisona' ('sweet-sounding'), for Josquin indulges in a joke at the singers' expense (in this case, his target is the singer of the altus part), so arranging things that on the first sing-through the result would have been anything but 'sweet-sounding'. The passage is shown in Example 2. The singer of the altus part, coming to the phrase for 'dulcisona', saw that he had been given the relevant element of the chant (a melody which he will have known), and he would have expected to sing this in its normal intervallic form, with B *fa*. Indeed, during the two breves' rest preceding his phrase, he had heard the tenor sing precisely the melody that he saw in his own part, and the tenor had duly used B *fa* in that phrase. The tenor would not, of course, have done anything else, since this is the chant, but in fact he had no room for maneuver in any case, since the superius forms a cadence with him, so that (in order to approach the cadence with the required major sixth) his B must be B *fa*. (The alternative way of forming this cadence, namely with the superius singing G sharp at the end of the fifth bar of the example, is probably too outlandish to consider at this point, although as we shall see Josquin does oblige this type of approach to a cadence on A later in the example.) The singer of the altus part would therefore have launched into his phrase in the confident expectation that he should echo what the tenor had just sung. However, the bassus then swept the rug from under his feet: setting off in rising semiminims (i.e. crotchets) from A, the bassus reaches E (twice) in the next bar. In order to avoid a tritone (B flat to E) within this line, he had either to sing the B as *mi* or to treat the Es as *fa* (i.e. E flat). He would certainly have opted for the former, not least since he would hear the quinta pars begin its chant phrase 'dulcisona' on E *mi* just as his semiminim scale begins. The bassus thus reaches E *mi* just as the altus tries to sing B *fa*, and *mi contra fa* results, in the form of an undesirable diminished fifth between the parts. As Aaron commented (see above), 'there is not a man who would not be caught' by the way in which Josquin here set up a particular expectation (particularly by the apparent echo of the tenor chant phrase) but then directed the music elsewhere. It is hard to believe that this is not a joke on the composer's part, knowing as he must have done that an 'ill-sounding' effect would occur just as the singers first sang his setting of the word 'dulcisona' = 'sweet-sounding'.[13]

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13 Adrian Willaert indulged in a similar joke at 'dulcisona' in his four-voice *Inviolata*, causing the singers to work hard to avoid an 'ill-sounding' result at the cadence ending the relevant passage. Willaert's 'trick' is strikingly similar to Josquin's: after several of the voices, including the tenor, have sung the chant-derived 'dulcisona' motive with the expected B *fa*, the tenor's last statement of this phrase is accompanied by an E in the bassus, so that either the tenor has to sing B *mi* on this occasion or the singer of the bassus part has to use

Further, when the altus singer then went back and reconsidered this phrase in order to remove the problem, he might have thought the melodic result of the solution for his own line less than 'sweet-sounding', given that he is obliged (in b. 7 of Example 2) to outline a tritone from B *mi* to F.

While at some points Josquin stipulated the correct interpretation (even though the singers have to work this out), at others he left some choice, and forced them to judge between grammatically acceptable alternatives. Such is the case with the setting of 'per sæcula', which follows from b. 14 of Example 2. The singers, knowing the chant and having had their expectations thus defeated in the passage just described, might by now have been particularly on their toes, since they would have known that the melodic phrase A-C-B-A heard in the chant at 'dulcisona' recurs at 'per sæcula' to end this verse of the sequence. Would the composer surprise them once again at this point? The answer turned out to be yes, but it is another singer who was now faced with a surprising challenge, and indeed the most surprising singer: the custodian of the chant melody at its original pitch (inhabiting the soft hexachord), namely the tenor. What the singer of the tenor line saw in his part during these closing breves of the *secunda pars* of the piece was the composer twice repeating the 'per sæcula' fragment of the chant (albeit with the first note altered from A to F for the repetitions). This repetition of course makes great sense as a portrayal of the words (meaning 'for ever'). The tenor would duly expect to sing B *fa* within the first statement of 'per sæcula', but already at this point a question is raised by the composer. The singer of the superius part might sing B *mi* rather than B *fa* at the end of b. 14 (the semiminim of its cambiata figure), to avoid *mi contra fa* with the E in the quinta pars. This B *mi* would thus offer a 'challenge' to the tenor's intention to sing B *fa* in the next bar. How, then, were the singers to perform the cadence in b. 15? On the one hand, they had already sung this cadence figure in b. 5, and—as explained above—will have performed it there with B *fa* in the tenor rather than with G *mi* in the superius. On this new occurrence, however, the B *mi* in the superius in b. 14 might

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E *fa*. If the first solution is adopted, this forces the superius singer to form its cadence with the tenor using G *mi*; if the latter solution is followed, then the bassus singer has to decide whether the three following occurrences of E in its phrase should also be E *fa*. See *Adriani Willaert Opera omnia* 1, ed. by Hermann Zenck, Rome 1950 (Corpus mensurabilis musicæ 3), p. 98, b. 90–92. Costanzo Festa composed a setting of this same text for two four-part choirs, the music of one choir being derived canonically from that of the other. He too made the setting of 'dulcisona' to be 'ill-sounding', but in this case through dissonances which cannot be removed by the singers finding a solution through their solmization. See *Costanzo Festa Opera omnia* 4, ed. by Albert Seay, Neuhausen-Stuttgart *c.* 1979 (Corpus mensurabilis musicæ 25), p. 105, b. 109–115.

encourage them to employ B *mi* (tenor) and G *mi* (superius) at the cadence. While the tenor singer might still have felt disinclined to alter the chant thus (and remember that he had not yet had to sing a B *mi* in this passage), doubt had presumably been sown in his mind by the way in which the altus had answered him with B *mi* at 'dulcisona'. Whatever the singers decided regarding b. 15, which they could interpret in two grammatically correct ways, the composer gave them no such choice for the repetitions of the 'per sæcula' motive, which must be sung using B *mi* in place of B *fa*, and for the same reasons as at 'dulcisona': the bassus enters with a progression from A to E; indeed, there is this time no semiminim run between the notes, but a direct leap (imitating the tenor's leap of a fifth at the repetition of 'per sæcula'), which must certainly be a perfect fifth (i.e. to E *mi*), and so the tenor has to sing B *mi*. The composer then rams home this solution: as the tenor sings 'per sæcula' for the third and last time, the bassus again imitates it with a leap from A to E, and the superius now joins in with a B, which must be B *mi* as in the tenor. The superius singer reading his own part might have been tempted to sing B *fa* here, according to the convention of 'una nota super la semper est canendum fa', given that his line is A–B–G–A; this would have seemed a strong possibility even if he had elected to sing B *mi* in b. 14. However, the occurrences of B *mi* in the altus and tenor in bars 16 and 17 would have steered the superius singer to choose B *mi* himself in b. 18. Finally, superius and bassus sing 'per sæcula' one last time, with yet again the A–E leap in the bassus obliging the superius to adopt B *mi*.

In requiring the tenor to sing B *mi* during its second 'per sæcula' statement, Josquin presented the altus singer with a quandary, for at this very point (b. 17 of Example 2) the altus makes a cadence with the tenor, a cadence emphasized through being approached via the conventional suspension figure. Given the B *mi* in the tenor, and in order to form a proper cadence, the altus should sing G sharp (so that the cadence has a major sixth proceeding to the octave). However, at this moment the quinta pars is singing a G natural (within its canonic echo of the chant phrase for 'per sæcula'). There would thus result a pungent false relation between quinta pars and altus, adding to the pungency already created by sounding the altus's suspended A against the pitch-class onto which it will resolve, the G (in the quinta pars). The singer of the superius then likewise forms a cadence with the tenor's next 'sæcula' (b. 18–19), and likewise might therefore sing G sharp here, such that another false relation occurs (with the G natural of the quinta pars), but one which is more pungent still since the clashing notes are just a semitone apart. (At b. 20 the superius has a similar melodic figure, but here forming no sixth-octave cadence: even if he sang G natural here, the singer of the superius would

certainly be 'on his toes' at this point, given what had just occurred.) With these false relations added to the mix, Josquin's treatment of 'eternity' becomes quite extraordinary in performance.

Another result of Josquin's tactics in this 'per sæcula' passage is that, for the first and indeed only time in the entire piece, the solmization of the two canonic parts has to be different: the quinta pars cannot follow the (intervallic) lead of the tenor for its final two statements of 'per sæcula', which would involve the quinta pars treating F as *mi*, i.e. F sharp: Josquin puts an F in the bassus on the first such occasion to block any such attempt to match the tenor (just as he did at b. 7 of Example 2, there similarly preventing the quinta pars singing F sharp in imitation of the intervallic content of the altus phrase which overlaps with but slightly precedes it).

In summary, what looked on paper to be a (suitably, given the text) repetitious ending to the *secunda pars*, representing the concept of eternity, is obliged by the composer to become in performance a highly dynamic and dramatic climax, in which notationally identical elements are transformed and the harmony directed away from the modal 'home' of the chant and of the piece, thus surpassing the previous such 'diversion' towards the end of the *prima pars*. We should note that, even though Josquin has left open two grammatically acceptable readings of the cadence in b. 15, both of these solutions produce—in the context of the longer passage—strikingly colourful results: either the music is 'diverted' rather suddenly at this cadence—with the B *fa* replaced by B *mi* and a G sharp in the superius so that the cadence contrasts with its (notationally) similar predecessor at 'dulcisona'—or the transformation from B *fa* to B *mi* occurs after this, i.e. between the first singing of 'per sæcula' and the subsequent ones. We see here encapsulated, I think, what Joshua Rifkin's has described as 'an ingenious and carefully ordered exploitation of ambiguities between surface and scaffold, identity and non-identity, repetition and non-repetition, symmetry and asymmetry' in Josquin's music.[14]

Reflecting the challenges which singers would have to face in this passage, Ludwig Senfl once again sought to aid them in his editing of the version printed in the *Liber selectarum cantionum* of 1520. As in the passage at the end of the *prima pars* discussed earlier, he did so by removing the B-flat signature from various voice parts, from various points, such that by the end of the *secunda pars* (the end of Example 2) all five voices are

14   Joshua Rifkin, 'Josquin's Chansons for Five Voices: Problems of Authenticity and Style', paper delivered at the *Colloquium on European Secular Music of the 16th Century*, Rutgers University 1984, p. 8, quoted in Richard Sherr, 'Introduction', in *The Josquin Companion*, ed. by Richard Sherr, Oxford 2000, pp. 1–10 (p. 7 n. 11).

without this signature (see Figure 1). Senfl's decisions about where to delete these signatures can be related to the detailed consideration above of the way Josquin has set 'tua per precata dulcisona nobis concedas veniam per sæcula'. Senfl is particularly helpful to the singer of the altus part, giving him abundant warning of the need to switch to B *mi* at 'dulcisona' by removing his B-flat signature not at the beginning of the relevant page (where Example 2 starts) but for the final system of the previous page (two breves before the beginning of Example 2). At the page-turn, the superius also loses its B-flat signature, but here the singer might nevertheless have been left in a quandary: his phrase beginning at the end of b. 1 on Example 2 is most logically interpreted using the soft hexachord, with B *fa* (even though the signature now seems to invite him to sing B *mi* for the semiminim towards the end of b. 3), and this conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the tenor (which retains its B-flat signature at this point) sings B *fa* in b. 2. The bassus retains its B-flat signature for longer than either altus or superius: the signature disappears only for the last line of the passage (b. 17 onwards). This makes reasonably good sense, since the singer of this part has to use B *fa* in b. 2 and b. 10 (and perhaps could have been relied upon to use B *mi* for the semiminim in b. 6, as noted above), and indeed the omission of the B-flat signature was not in one sense necessary even for the last system of the *secunda pars*, at 'sæcula', since the bassus never sings B here. The notation of the tenor part reflects the dramatic shift in solmization between the 'dulcisona' and 'per sæcula' motives, described above. The B-flat signature here disappears on a line-break, significantly placed immediately after the B *fa* on 'concedas' in b. 10, so that 'dulcisona' is shown with B *fa* but all three statements of 'per sæcula' without. Senfl has thus steered the singers towards the interpretation of the b. 15 cadence using B *mi* (of the two grammatically acceptable solutions which I mentioned above), with the superius singing thus in b. 14, and the altus anticipating this solmization with the same cambiata figure as the superius, in b. 12.

In certain passages such as that just described, Josquin not only provoked singers of the time to ponder carefully his intentions for performance, but continues to provoke lively debate about the best interpretations among modern scholars and performers. The most vivid example of such debate is a sequential passage in what is probably his best known motet, *Ave Maria…virgo serena*.[15] Bent states that:

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15   The debate was sparked off by the discussion of this passage in Bent (n. 2), pp. 29–34. Bent refers to other scholars' responses, and responds to these, in 'Diatonic *ficta* revisited: Josquin's *Ave Maria* in Context', in *Music Theory Online* 2.6 (1996), http://www.societymusictheory.org/mto/issues/mto.96.2.6./mto.96.2.6.bent.html.

late-medieval singers were in a very real sense collaborators with the composer in making the music happen—realising it—within the limits of his intentions. Those limits included the possibility of different realisations, of different actual sounds at some but perhaps not all places which are underprescribed by our standards.[16]

In the passages in *Inviolata* considered here, Josquin in fact draws 'the limits of his intentions' firmly and strictly, although he hides them, defeating the singers' clear expectations set up not only by the chant and by melodic and contrapuntal norms but also precisely by his own compositional devices, such as the canon and motivic repetition. Such repetition is indeed a hallmark of his writing, but (as we have seen) sometimes constitutes repetition only on paper and not in sound, in the case of *Inviolata* at least.[17] Josquin has, in the end, controlled the singers, making them (if they are alert to the requirements of the music) behave as he wished, to create a performance that is both 'sweet-sounding' and strikingly shaped, in response to the text. One thinks here of perhaps the most famous sixteenth-century comment about Josquin, a comment of Martin Luther reported by Johann Mathesius: "'Josquin", sagt er, "ist der Noten Meister: die haben's müssen machen, wie er wollte; die andern Sangmeister müssen's machen, wie es Noten haben wollen."'[18] One of several possible implications of Luther's statement might be that whereas other musicians tend to work within the norms of conventional melodic and contrapuntal practice, Josquin has the wit and imagination so to construct things that the musical result is directed away from the conventional and conforms to his own imaginative intent. This is very much what we find in the setting of 'tua per precata dulcisona nobis concedas veniam per sæcula' in *Inviolata*, described above. Another famous comment by Luther seems specifically relevant in this regard: 'Josquin des alles composition frolich, willig, milde heraus fleust, ist nitt zwungen und gnedigt *per* [*regulas*] *sicut* des fincken gesang.'[19] Tellingly, in respect of Josquin's treatment of the text concluding the *secunda pars* of *Inviolata*, Robin Leaver interprets Luther as meaning that 'Josquin's compositions

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16 Bent (n. 2), p. 13.

17 A wider survey of Josquin's motets in such terms is called for, to discern how unusual or otherwise are the types of device seen in *Inviolata*.

18 Johann Mathesius, *Martin Luthers Leben*, St Louis 1883; reprint of Mathesius, *Historien, Von des Ehrwirdigen inn Gott seligen theuren Manns Gottes, D. Martin Luthers*, Nuremberg 1576, pp. 227–228. The passage is quoted in Robin A. Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications*, Grand Rapids, Mich., Cambridge 2007, p. 369 n. 213. See the discussion on p. 56, where Leaver also provides the following translation: "'Josquin", he said, "is the master of the notes, which must express what he desires; the other masters of singing must do what the notes dictate."'

19 'Josquin, from who all composition flows gladly, willingly, mildly, is not compelled and forced by rules, as in the song of the finch.' Quoted in Leaver (n. 18), p. 368 n. 199, and translated and discussed on p. 51.

are free in contrast to the song of the finch that always obeys the rules. Luther therefore seems to be drawing attention to repetitious birdsong.'[20] What appears on the page to be repetitious song in *Inviolata* gives in performance an impression of variety and freedom from rules (even though, ironically, it is the rules of good musical grammar which Josquin exploits to achieve such effects, as we have seen). One can imagine Luther, an experienced and active musician, and a lover of contrapuntal artifice, taking great pleasure in the way that *Inviolata* is fashioned, a piece that he very likely knew (perhaps in Senfl's edition of 1520, as Leaver suggests).[21] One might also here bring in the comments of the Swiss music theorist Heinrich Glarean, who just a few years after Luther's reported comments discussed Josquin's status and talent at length in his famous treatise *Dodekachordon* (Basle 1547). Glarean describes Josquin as 'the magnificent virtuoso' ('ostentator') in most of his works,[22] and one can see in *Inviolata* that his control of the counterpoint and hence of the singers to achieve his ends is indeed both 'virtuosic' and surely an example of 'ostentation'.

Josquin catered, I believe, for three audiences in his fashioning of *Inviolata*: the singers are challenged by him (who in a sense confronts them as 'auctor' as they confront the piece), and are obliged to interpret the counterpoint with skill; for the human listener the result is dramatically shaped and striking; in addition, the divine audience (and any earthly musician who took the trouble to examine the piece in such terms) would perceive a larger-scale 'harmoniousness' in the work. As noted, the piece is built upon a canon at the fifth, an interval which is generated by the ratio of frequencies 3:2. Josquin deploys this ratio also in the lengths of sections of his piece: the *prima pars* is 63 breves long, and the *secunda pars* 42 breves long, so that they are in the ratio of 3:2. Other simple harmonious ratios also are represented in the structure. The two sub-sections of the *prima pars* are 36 and 27 breves in length respectively, and thus in the ratio 4:3, while the two sub-sections of the *secunda pars* are both of 21 breves, a ratio of 1:1. The *tertia pars* brings the length of the entire piece to 144 breves, that is 12 x 12, widely understood as a significant and 'holy' number, not least in Marian contexts (as here), given the association of Mary and the 'woman of the apocalypse' from the Book of Revelation, around whose head was 'a crown of twelve stars'.[23] The other number most closely

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20 p. 368.

21 pp. 50–51.

22 Glarean's assessment of Josquin is quoted in translation and discussed in Sherr (n. 14), pp. 3–5.

23 For the relevance of this biblical passage and its devotional associations to music of the period under discussion, specifically regarding motet settings of the text *Ave sanctissima*

associated with Mary was seven, and one notes multiples of seven in the length of the *prima pars* (63 = 7 x 9), the length of the *secunda pars* (42 = 7 x 6), and hence of course the combined lengths of the *prima* and *secunda pars* (105 = 7 x 15). All the lengths of sub-sections in the piece (21, 27, 36, 39 (which is the length of the *tertia pars*), 42, and 63) are multiples of 3, the 'perfect' number, represented in mensural notation by the perfect form: the circle (showing what was termed *tempus perfectum*), an unbroken—or 'inviolate'—shape. In terms of number and proportion, then, the motet is 'sweet-sounding', reflecting divine harmoniousness and perfection, and honouring Mary in this hidden way as well as through the audible work of composer and singers.

Maria, see Bonnie Blackburn, 'The Virgin in the Sun: Music and Image for a Prayer Attributed to Sixtus IV', in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 124 (1999), pp. 157–195.

Example 1a

Josquin Desprez, *Inviolata, integra, et casta es Maria*, part of prima pars

Example 1b

Josquin, *Inviolata*, passage shown in Ex. 1a, as singers might have interpreted it intervallically

Example 2

Josquin, *Inviolata*, end of secunda pars

Melanie Florence

Re-presenting set-piece description in the courtly romance: Hartmann's adaptation of Chrétien's *Erec et Enide.*

1 Introduction

This study aims to bring certain aspects of the notion of performance to an examination of one particular facet of Hartmann's adaptation of Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*, namely his response to a selected group of descriptions. It begins by outlining briefly the ways in which such set-piece descriptions may be seen as performances in themselves, before going on to consider in detail how Hartmann adapts the descriptions in the course of 'interpreting' the French romance for a new audience in a different linguistic, geographical, literary and socio-cultural space.

The courtly romance was, of course, read aloud; in this framework, the set-piece or topical descriptions so characteristic of the genre may be seen as constituting 'performances within a performance'. Firstly, the origins of such description in classical forensic and epideictic oratory attach it firmly to oral performance.[1] Within its narrative avatar, it retains its affective function, being designed to awaken an emotional response in the audience. It is notable also that a description very often occurs at a 'public moment' in the narrative, such as a court feast, reflecting the visual impact of its subject on one or more characters; there is thus an audience within the tale in addition to the audience listening to the romance. A common instance is the portrait of female beauty when the hero first sees the lady he will love, which serves to justify the awakening of his emotion.

Furthermore, descriptions may possess features which single them out from the surrounding narrative. A lexical 'frame' may demarcate the passage: the initial portrait of Enide, for example, is preceded by 'sa fille qui molt fu bele, / qui an un ovreor ovroi[et]' (*EE* 399; 'his very beautiful daughter, / who was working in a workroom') and the narrative resumes

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with 'Issue fu de l'ovreor' (442; 'She had come out of the workroom').[2] The passage may be explicitly designated as a 'description', or the poet's act as 'describing', as in the following lines from *Cligés*: 'Por la biauté Cligés retreire / Vuel une description feire' (2721f; 'In order to tell of the handsomeness of Cligés / I shall compose a description'),[3] or these from the description of Erec's coronation robes: 'Macrobe m'anseigne a descrivre / … / l'uevre del drap et le portret (*EE* 6679–6681; 'Macrobius teaches me to describe / … / the craftsmanship of the cloth and its designs'). As in these cases, descriptions frequently contain narrative comment, and even direct address to the audience, which at the very least lends emphasis. Alternatively, they may stand out on account of particularly intricate composition, specialist vocabulary, various bravura effects or simply their length.

Significantly, many developed a life beyond their original narrative context, becoming known to contemporary audiences and other poets who imitated, parodied and otherwise alluded to them in their own works.

In an apparent paradox, however, the very features which single out these passages are also those which enable them to form an integral part of the thematic and formal structures of the romance. A particular characteristic of Chrétien's and Hartmann's romances is the essential role played by all sorts of analogies, contrasts, and parallels in the narrative, between episodes, characters and motifs. The sense of the work emerges from a recognition of such similarities and differences.[4] Descriptions too are composed in relation to one another, and arguably function as signals, with a relationship between descriptions indicating a similar relationship between their narrative contexts.

Chrétien's first romance, *Erec et Enide*, is especially finely wrought in this respect. The poet uses a far greater number of set-piece descriptions than in his subsequent works, and in their longest and most conventional form. A series of descriptions of Erec and Enide and their clothing spans the narrative, each appearing at, and expressing the significance of, a key moment; together they thus provide a symbolic commentary on the social

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2   All references to *Erec et Enide* are to Chrétien de Troyes, *Les romans de Chrétien de Troyes édités d'après la copie de Guiot (Bibl.nat., fr.794)*, vol. 1 (*Erec et Enide)*, ed. by Mario Roques, Paris 1981 (Classiques Français du Moyen Age 80). For clarity, line references are preceded by *EE* when discussion switches to Chrétien from Hartmann. Translations are my own.

3   Chrétien de Troyes, *Les romans de Chrétien de Troyes édités d'après la copie de Guiot (Bibl.nat., fr.794)*, vol. 2 (*Cligés)*, ed. by Alexandre Micha , Paris 1982 (Classiques Français du Moyen Age 84).

4   The classic study of the structure of Hartmann's romance is Hugo Kuhn, 'Erec', in *Hartmann von Aue,* ed. by Hugo Kuhn, Christoph Cormeau, Darmstadt 1973 (Wege der Forschung 359), pp. 17–48. On Chrétien, see e.g. Norris Lacy, *The Craft of Chrétien de Troyes: An Essay on Narrative Art,* Leiden 1980.

and psychological development undergone by the eponymous characters. In addition to this linear sequence, certain descriptions are associated, usually in pairs, by various elements of form or content, with the effect noted above. Hartmann's model could scarcely have presented him with a greater challenge as far as the intricacies of its descriptions are concerned.

At this point it is useful to consider very briefly the settings within which the two poets are working. Chrétien de Troyes is generally accepted to have been a cleric, with a classical education, working for one of the great aristocratic courts in Northern France; patrons of two of his later works are known to be Marie de Champagne and Philip of Flanders, and it is likely that his first also has Plantagenet connections. Hartmann von Aue, by contrast, was a knight, unusually an educated one, probably serving in some capacity at one of the larger courts in South West Germany. It is most likely that he composed his *Erec* during the 1180s, for this aristocratic milieu which was passionately interested in French courtly culture and regarded French fashion in literature, as in clothes, as a desirable model to be imitated.[5] It is not hard to appreciate, therefore, why the first French Arthurian romance also became the first to be written in German.[6]

How might Hartmann have conceived of his task? For medieval writers, the project of rendering a work into another language is quite different from our modern concept of translation, in which maximum fidelity to the source is paramount; rather, it is a case of re-telling, retaining the essential material while having the freedom to elaborate it in one's own way.[7] In other words, the poet-translator aims to draw forth and enhance what he sees as inherent in his model, something which

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5   *A Companion to Chrétien de Troyes,* ed. by Norris J. Lacy, Joan T. Grimbert, Cambridge 2005, contains useful background essays: see particularly June Hall McCash, 'Chrétien's Patrons', pp. 15–25 and Laurence Harf-Lancner, 'Chrétien's Literary Background', pp. 26–42. On Hartmann's identity and background, see Christoph Cormeau, Wilhelm Störmer, *Hartmann von Aue. Epoche-Werk-Wirkung,* Munich 1985, especially 'Arbeitsbereich I: Historische Phänomenologie: Die Quellen zu Person und Werk Hartmanns von Aue', pp. 16–39.

6   On the spread of French aristocratic culture to Germany see Joachim Bumke, *Höfische Kultur. Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter,* 2 vols, Munich 1986, vol. 1, pp. 83–133. The discovery of the Zwettl fragments of an Erec romance closer to Chrétien than Hartmann's work raises the possibility of a German adaptation of Chrétien's romance independent of and perhaps even prior to Hartmann's work; see Kurt Gärtner, 'Die Zwettler "Erec"-Fragmente; Versuch einer ersten Auswertung', in *Literatur als Erinnerung. Festschrift für Winfried Woesler,* ed. by Bodo Plachta, Tübingen 2004, pp. 35–50.

7   See Franz Josef Worstbrock, 'Wiedererzählen und Übersetzen' in his *Ausgewählte Schriften I: Schriften zur Literatur des Mittelalters,* ed. by Susanne Köbele, Andreas Kraß, Stuttgart 2004, pp. 183–196. A contrasting (and little accepted) view of the process as mechanistic and determined solely by the nature of the model is presented by Michel Huby, e.g. in 'Zur Definition der adaptation courtoise. Kritische Antwort auf kritische Anmerkungen', in *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 33 (1983), pp. 301–322.

applies as much to its formal as to its thematic aspects. In the medieval Latin poetic handbooks description is classed as one of the means of effecting the *dilatatio materiae*, the amplification recommended in handling narrative material which has already been used.[8] This is the case for both Chrétien and Hartmann, in different ways. It is important to note that, at least for them, description amplifies the meaning of the work and not just its length; thus, while the handbooks class it as an ornament, its role is far more functional and interesting than the term might imply. It is likely that, with Hartmann's education, he was familiar with such rhetorical teaching, even if there is no proof that it was applied to writing in the vernacular.

The process of bringing out what he perceives as inherent in his model necessarily involves the poet as a reader in the first instance;[9] in tracing Hartmann's response to the description, we are thus able to recover, at least in part, the reading of a near-contemporary of Chrétien's.

It is reasonable to assume that what the poet perceives in his model will be influenced by his intended audience, the 'moment', and his own interests and aptitudes. Crucially, Hartmann is himself a knight, and it seems that his intended audience contains knights and/or those with a keen interest in and knowledge of chivalric matters. The most obvious changes he makes to his model are connected with this theme: he takes a more biographical approach to his hero's story, beginning when Erec is as yet a young and untried knight, whereas Chrétien's hero is already twenty-five and the most renowned knight at Arthur's court; in this altered conception of the hero, certain chivalric occasions possess a heightened significance, and Hartmann builds these out; he also adds a wealth of insider detail of chivalric practices, and it is possible that there is a didactic dimension to this as his German audience is less familiar with the courtly and chivalric ideal than the French.[10]

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8   On this, with a demonstration of Hartmann's method, see Franz Josef Worstbrock, '"Dilatatio materiae": Zur Poetik des "Erec" Hartmanns von Aue', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 19 (1985), pp. 1–30. For more detail on the relevant sections of the rhetorical handbooks, see Edmond Faral, *Les arts poétiques du XIIᵉ et du XIIIᵉ siècle. Recherches et documents sur la technique littéraire du moyen âge,* Paris 1924 (Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes 238).

9   An angle interestingly taken by René Pérennec in his '"dâ heime niht erzogen"– Translation und Erzählstil. "Rezeptive Produktion" in Hartmanns *Erec*', in *Interregionalität in der deutschen Literatur im europäischen Mittelalter,* ed. by Hartmut Kugler, Berlin 1995, pp. 107–126.

10 The chronological and socio-cultural links between chivalry and Arthurian romance are comprehensively examined by William H. Jackson, *Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Germany. The Works of Hartmann von Aue*, Cambridge 1994 (Arthurian Studies 34). Jackson's study of *Erec* demonstrates the relevance of contemporary ethical ideas of chivalry to Hartmann's romance. The notion of chivalry is also key in the comparative work by René Pérennec, *Recherches sur le roman arthurien en vers en Allemagne aux XIIᵉ et XIIIᵉ siècles,* 2 vols, Paris 1984.

In the light of the above, those descriptions pertaining directly to the theme of chivalry are an especially appropriate subject for a consideration of how Hartmann adapts his model for a new audience.

The passages to be discussed are those which mark out the following four episodes: the sparrowhawk contest; the tournament; the couple's departure from their own court after the crisis; and one of Erec's main rehabilitatory adventures, his first encounter with the dwarf-king Guivrez. From the first of these, Hartmann's desire to enhance the chivalry theme is evident.

2 The sparrowhawk contest

In line with his altered conception of the hero and the different emphasis he gives to his material, Hartmann completely changes his model's arms description in the episode of the sparrowhawk contest. Chrétien gives a conventional *chanson de geste*-type arming scene (*EE* 707–726).[11] Against this familiar model, and in the absence of any exceptional feature of the arms themselves, one element stands out for an audience: it is Enide who arms Erec. This focuses attention on her presence and relationship with Erec: just as Enide arms him for the combat in a literal sense, so it is, firstly, her beauty which allows Erec to undertake the contest and, further, her love and beauty which, at least in part, inspire him with the strength to defeat Yders (907–912). Appropriately, given its relevance to the personal sphere, the scene is situated in the privacy of Erec's lodgings. Hartmann downplays Enite's role in the contest and the impending marriage, and makes no mention of love until later; instead he reslants the episode to emphasise Erec's chivalric prowess and the contest as his opportunity to avenge himself on Iders and restore his lost honour,[12] thus rounding off the main narrative line in this section of the text. Correspondingly, he

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11   Zara P. Zaddy, 'Chrétien de Troyes and the Epic Tradition', in *Cultura Neolatina* 21 (1961), pp. 71–82. The author usefully identifies the elements of the topos and demonstrates how Chrétien varies it in three of the passages I discuss. While considering artistic and extra-textual factors, however, she neglects the descriptions' significance in their narrative context; her view of Enide's role in arming Erec as unexceptional seems shortsighted.

12   Hartmann significantly reverses the order of the thoughts which spur Erec on: Chrétien's hero looks at Enide and his strength grows 'por s'amor et por sa biauté' (*EE* 911; 'on account of her love and her beauty') and then remembers his dishonour (913–916); Hartmann's Erec thinks first of his shame (*E* 930–934), only then looking at Enite (935–939): for details of edition, see n.13. For further discussions of love and Enite's beauty in the opening episode, see e.g. Kathryn Smits, 'Die Schönheit der Frau in Hartmanns *Erec*', in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 101 (1982), pp. 1–28 (especially pp. 3–10); Ursula Schulze, '"Amîs unde man". Die zentrale Problematik in Hartmans *Erec*', in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 105 (1983), pp. 14–47 (especially pp. 17–21).

omits Chrétien's description, instead adding antithetical descriptions of Erec and his opponent Iders which single out the much more public moment of the actual combat, thus amplifying Erec's success and directing attention towards the question of public image.

The alteration also seems to reflect the adapter's desire to emphasise the parallels between Erec and Enite. Hartmann streamlines Chrétien's arrangement, giving the characters just one attribute each from the outset:

> Diz was Erec fil de roi Lac,
> der vrümekeit und saelden phlac. (*E* 2–3)

> This was Erec fil de roi Lac
> who possessed prowess and good fortune.

> ich waene got sînen vlîz
> an si hâte geleit
> von schoene und von saelekeit. (339–341)[13]

> I believe God had taken pains
> to give her beauty and grace.

He then goes on to develop these in parallel: since both beauty and prowess are needed to win the contest, and Enite's beauty has been displayed in her portrait (*E* 323–341), there is a need for a description highlighting Erec's chivalric skills.

The descriptions of Erec and Iders armed for the sparrowhawk contest are carefully constructed to maximise the contrast between the two knights. An introductory couplet unites the two in a common activity, 'zehant schieden si sich dâ / unde wâfenten sich sâ' (728f; 'immediately they went off separately / and armed') for until they arm, material differences are not apparent. In the process of arming, however, they are driven apart, henceforth appearing separately and contrasted harshly by antithetical rhyme: 'der ritter als im wol tohte, / Erec als er mohte' (730f; 'the knight as it befitted him, / Erec as he was able'). Iders is described first (732–745), introduced as the model knight—'wan er hete sich gewarnet dar / als man ze ritterschefte sol' ('for he had equipped himself there exactly as one should for chivalric deeds')—after which the description shows how the perfect knight of Hartmann's day is equipped: painted lances, plumed helmet, horse with a costly cover, and green samite *wâpenroc* (surcoat) with a rich silken trimming. This picture of the most modern contemporary armour was doubtless of interest to Hartmann's

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13 All references to Hartmann's text are to *Erec von Hartmann von Aue*, ed. by Albert Leitzmann, continued by Ludwig Wolff. 7th edn, prepared by Kurt Gärtner, Tübingen 2006 (Altdeutsche Textbibliothek 39). Line numbers are preceded by *E* when discussion shifts to Hartmann's work.

audience, offering instruction, an object of aspiration or the possibility of self-recognition, depending on individual circumstance.[14]

The final lines—'als uns diu âventiure zalt / sô was sîn harnasch lobelîch, / er selbe einem guoten ritter gelîch' (743–745; 'as the tale tells us / his armour was praiseworthy, / he himself looked in every respect a worthy knight')—sum up the positive impression and raise the question of the relationship between clothing and person;[15] furthermore, the narrator's source reference serves by its inclusive address *uns* to draw audience and narrator closer together, emphasising the passage and thus lending a memorable quality both to the description and to its concluding notion. In addition, the recognition that Hartmann's use of 'lobelîch' here may allude to the rhetorical tradition of laudatory description—with the foregoing description of Iders's equipment both proving and being justified by this assertion that it deserves praise[16]—enables the passage to be seen as embodying one of the narrative's informing ideas, one which is particularly relevant to its programme of descriptions, namely reputation and public image. The tale 'tells' Hartmann that Iders's arms are praiseworthy and he appears a worthy knight;[17] Hartmann perpetuates this view through his laudatory description, which, in its turn, gives the opinion credibility.

One of the central functions of the arms description is signalled by Hartmann's deft introduction of the *sol:wol* rhyme of ll. 734 f to recall the previous encounter of the two men where, equally, '[Iders] was ze harnasche wol, / als ein guot kneht sol' (16 f; '[Iders] was finely fitted out, / as a worthy knight should be') while, unarmed, Erec could not avenge himself; he thereby contrasts that occasion with the current one, reminding the audience of the interpretative context for the combat and making it obvious that this description is part of a series.

If Iders's arms are praiseworthy, the same can not be said of his challenger's. Koralus's arms may give Erec the wherewithal to fight Iders, but they are far from affording him material equality with his opponent:

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14   The up-to-the-minute features of Iders's equipment are discussed by Jackson, *Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Germany*, pp. 43–45. On the historical development of the pieces of armour, see Bumke, *Höfische Kultur*, pp. 213–220 and 223f.

15   cf. *E* 1578 'ir kleit was rîch, si selbe guot' ('her outfit was splendid, she herself lovely') concluding the account of Enite's courtly finery.

16   For discussion of other instances of such allusions in this romance, see e.g. Uwe Pörksen, *Der Erzähler im mittelhochdeutchen Epos. Formen seines Hervortretens bei Lamprecht, Konrad, Hartmann, Wolframs 'Willehalm' und in den 'Spielmannsepen'*, Berlin 1971 (Philologische Studien und Quellen 58), pp. 157–161, and Pérennec, *Recherches sur le roman arthurien en vers*, vol. 1, pp. 119–123. Neither critic includes the Iders description.

17   For Hartmann, references to the 'âventiure' are to the oral tale: see Pörksen, *Der Erzähler im mittelhochdeutchen Epos*, p. 70.

> sîn ros was gezieret
> mit rîcher kovertiure –
> diu was Erecke tiure. (737-739)

> his horse was adorned
> with a splendid caparison –
> Erec lacked such a thing.

In these lines, where the rhyme reinforces the couplet carefully placed exactly halfway through the fourteen-line description, the sharp antithesis focuses on a lack which proves to be symptomatic. In a significant change of content, Hartmann considerably worsens Erec's arms which in Chrétien, though described in general terms, emerge as high quality, costly and partly new.[18] This shift is in keeping with the poverty of Enite's father, which Hartmann intensifies, and also develops the parallel between Erec and Enite.

Erec is introduced baldly—'Erec ouch dort zuo reit' (746; 'Erec rode up as well')—and, without any of the approval given Iders, his appearance needs just four lines to reveal its insufficiencies:

> sin schilt was alt swaere lanc und breit,
> sîniu sper unbehende und grôz,
> halp er und daz ros blôz
> als imz sîn alter sweher lêch. (747–750)

> his shield was old, heavy, long, broad,
> his lances unwieldy and large,
> both he and the horse half bare,
> just as his old father-in-law lent him it.

Old and unwieldy weapons contrast with Iders's painted lances, and while the latter and his horse sport splendid attire, Erec and his horse are only half protected. This contrast, one between 'generations of knightly equipment',[19] externalises a series of other oppositions: Iders is arrogant, with many victories behind him, and well known to the onlookers, while Erec is polite, untried and a stranger.

This negative picture of Erec's equipment apparently contradicts that given earlier by Koralus, and corroborated by Erec and the narrator (590–592; 618). In fact the viewpoint has shifted, from one which recognises inner worth, despite appearances, to a more public and superficial one which sets store, and judges, by outward appearances. Iders is deceived into expecting victory by his opponent's appearance (763-765). The audience is similarly misled into temporarily sharing this point of view,

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18   *EE* 615–620; the later description by onlookers (763–772) also presupposes good quality armour. Zaddy, 'Chrétien de Troyes and the Epic Tradition', pp. 74-75,. notes the inclusion of *chauces* and *ventaille* as modern .

19   Jackson, *Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Germany*, p. 45.

according to which, despite the unanimous support of the onlookers (752–754) and the narrator's assurance that 'gelücke sîn helfe im niht verzêch' (751; 'Good fortune did not withhold its help from him'), Erec appears at a severe disadvantage in the combat, as the splendour and greater length of the Iders description seemingly mark him out as the victor. By thus manipulating the audience's responses, the poet arguably engages them to a heightened degree, and so when Erec subsequently does win, the effect is all the greater. In this way, his inauspicious equipment serves ultimately to heighten his prowess, just as Enite's beauty stands out against her tatters.[20]

By thus refuting assumptions, the instance further draws attention in a particularly memorable way to the problematic relationship between inner worth and outward signs. Giving dramatic form to an idea central to the narrative, the episode demonstrates the irrelevance, indeed potential deceptiveness, of outward appearances and dress when it comes to judging true worth.[21] Iders himself is established as the embodiment of the fact that outward splendour is no guarantee of success. Hartmann plays on this association in two later descriptions of Erec and Enite (1537–1610; 2285–2344).

Hartmann's treatment of the arms descriptions also reveals his concern to perfect the formal patterns of his model. His restyling of Erec's arms effects an obvious parallel between Erec and Enite: his old, unlovely equipment and in particular the motif of insufficient cover (749) echo the picture of Enite in her worn, rent clothing, drawing attention to more extensive similarities between their situations and roles. At Tulmein both Erec and Enite are suffering the *scham* and *schande* ('shame' and 'disgrace') of a fall from their proper place in society; each is isolated from society thereby; and Enite is not dressed as a 'lobelîchez wîp' ('praiseworthy wife') any more than Erec looks like the 'guot kneht' ('worthy warrior') or 'ritter' ('knight') figured by Iders.[22] Hartmann makes more of Erec's shame and his lack of material goods than the model, and this also tends to emphasise the analogy with Enite. These similarities underline the equivalent role played by the contest for both characters: Enite is acknowledged as the most beautiful lady, and Erec hailed as the

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20 The emotional effect on Hartmann's audience of the episode's theme of poverty is examined by Nigel F. Palmer, 'Poverty and Mockery in Hartmann's *Erec*, v. 525 ff. A Study of the Psychology and Aesthetics of Middle High German Romance', in *Hartmann von Aue. Changing Perspectives*, ed. by Timothy McFarland, Silvia Ranawake, Göppingen 1988 (Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik 486), pp. 65–92.

21 Seen already in descriptions of Koralus (*E* 275–290) and Enite (*E* 323–341).

22 Further, see Palmer, 'Poverty and Mockery in Hartmann's *Erec*', pp. 73-74; Smits, 'Die Schönheit der Frau', pp. 8-9.

bravest man (1306–1311). This is a preliminary demonstration of their beauty and prowess, taking place in a non-Arthurian realm and where their qualities still have to transcend unpromising exteriors.[23] Thereafter, their roles continue in parallel so that each enjoys still greater acclaim, this time in the Arthurian milieu and with all suitable finery, Enite when she is hailed the most beautiful at court and Erec as he wins the tournament.[24]

3 Tournament

Hartmann expands the account of the post-wedding tournament from 143 lines to 630, of which more than a tenth is occupied by a new description of the arms Erec acquires for the occasion (*E* 2285–2354).[25] This addition, like Hartmann's other changes to the tournament, reflects his interest in the realities and ethos of chivalric life;[26] the occasion is also the culmination of Erec's progress to date, his first tournament, where, in the presence of Arthur, he surpasses all others. The elaborate description singles out both Erec's chivalry and the episode as a whole: Hartmann uses the occasion to relate in detail the experience of the first-time participant, whose concern to behave appropriately lends a potentially didactic element to the narrative. This is doubly appropriate in what is the first major representation in German literature of an event which was comparatively uncommon in Germany at this time. In addition, however, Hartmann is concerned to perfect the correspondence between thematic aspects of the narrative and its descriptions in two related areas: Erec's chivalric career, and the parallelism between the partners. He realises that for his young hero, the tournament carries increased weight, becoming a true counterpart to Enite's reception at court: as her beauty is recognised as supreme by the Round Table, so the Arthurian company acknowledges his prowess as outstanding and he becomes a full member of its chivalric

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23 Although Enite is not described at the contest, ll. 640–656 function as a reminder of her poor clothing.

24 The process whereby the partners and their respective beauty and chivalry achieve harmonious interacgtion is obviously a central concern of criticism. For example, Schulze, '"Amis unde man"', and Smits, 'Die Schönheit der Frau', both interpret it in the light of contemporary ideas and experience. While certain episodes have been noted as equivalent in the couple's respective lives, such patterning has not, to my knowledge, been fully recognised in relation to description.

25 For comparative studies of the episode, see e.g. Joachim Bumke, *Der 'Erec' Hartmanns von Aue. Eine Einführung*, Berlin 2006, pp. 31–33; William H. Jackson, 'The Tournament in the Works of Hartmann von Aue: Motifs, Style, Functions', in *Hartmann von Aue*, ed. by McFarland, Ranawake, pp. 233–251 (pp. 240–246).

26 See Jackson, 'The Tournament in the Works of Hartmann von Aue', pp. 240–245.

community.[27] To underline this correspondence, in adding the arms description, Hartmann incorporates elements linking it to the account of Enite at court, as will be made clear presently.

In Chrétien, the arms description at the contest remedies Erec's lack of proper equipment on his first encounter with Yders. This leaves his participation in the post-wedding tournament, which is nevertheless a higher point than the contest, unadorned by material description: there is a substantial impressionistic evocation of chivalric display en masse (*EE* 2084–2104), but Erec's fine arms and horse are mentioned only in passing (2117; 2142 f.).

Hartmann clearly perceives the longer sequence latent in his model, suggested both by the hero's progress and by the shift in location from the forest to a non-Arthurian town to a place within the Arthurian ambit. Accordingly, he extends Chrétien's two stages into a three-stage sequence: Erec goes from being 'blôz als ein wîp' (*E* 103; 'unarmed as a woman') on the first occasion to 'halp...blôz' (749; 'half unarmed') when he defeats Iders and avenges his dishonour, but still without equipment appropriate to his status and ability. Only at the tournament does Erec appear in full chivalric splendour; and Hartmann's detailed evocation of it is the third instance where explicit or implicit comparisons to Iders convey Erec's chivalric progress.

Hartmann provides a cue to the audience to relate the new description to that of Erec and Iders at the contest (728–750) by introducing it with a group of motifs recalling Erec's set of arms on the previous occasion: Erec's need to acquire arms; his dependency on Arthur, as before on Koralus; the modesty of his requests; an element of 'making do': at Tulmein Erec armed himself 'als er mohte' (731; 'as he was able') and in acquiring his tournament equipment 'nâch sîner maht vienc erz an' (2284; 'he went about it as his means allowed').

Hartmann draws the description from life, providing a detailed evocation of the most modern arms of the day; yet he fully integrates them into the thematic structures of his romance. As an ensemble, the passage clearly conveys the hero's status and quality; however, Erec wears the *Kronenhelm* and has one shield bearing a lady's sleeve and another with an image of a lady on the inside, thus bringing together the three strands of his identity—chivalry, love, monarchy—which function in harmony as he is acclaimed the best in the tournament, before returning home to rule with his wife.[28]

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27   See Jackson, 'The Tournament in the Works of Hartmann von Aue', pp. 246-247.

28   On the tournament as Erec's rite of passage, see Jackson, *Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Germany*, p. 104. For some critics, Erec is nonetheless guilty of faulty behaviour during the tournament; see e.g. Bumke, *Der 'Erec' Hartmanns von Aue*, p. 33; Heimo Reinitzer,

The arms description is clearly composed with reference to that at the sparrowhawk contest. Erec's three lavish shields, each finer than the last, and with caparisons and pennants to match (2285–2323) contrast greatly with the one he used then (747). Likewise, his

> vünf ros von Spanje,
> helme von Poitiers,
> halsberge von Schmliers,
> îserkolzen von Glenîs (2327–2330)

> five Spanish horses,
> helmets from Poitiers,
> halberks from Schmliers,
> greaves from Glenis

contrast with his one horse and outdated armour (747–749) by their numbers and specialist provenance. Thereafter, references to the earlier passage become more specific, and details of Erec's remaining arms take up in the same order, and clearly enhance, Iders's arms on the previous occasion. Erec's

> von Lôfaigne zehen sper,
> von Etelburc die schefte,
> geverwet ze ritterschefte (2333–2335)

> ten lances from Lofaigne,
> their shafts from Etelburc
> painted for chivalric deeds

surpass Iders's weapons: 'sîniu sper wâren geverwet wol' (735); lines 2336–2338

> sîn helm gezieret schône:
> ein engel ûz einer krône
> von golde geworht schein.

> his helmet was finely decorated;
> an angel shone from a crown
> made of gold.

are in the same relationship to l. 736 'er was gezimieret' ('he had a finely decorated helmet'); and similarly with the surcoat and trappings:

> wâpenroc und kovertiure al ein,
> beidiu genuoc kuntlîch,
> grüener samît phelle rîch,
> zesamene geparrieret
> mit borten wol gezieret. (2339–2443)

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surcoat and trappings matching,
both skilfully made,
from green samite and costly silk combined,
with richly decorative borders.

and

> sîn ros was gezieret
> mit rîcher kovertiure –
> ....
> sîn wâpenroc alsam was,
> samît grüene als ein gras,
> mit rîchen borten umbestalt. (737–742)

> his horse was adorned
> in a costly caparison –
> ……………………….
> his surcoat was of the same stuff,
> samite green as grass,
> edged with rich borders.

Finally, Erec's fifteen good and well-equipped squires (2344–2350) reverse his solitary, outsider's position at Tulmein.[29]

In this way, Erec is implicitly measured against Iders, the benchmark of chivalric apparel, and against himself at the sparrowhawk contest; the greater detail and splendour of Erec's tournament arms demonstrate both that he has not only equalled but surpassed his old enemy, and that the previous discrepancy between his prowess and his outer appearance is amply resolved. Moreover, the greater length and detail reflect the greater importance of the episode, as well as the increased magnitude and more public nature of the tournament.

In terms of Erec's progress, Iders thus functions as a positive model. However, his spectral presence also calls to mind the potential deceptiveness of clothing, and indeed reputation, as indicators of ability: the description of Iders's splendour preceded not success but a fall. Consequently, while the lavish description of Erec's arms celebrates his status and prowess, it is also a veiled warning that he is not proof against failure just because he has the outward signs of supremacy.

In adapting the equivalent scene in Enite's life, Hartmann von Aue incorporates into his evocation of her courtly finery certain allusions to Iders which function in the same two-sided way: Enite's green samite (1549), the fashionable and exemplary manner of her dress (1544–1549), its *rîcheit* (1540; 1570; 'costliness') and the *loben* ('praise') motif (1545; 1589)

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29 Hartmann uses the same *Steigerung* technique in his descriptions of Enite's two horses: 1428 cf. 7327-7331; 1432 cf. 7344 f; 1429 cf. 7355; 1430 f., cf. 7356 f.; 1437 f., cf. 7439; 1439, cf. 7446-7449; 1438 f., cf. 7791-7797.

all recall motifs prominent in the description of Iders at the contest.[30] That this similarity between the court and tournament descriptions is intentional is confirmed by a whole series of parallels in both form and content. Each combines action on the part of a character with static description. Arthur provides arms and horses for Erec, who cannot supply them himself (2324 ff; 2262 ff), recalling Guinevere's gift of clothing to Enite.[31] As the 'künecliche wât' ('royal garment') acknowledges Enite's future queenship, so Erec wears the *Kronenhelm* of the king's son (2336–2338; 2568). Both outfits are shown to be the height of fashion in Hartmann's day. Erec's tabard of 'grüener samît phelle rîch /zesamene geparrieret' (2341f; 'green samite combined with costly silk') recalls the 'grüener samît' of Enite's robe (1549); gold and sable figure in both descriptions (1550–1552; 1571f; 2293–2295; 2304–2307), and both emphasise the notions of *mâze* (1574; 2294) and fitting well (1548; 2310) in similar phrases. The opening account of three shields, each more splendid and described in more detail than the last (2285–2319), recalls the three similes used of Enite as she appears before the court (1701–1706; 1712–1729; 1766 –1783),[32] particularly as one shield bears the image of a lady (2313f.) and the angel decoration on Erec's helmet (2336f) echoes the comparison of Enite to an angel (1842–1844).[33]

As the account of Enite's clothing is followed by a two-phase evocation of her beauty (1590–1610; 1698–1783), so that of Erec's arms is succeeded by two passages praising his chivalric qualities. These share the double-edged and premonitory function of the former, thereby reinforcing Hartmann's covert message.

   After the tournament and without a link to it, Chrétien tells us that Gauvain is the best knight at Arthur's court: 'a celui ne se prenoit nus; /aprés celui prisoit il plus / Erec…' (*EE* 2233–2235; 'no one could rival him; / next to him he prized Erec most highly'). The adapter brings this detail into the tournament scene itself, making it directly relevant: having stated that Gawein has lived up to his reputation for unsurpassed prowess,

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30 For a discussion of the *loben* motif, relating this to Enite's introductory portrait, see Pérennec, *Recherches sur le roman arthurien en vers*, pp. 119–123. On courtly clothing, see Elke Brüggen's comprehensive *Kleidung und Mode in der höfischen Epik des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts,* Heidelberg 1989.

31 Jackson, 'The Tournament in the Works of Hartmann von Aue', relates this to the motif of material gain in the episode, which reflects contemporary socio-historical circumstances (pp. 244-245).

32 Worstbrock, '*Dilatatio materiae*', demonstrates how Hartmann adapts his model in this scene by using description (pp. 5-9).

33 Uwe Ruberg, 'Bildkoordination im *Erec* Hartmanns von Aue', in *Hartmann von Aue*, ed. by Hugo Kuhn, Christoph Cormeau, Darmstadt 1973 (Wege der Forschung 359), pp. 532–560 (pp. 551–553).

Hartmann adds a eulogy presenting him as a paragon of chivalric-courtly virtues, the most perfect man ever to come to Arthur's court (*E 2730 – 2746*), before reversing Chrétien's hierarchy:

> Êrec fil de roi Lac
> den lâze ich vor den einen tac,
> vürbaz entar ich,
> wân man saget, sîn gelich
> ze Britanje kaeme nie:
> kam aber er dar ie,
> daz mohte Êrec wol sîn:
> daz was an sînen tugenden schîn. (2756–2763)

> Erec fil de roi Lac,
> I'll give him precedence for just one day,
> more I dare not,
> for they say his [Gawan's] like
> never came to Britain:
> if he did, however,
> this might well be Erec:
> that was evident from his virtues.

On the one hand, the change is logical: if Erec is the best in the tournament, why should he not be allowed to surpass Gauvain? Hartmann also intensifies Erec's prowess, presenting his exploits as more exceptional than does Chrétien.[34] However, in explicitly 'daring' to put his own hero before Gawein, albeit briefly, Hartmann is picking up on Chrétien's allusion to a storytelling tradition in which Gauvain is unsurpassed, and revealing its constraints. The main purpose of the description of Gawein appears, therefore, to be to praise Erec, by suggesting his almost unthinkable prowess. Significantly, however, the passage also makes the point that even the greatest knight may be surpassed and must therefore look constantly to his laurels; the instance thus adumbrates Erec's later experience.[35]

With the next description, analogous in function, Hartmann completes a series of three, showing a rising progression: that of Erec's arms compares him implicitly with Iders, whose role and representative value so far exist within this narrative only;[36] the comparison with Gawein

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34 See e.g. Jackson's comments on 'Erec's rescue act', in 'The Tournament in the Works of Hartmann von Aue', p. 242.

35 The passage may also be seen as pointing to the short-lived nature of Erec's success; see Reinitzer, 'Beispielfiguren in Hartmans *Erec*', p. 603.

36 Iders's first appearance in German is in *Erec*: Frank W. Chandler, *A Catalogue of Names of Persons in the German Court Epics. An Examination of Literary Sources and Dissemination, together with Notes on the Etymology of the More Important Names* ed. by Martin H. Jones, London 1992 (King's College London Medieval Studies VIII), pp. 127f.

involves a figure whose reputation is proper to the wider body of Arthurian legend and literature; finally we have great biblical and historical heroes whose example is more universal, transcending the bounds of age and genre:

> … man begunde gelîchen
> sîn wîsheit Salomône,
> sîn schoene Absolône,
> an sterke Samsônes genôz.
> sîn milte dûhte si sô grôz,
> diu gemâzete in niemen ander
> wan dem milten Alexander. (2815–2821)

> they began to compare him
> in wisdom to Solomon,
> in his looks to Absalom,
> in strength Samson's peer.
> They deemed his liberality so great
> that they compared him to none other
> than the generous Alexander.

Having in effect created the two previous passages to go with this one, present in the model (*EE* 2207–2212) the adapter need only 'correct' the comparison of Erec to a lion to one to Samson in order to unify the topical group[37] of great rulers who are *exempla* simultaneously of good characteristics and of men brought low by love and women, allowing him to convey at one and the same time both the highest praise of Erec's qualities and the shadow of impending downfall.[38]

Already for Chrétien, this 'ideal' description appears to voice the public's opinion (*EE* 2207f.) and with the subsequent crisis at Carnant, unanimous praise turns to universal criticism (2439f; 2455f; 2459f.). Hartmann is concerned to bring out this aspect more clearly. His description is unequivocally attributed to the public, and shown to constitute *laudatio* by a frame: 'Êrec…/ wart ze vollem lobe gesaget' (*E* 2811f; 'Erec…/ was accorded the highest praise'); 'sus verdiente Êrec sîn

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37   Reinitzer, 'Beispielfiguren in Hartmans *Erec*', pp. 601-02. Interestingly, a similar process seems to have been adopted by editor of Chrétien, Wendelin Foerster; in his first edition he gives *lion* with the majority of the mss, but subsequently conjecturally emends this to *Sanson* by analogy with Hartmann; see Carleton Carroll, *Chrétien de Troyes, 'Erec et Enide',* ed. and trans. by Carleton W. Carroll, London, New York 1987 (Garland Library of Medieval Literature, 25 series A), p. 319.

38   See Dennis H. Green, 'Hartmann's Ironic Praise of Erec', in *Modern Language Review* 70 (1975), pp. 795–807 (pp. 800f); cf Reinitzer, 'Beispielfiguren in Hartmans *Erec*', pp. 603–604: the context narrows the double meaning to a negative one, primarily inculpating Enite. Relevant documentation and details in Lambertus Okken, *Kommentar zur Artusepik Hartmanns von Aue,* Amsterdam 1993 (Amsterdamer Publikationen zur Sprache und Literatur 103), pp. 93–95.

loben' (2825; 'thus Erec won his renown'). [39] It is thus the culmination of a chain of references to the praise Erec wins in the tournament (2433–2436; 2473 f.; 2485 f.; 2516–2520; 2536f; 2621f.).

During the crisis at Karnant, renewed references to praise, this time ironic, signal that Erec's behaviour is the reverse of what it was before: 'ich lobe an im den selben site' (2965; 'I applaud him for this habit') as he stays at home while sending his men to tournaments, 'den lop hete er erworben' (2983; 'this was the reputation he had gained') as everyone bemoans his ruinous *verligen*.[40] Hartmann thus uses lexical means to emphasise how triumph may turn to fall. His clear conception of the tournament and crisis as antithetical is confirmed by the addition of Erec's rising early to participate in preliminary jousting (2413–2439; 2501–2515), which is praised and held up as exemplary by Arthur (2529–2535); the episode, while illustrative of contemporary practice,[41] is also introduced to contrast with Erec's later *verligen* when he lies abed with Enite, rising only to attend Mass and to eat (2937–2953).

The poet's use of the terminology of praise, moving thus from sincere to ironic and allowing for different interpretations by different people, once more reveals the potential gap between appearance and reality, and draws attention to the importance of reputation and image.

In retrospect the full extent of Hartmann's parallelism becomes visible. Both court and tournament episodes are structured around three descriptive passages: an initial clothing one, and a two-stage account of the character's attribute, the first part considering the place of the narrator and his subject relative to literary tradition—producing another topical portrait of female beauty (1590–1610), allowing Erec to outdo Gawan—and the second centring on a series of linked images: the cosmic similes used of Enite, and the ambiguous *exempla*.

Hartmann's concern to realign descriptions explains why he omits the description of Enide which in Chrétien parallels that of Erec both in form and in its function of setting up an ideal to be overturned (*EE* 2398–2429). Thanks to the echoes of Iders which simultaneously celebrate their subject's acclaim and suggest its precarious nature, the descriptions of Enite at court and of Erec at the tournament have taken over the ironic function of the 'ideal' pictures, allowing the adapter to dispense with that of Enide while integrating that of Erec into the tournament series.[42]

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39   cf. Green, 'Hartmann's Ironic Praise of Erec', p. 799.

40   See Green, 'Hartmann's Ironic Praise of Erec', p. 799.

41   Jackson, 'The Tournament in the Works of Hartmann von Aue', p. 243.

42   See Green's complementary view that since Hartmann attributes no major guilt to Enite and is primarily interested in Erec's progress, he transfers the juxtaposition of ideal and fall

This new arrangement has much to recommend it in terms of Hartmann's strict parallelism between the partners and their attributes. The paired passages are more closely parallel, in that both simultaneously show the ideal picture and presage disaster, whereas Chrétien showed Enide as the ideal courtly lady, following this immediately by the fall. Instead of two descriptions at different times and in quite different places and contexts, Hartmann's two are in the same section of the narrative, and already parallel, showing the character in finery at the moment of his or her greatest triumph. Also, where in Chrétien it was the characters' social roles which were highlighted by the twinned descriptions, Hartmann uses them to single out the qualities of chivalric prowess and beauty. This is entirely consonant with the way they are introduced as equivalent in the introductory portraits of the hero and heroine (*E* 2–4; 339–341) and developed in parallel in Hartmann's descriptions.

Two more key moments in the narrative are marked by arms descriptions: Erec's departure on the adventure quest, and his first encounter with the dwarf-king Guivreiz. Unlike in the instances already considered, we here see Hartmann actually working with the equivalent descriptions in his model. In Chrétien, both of these depend largely for effect on their close relationship with the initial description of Erec armed for the sparrowhawk contest. Hartmann's omission of that passage thus has implications for his response to the subsequent descriptions.

4 Departure from Carnant

Chrétien's account of Erec's arming for departure directly parallels the earlier one, containing the same elements in the same order. It expands the former, however, evoking in greater detail arms which appear considerably more luxurious than the previous set. This technique emphasises Erec's increased material fortune and also signals the relationship between the descriptions' contexts: each time Erec is departing to avenge a dishonour, first by a single adventure and next, a much greater one by the whole quest.

Equally, these similarities throw into relief significant differences, primarily reversals, which highlight the stark contrast between the two episodes with regard to Erec's practice of chivalry and especially Enide's role in relation to this. At the contest, Enide armed Erec (*EE* 709; 716), reflecting the fact that her presence was inspiring, and even a practical

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marking Chrétien's Enide description to Erec (*E* 2924–2998; cf. *EE* 2402–2464, esp. 2428ff.): 'Hartmann's Ironic Praise of Erec', p. 804.

necessity, to his victory; now that their relationship has become detrimental to chivalry, it must be abjured: Erec goes off to arm with the aid of a squire and in wholly male company (2649 f.). The shift is most eloquently conveyed by the emphatic culminating gesture of each arming scene, as 'Au costé l'espee li ceint' (717; 'she girds his sword at his side'), with Enide as subject, gives way to Erec's own act, 'puis prant l'espee, si la ceint' (2657; 'then he takes his sword and girds it on'). This marks Erec's new assumption of responsibility for himself, as he symbolically rededicates himself to male valour, resolved henceforth to rely on his own efforts.

With no counterpart in the earlier passage, and arguably attracting the audience's particular attention by the fashionably exotic item, the moment when Erec has a carpet specially brought and sits for arming on its leopard image[43] suggests a consciously symbolic act; inviting comparison with the lion to which he was likened at the tournament, but representing a lower form of chivalry, perhaps this emphasises Erec's lapse. As a symbol of *luxuria*, the leopard might also be seen to illustrate its cause.[44]

Chrétien provides a clue as to how the audience is to interpret his hero's armour when, just before this, Erec commands Enide to put on her best outfit (2576 f.); this she does 'mes nule chose ne li plot, / einçois li dut molt enuier' (2610 f.; 'but it gave her no pleasure at all, / rather it irked her greatly'). It seems reasonable to see this as a reminder of her joyful reception at the Arthurian court where she received a most splendid outfit, the lavish description of which is associated with her beauty as a source of social harmony in the custom of the white stag. Similarly, Erec's superlative armour conjures up the image of the ideal knight which he is no longer. A renewed disjunction has arisen between inner and outer; both partners still have the clothing which reminds them—and us—of their ideal condition, but they must now, through their quest, make themselves once more worthy to wear it. In particular, the centrepiece of the description (2635–2648), marked as such by its length and use of address to the audience, Erec's light, luxurious, rustproof halberk of pure silver, seems to represent the shining, untarnished chivalric reputation to which he now aspires;[45] he must regain and enhance the degree of chivalry he possessed before his *recreantise*. The necessity of seeking the meaning of the scene is urged upon the audience by the bystanders' wonderment at Erec's actions:

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43   Zaddy, 'Chretien de Troyes and the Epic Tradition', p. 76.

44   See Reto Bezzola, *Le sens de l'aventure et de l'amour*, Paris 1947, p. 147: the leopard represents 'sa virilité…son élan guerrier' ('his virility…his warrior élan').

45   On this passage, see the interesting comments in Peter Haidu, *Lion – queue – coupée. L' écart symbolique chez Chrétien de Troyes*, Geneva 1972, pp. 19–21.

> Li sergent et li chevalier
> se prenent tuit a mervellier
> por coi il se fesoit armer,
> mes nus ne l'ose demander. (2649–2652)

> The men-at-arms and knights
> all begin wondering
> why he is getting armed,
> but no one dares ask him.

Instead of his model's close links with the contest scene, significant for Enide's role, Hartmann gives a brief resumé of the departure episode, concentrating on Erec himself (*E* 3050–3092). Relegating the detail of Enide's dress to the background, and significantly omitting its emotional effect on her, Hartmann relies on the armour and especially the mention of *buhurdieren* (3080–3083) to evoke the tournament, which saw Erec's fullest realisation of his chivalric potential and, in particular, the perfect match of inner worth and its outward signs; both of these are of course in stark contrast to his current situation. Erec's actual arming expresses awareness of the problem and how to remedy it.

The adapter selects the most prominent items from Chrétien, though he omits the carpet—perhaps because he has also omitted the lion image, and the coronation thrones with their leopards (*EE* 2212; 6665f.), which link with it—but rather than their appearance, it is Erec's actions and speech as he arms which carry significance. Professing a wish to go riding 'ûz kurzwîlen' (*E* 3062; 'for pleasure'), he arms secretly, hiding his body armour beneath his clothes: this represents his situation, as his chivalric prowess has been eclipsed by amorous pursuits but is still there in reserve.[46] He next puts on his helmet without a coif, thereby expressing his resolve to re-establish contact with chivalry, without the comforts of courtly life; this accurately predicts his experience during the quest. Erec's speech, clearly the main point of the scene, goes to the heart of the question. He complains that something is amiss with the helmet, which would let him down in time of need; the solution is that 'man sol in baz riemen' (3076; 'the straps need improvements'). Hartmann adopts his model's technique of having the main feature emphasised by the household's incomprehension (3077–3079), thus encouraging the audience to look beyond the literal level for meaning. In expressing the need for an adjustment to the straps which connect helmet and knight, Erec acknowledges that there is a fault in his relationship to chivalry. Quite simply, there is not a perfect fit between him and the clothing which

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46   See Geoffrey See, 'An Examination of the Hero in Hartmann's *Erec*', in *Seminar* 27 (1991), pp. 39–54 (p. 45): Erec is as yet unable to reconcile his two roles of knight and husband and 'His mental disarray finds physical expression in his confused raiment'.

represents his status and abilities. By the coming adventure quest Erec must, metaphorically, make his armour fit once more.

Hartmann thus uses armour to convey a significance essentially similar to that of his model, but with a clearer emphasis on the problematic relationship between inner and outer man. Interestingly, the changes he makes may also be seen to exemplify the adapter's tendency to rationalise, and to increase the courtliness of his characters: Erec's subterfuge and mystifying behaviour throw his courtiers off the scent, making things easier for both them and him.

5 Guivrez

In Erec's rehabilitatory adventures, a key role is played by Guivrez, the dwarf-king. Chrétien marks Erec's encounter with him by a description of Guivrez which serves to convey the significance of the episode. The account, which appears as Guivrez prepares to challenge Erec (*EE* 4280–4318), reverses the pattern associated with the hero through both the departure scene and the earlier contest; the same items of armour occur but in reverse order, and similarly with the motifs of the ordering and bringing of arms and horse. On the one hand this technique establishes Guivrez as an adversary for Erec. Moreover, other elements of the scene call to mind specifically Erec's departure after his *recreantise*, thereby providing the audience with a frame within which to interpret the current encounter.

The narrator's prefatory comment singles out Guivrez's essential characteristic, made memorable by the presence of assonance, chiasmus and neat rhyme:

> De celui savrai je bien dire
> qu'il estoit molt de cors petiz,
> mes de grant cuer estoit hardiz. (3664–3666)

> Of him I can say for certain
> that though outwardly of small stature
> he was courageous with a great heart.

The notion that inner disposition is more important than, and may be discrepant with, outward appearances clearly recalls both the departure scene which emphasised the discrepancy between Erec's chivalric dress and his inner qualities, and the wider situation during Erec's time at Carnant: possessing the external things necessary to a knight and a ruler, he appeared ideal, but failed in the inner disposition which is the determining factor. The fact that Guivrez first looks, then comes, down from his tower (3662 f.; 3667 f.) creates a contrasting link with the earlier

scene where Erec goes upstairs to arm (2623). The lion motifs on Guivrez's saddle remind us that Erec was compared to a lion at the tournament, thereby suggesting that Guivrez now represents the ideal of chivalric prowess; Erec, as we saw at Carnant, is more of a leopard.

Thus the Guivrez arming description is clearly conceived as a reversal of Erec's departure from Carnant, and Guivrez as a contrast to Erec at that time. Accordingly, the encounter between the two knights reverses the situation at Carnant. By defeating Guivrez who claims he will make him *recreant* (3676–3680), Erec definitively refutes the accusation of *recreantise* which triggered his departure, and demonstrates that he has progressed from the slough of inactivity to the point where he can defeat the relentlessly active and previously unbeaten knight. His victory over and subsequent friendship with this figure show that Erec has regained the degree of prowess he enjoyed initially, perhaps reappropriating the ideal Guivrez represents.

When we come to Hartmann, we see a very obvious difference in the way he describes Guivreiz. Instead of Chrétien's arming scene, which is followed, incidentally, by a cameo of the vigorous knight in action – what might be called a visual 'here and now' picture – Hartmann gives a description of Guivreiz's essential, timeless characteristics. He takes Chrétien's opening lines and expands on them, rationalising and drawing implications as he goes. After evoking the knight's small size combined with a stout heart (*E* 4280–4290) he stresses the importance of disposition over size (4291–4297) as the key to his outstanding quality, courage (4280f.). The passage builds through praise of his disposition and chivalric way of life—he possesses 'rîchen muot' ('a spirited disposition') and has defeated all comers (4299–4313)—to the most significant fact: Guivreiz never misses a chance of chivalric activity:

> dehein ritterschaft er versaz
> …………………………………
> swaz er ir bî sînen zîten
> ie mohte errîten. (4314–4317)

> he never missed any chivalric contest
> …………………………………
> if he was able to get to it.

Guivreiz's constant and assiduous practice of chivalry contrasts very strongly with Erec's behaviour during the crisis period at Karnant.

Whereas Chrétien implies the contrast between the knights using formal means, the antithetical descriptions, Hartmann explicitly focuses on the grounds for their contrast, which is clearly one between two ways of life: Guivreiz displays the proper state of mental and physical readiness to fight, honed by combats and tournaments, while in Erec this chivalric

ideal has been debased by *verligen*. The same contrast is embodied by their combat, in which Erec initially shows the weaknesses resulting from his *verligen*, but overcomes these to defeat Guivreiz.[47] In so doing, he reverses his earlier state, and Hartmann underlines this reversal by subtle allusions to the crisis: the combat begins 'umbe einen mitten tac' (4406; 'around midday'), echoing the moment at Karnant when Enite reveals their predicament to Erec (3014), and here as there it is Enite's expression of despair which moves Erec to decisive action (4425–4438; cf. 3029–3052). These reminders lend depth and significance to the current episode. Thus although Hartmann does not have Chrétien's close links between formal descriptions, he obviously appreciates their purpose and adapts the method to the new context.[48]

This is characteristic of the attitude which Hartmann brings to the task of reworking his French model. As this examination of a particular group of descriptions demonstrates, his response is a deeply considered one, and one clearly stemming from a profound overall reading and knowledge of the text. It is evident that he appreciates the function of Chrétien's descriptions in their narrative context, and is concerned to integrate this, where appropriate, into the structures of his own work. He varies his method according to the individual case, being led by the significance he wishes to impart; the four passages which have been analysed show him omitting one description to replace it by a different one, adding a whole new one, and adapting two others in differing ways.

With regard to the 'performance-related' features, one might say that those of Chrétien's descriptions have worked on him in his capacity as reader in the first instance. While his own descriptions show similar traits and devices, he does not employ them in the same places as his model, and it thus appears that he is concerned with the effects they create rather than with them in themselves. It is notable that Hartmann has a sharp sense of the topical nature of some of his subjects, and imparts an ironic, self-reflexive dimension by means of the *lob* motif. However, this is not a mere formal game, but serves to highlight the central notion of reputation and outward image. Arguably the most striking thing he does in this

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47 I here follow Martin Jones, 'Chrétien, Hartmann and the Knight as Fighting Man: On Hartmann's Chivalric Adaptation of *Erec et Enide,*', in *Chrétien de Troyes and the German Middle Ages'*, ed. by Martin H. Jones, Roy Wisbey, Cambridge 1993 (Arthurian Studies 26), pp. 85–109 (pp. 102–107). See also Jackson, *Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Germany*, pp. 120–126.

48 One of the 'new' Wolfenbüttel fragments provides evidence of a German adaptation of this episode independent of Hartmann's romance as we know it from the Ambras manuscript and much closer to Chrétien; see Kurt Gärtner, 'Der Text der Wolfenbüttler Erec-Fragmente und seine Bedeutung für die Erec-Forschung', in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 104 (1982), pp. 207–230; 359–430 (pp. 391–412, especially pp. 399-401 on the description).

respect is to build this motif into the sequence of passages evoking Iders and then subtly alluding to him.

Hartmann also seems to delight in pattern-making, from the comprehensive way in which he perfects the parallels between descriptions of Erec and those of Enide, to the creation of a three-scene sequence in which Erec is measured against Iders, or the deft change of order to create the rising three-part series within the tournament episode. The same eye for detail and grasp of the descriptive programme as a whole enables him to make changes and keep track of their implications for other, linked passages.

If all this suggests rightly that Hartmann is a master of the structures within both his model and his own work, then he also looks beyond them, drawing real-life details of armour into his descriptions and making them part of the thematic structures of his narrative which, in turn, reflect wider aspects of chivalric life.

Alastair Matthews

'Ich pin der haid Aristotiles. ein exempel nemend des': Performing Aristotle's lessons

1

In chapter 22 of the late medieval *Ackermann* ('Ploughman') by Johannes von Tepl, the figure of Death confronts the Ploughman grieving for his wife with the following argument drawn from classical philosophy:

> Du bittest rat, wie du leyt auß dem herczen bringen sollest. Aristotiles hat dich *es* vorgelart, das frewde, leyt, vorcht vnd hoffnung, die vier, alle welt bekommern vnd jerlich die, die sich vor jn nit konnen huten. Frewde vnd vorcht kurczen, leyt vnd hoffnung lengen die weil. Wer die vier nit gancz auß dem mut treybet, der muß alle zeyt *s*orgende wesen. […] Jch han dir genug geraten. Kanstu es versten, stumpffer pi*c*kel?[1]

> You ask for advice on how to drive sorrow from your heart. Aristotle taught you long ago that joy, sorrow, fear, and hope, all four of them, trouble the whole world, overcoming those who are unable to keep their guard up against them. Joy and fear make time shorter, sorrow and hope make it longer. Anyone who doesn't put them completely out of his mind cannot but be in constant distress. […] I've given you enough advice. Can you take it in, you dolt?

Death states Aristotle's teaching and elucidates it for the Ploughman—but then questions the latter's ability to understand it at all in the exasperated rebuke with which the chapter ends. In the immediate context of the story behind the *Ackermann*, the question reflects one of the crucial difficulties the work has posed to scholars, that of determining whether (and how) abstract, theoretical teachings are to be converted into ones to be used by the Ploughman in the real situation of his own life.[2] The passage is one of

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1 Johannes von Tepl, *Der Ackermann: Frühneuhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch*, ed. by Christian Kiening, rev. edn, Stuttgart 2002 (RUB 18075), 22, 14–43. *Jerlich* has been translated as a variant spelling of *gerlîche*, 'completely', as suggested by Kiening on p. 124. It is conventionally noted that the ideas attributed to Aristotle here are actually those of the Stoics (see Kiening's commentary on p. 123), but a similar passage in *De anima* should also be borne in mind (see Christian Kiening, *Schwierige Modernität: Der 'Ackermann' des Johannes von Tepl und die Ambiguität historischen Wandels*, Tübingen 1998 (MTU 113), p. 345 n. 471).

2 This question lies behind the debate about whether the Ackermann was intended as primarily a (pseudo-)autobiographical account or a rhetorical exercise in the presentation of

several in which the *Ackermann* draws attention to the process of didactic communication when referring to and making use of the thought of learned classical figures.[3] Seneca, for example, is not simply a figure of authority, for his thought is linked to the story of his death,[4] and the truth of Philosophy's teachings is treated not merely as static fact but as words with a dynamic effect on Boethius.[5] Set alongside these examples, Death's words to the Ploughman express awareness of a different, though related problem: the presence of a given authority, in this case Aristotle, does not guarantee acceptance of the message.

The status of Aristotle in the *Ackermann* provides the starting point for this essay, which sets out to outline a concept of performance with which we can describe the interplay between Aristotle as a figure of authority and the lessons associated with him in a series of premodern German

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learning; for orientation, see Kiening, *Schwierige Modernität* (n. 1), pp. 414–433; Nigel F. Palmer, 'Der Autor und seine Geliebte: Literarische Fiktion und Autobiographie im "Ackermann aus Böhmen" des Johannes von Tepl', in *Autor und Autorschaft im Mittelalter: Kolloquium Meißen 1995*, ed. by Elizabeth Andersen et al., Tübingen 1998, pp. 299–322.

3   See, for example, Christian Kiening, 'Hiob, Seneca, Boethius: Traditionen dialogischer Schicksalsbewältigung im "Ackermann aus Böhmen"', in *Literatur im Umkreis des Prager Hofs der Luxemburger: Schweinfurter Kolloquium 1992*, ed. by Joachim Heinzle, L. Peter Johnson, Gisela Vollmann-Profe, Berlin 1994 (Wolfram-Studien 13), pp. 207–236.

4   'Hastu nicht gekant den weyssagen, der jn dem bade sterben wolt, oder sein bucher gelesen, das niemant sol clagen den tot der totlichen?' (Johannes von Tepl (n. 1), 20, 6–9, quoted by Kiening, 'Hiob, Seneca, Boethius' (n. 3), pp. 222–223; 'Have you not heard about the philosopher who wanted to die in the bath, have you not read the books by him that say no one should lament the death of mortals?'). The four manuscripts that scholars have included with numerous prints in group γ of the *Ackermann*'s transmission contain the reading 'Senecam den weissagen' here (see the apparatus in Johannes von Saaz, *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, ed. by Günther Jungbluth, Heidelberg (Germanische Bibliothek: 4. Reihe), vol. 1, 1969, p. 89). The reference to Seneca would have been identified by contemporary readers because the tale about his wish to die by having his veins cut in the bath appears in several other vernacular texts: Hugo von Langenstein, *Martina*, ed. by Adelbert von Keller, Stuttgart 1856 (BLVS 38), fol. 21, 55–87; *Das alte Passional*, ed. by K. A. Hahn, Frankfurt a. M. 1845, pp. 193–194; Jacob Twinger von Königshofen, *Chronik*, vol. 1, in *Die Chroniken der oberrheinischen Städte: Straßburg*, ed. by C. Hegel, Leipzig, vol. 1, 1870 (CDS 8), pp. 153–498 (p. 343).

5   'Wann weibes vnd kinder habe ist nit das mynste teyl der jrdischen selden. Mit sollicher warheyt hat den trostlichen Romer Boecium hin gelegt Philosophia, die weise meysterjnn' (Johannes von Tepl (n. 1), 29, 7–11, quoted by Kiening, 'Hiob, Seneca, Boethius' (n. 3), pp. 229–230; 'for possessing a wife and children is no small part of earthly happiness. Such was the truth with which the wise Philosophy brought rest to Boethius, the Roman consoler'). The precise meaning of the verb 'hin gelegt' is disputed; see Burdach's commentary in *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, ed. by Alois Bernt, Konrad Burdach, Berlin 1917 (Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation 3.1), p. 378; Johannes von Saaz, *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, ed. by Günther Jungbluth, Heidelberg (Germanische Bibliothek: 4. Reihe), vol. 2: *Kommentar*, ed. by Rainer Zäck, 1983, pp. 198–199; Johannes de Tepla, *Epistola cum Libello ackerman und Das büchlein ackerman: Nach der Freiburger Hs. 163 und nach der Stuttgarter Hs. HB X 23*, ed. by Karl Bertau, Berlin, New York 1994, vol. 2: *Untersuchungen*, p. 549.

texts. Of particular interest are those works in which he is not just a name that guarantees the veracity of particular facts but also a speaking, acting character who steps into the world of the texts and has a role to play in them. This process is most obvious in several fifteenth- and sixteenth-century plays in which a lesson is presented in conjunction with stories about Aristotle that are acted out before an audience, but it can also be traced back to earlier, narrative texts in which motifs of the later tradition began to take shape in literature in German.[6] In analysing them, the word 'performance' is used not simply in the narrow, everyday sense of an act of dramatic staging, but in a broader sense according to which it means 'that something is enacted' and is 'above all a process, an activity'.[7]

<div align="center">2</div>

The dynamic nature of performance can best be made clear by contrasting it with what it is not. Consider, for example, the following reference to Aristotle in Thomasin von Zerklaere's early thirteenth-century didactic compendium, *Der Welsche Gast* ('The Italian Visitor'):

> dialeticâ hât ouch ir diet;
> die sint die besten, die si hiet:
> Aristôteles, Bôêcjus,
> Zênô und Porphirjus.[8]
>
> Dialectic has supporters too. Here are the best it knew: Aristotle, Boethius, Zeno, and Porphyry.

Here, in the context of an exposition of how the seven liberal arts can serve as an aid to correct behaviour, Aristotle is mentioned as one of the greatest figures in dialectic, the part of the trivium that Thomasin describes as concerned with separating truth from falsehood.[9] Aristotle's

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6   It is beyond the scope of this article to consider how the material evolved in other literatures and the visual arts in Europe and further afield; further details can be found in the work on Aristotle and Phyllis mentioned in note 23 below. For a brief introduction to the status of Aristotle as a model figure of authority, see Ulrike Cova, 'Antike Beispielfiguren in deutschsprachiger didaktischer Literatur und darstellender Kunst des 13. Jahrhunderts', doctoral dissertation, University of Vienna 1973, pp. 24–30.

7   Carolin Duttlinger and Lucia Ruprecht, 'Introduction', in *Performance and Performativity in German Cultural Studies*, ed. by Carolin Duttlinger, Lucia Ruprecht, Andrew Webber, Oxford 2003 (German Linguistic and Cultural Studies 14), pp. 9–19 (p. 11).

8   Thomasin von Zerklaere, *Der Welsche Gast: Text (Auswahl), Übersetzung, Stellenkommentar*, ed. by Eva Willms, Berlin, New York 2004 (de Gruyter Texte), 8941–8944.

9   'dîaleticâ bescheidet daz slehte / vome krumben, die wârheit / vom valsche' (8922–8924; 'dialectic distinguishes the crooked from the straight and truth from falsehood'). On the background to this section of the text, see Ernst Johann Friedrich Ruff, *Der Wälsche Gast*

proficiency is implicitly set up as an example that should be followed, for the benefits of dialectic are subsequently presented in a generalized form applicable to all men:

> der kan dîaleticâ ze reht,
> der an guoten dingen ist sleht
> und sich vor lügen hüeten kan,
> daz er niht triege einn andern man.[10]

> He is skilled in dialectic who holds to good things and is able to steer clear of lying so that he does not deceive his fellow man.

Even so, Aristotle's authority is a static quantity. No indication is given as to how he acquired or demonstrated it; he is merely a name, a figure without a story.

The reference to Aristotle in Brun von Schönebeck's *Das Hohelied* ('The Song of Songs') in the late thirteenth century, on the other hand, begins to draw attention to his work as a process and activity:

> waz di sele si beschribet da
> Aristoteles in libro de anima:
> *anima quodammodo est omnia.*
> sus schribet Aristoteles der jungeling,
> her sprach, di sele si alle ding.[11]

> Aristotle describes what the soul is in his *libro de anima: anima quodammodo est omnia.* Thus wrote the youthful Aristotle; he said that the soul is everything.

As in the Thomasin passage, Aristotle is treated as an authority, in this case on the nature of the soul. Although mention is made of a source that preserves his teaching and guarantees its veracity (the *De anima*), the references to the acts of writing and speaking make clear that it is not simply an object in the form of a book but also the product of something that Aristotle did.

The transition from making references to Aristotle to telling a story about him has been completed in the dispute about the Eucharist in the fifteenth-century manuscript containing the Berleburg version of *Die Pilgerfahrt des träumenden Mönchs* ('The Pilgrimage of the Dreaming Monk'), one of three German translations of Guillaume de Deguileville's *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* ('The Pilgrimage of Human Life').[12] Wisdom has

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     des Thomasin von Zerklaere: Untersuchungen zu Gehalt und Bedeutung einer mittelhochdeutschen Morallehre, Erlangen 1982 (Erlanger Studien 35), pp. 191–194, and Willms's commentary in Thomasin von Zerklaere (n. 8), pp. 186–188.

10   Thomasin von Zerklaere (n. 8), 9003–9006.

11   Brun von Schönbeck, *Das Hohe Lied*, in *Brun von Schonebeck*, ed. by Arwed Fischer, Tübingen 1893 (BLVS 198), pp. 1–380 (ll. 7168–7173).

12   On the *Pilgerfahrt*, see Volker Honemann, "'Pilgerfahrt des träumenden Mönchs'", in *Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd edn, Berlin, New York, vol. 7, ed. by Kurt Ruh et al., 1989, cols 683–687; Wolfgang Haubrichs, 'Die "Pilgerfahrt des träumenden Mönchs": Eine poetische

divided the bread into enough small pieces to be sufficient for all, yet each is no smaller than the other. In her displeasure at this, Nature summons Aristotle to take up the argument with Wisdom.[13] His appearance is framed by motions of entry and exit ('Da Aristotules kommen was' and 'Also gienge er enweg' ('When Aristotle arrived' and 'Thus he went away')),[14] which draws attention to his physical presence as a figure whose role is to put across a message by speaking it in the present of the action:

> Eynen irer schuler sij [Nature] suchen det
> Und schickete den zu ir [Wisdom] zu reden,
> *Sij* zu schelden und zu straffen mit reden.[15]

> She [Nature] sought out one of her pupils and sent him to speak to her [Wisdom], to scold her and punish her with his words.

Accordingly, Aristotle opens the exchange by presenting himself in the role of a didactic authority:

> Frauwe Wißheit, zu uch hait Nature
> Mich gesant zu reden und uch zu sturen
> Und uch der ubergriffe zu underwijsen.
> […]
> Ich sagen das ich davon weiß.[16]

> Lady Wisdom, Nature has sent me to talk to you, to guide you and instruct you about your transgressions. […] I'll tell you what I know about such things.

Yet, as he himself acknowledges, the words of his teaching have been shown to be flawed by events that have already taken place:

> So han ich auch nit gewist
> Noch nit anders me horen sagen
> Und auch nit han gesehen bij mynen tagen
> Dann das eine gantze sache, welicherleye die were,
> Ye grosser were dan sinre deile eins were.
> Aber ir hant die deyle nu gemacht
> Das sij als groß sint als daz gantz zu male waß:
> Das ist nu ein grosser ubergriff
> Wieder Nature und auch wieder mich.

Übersetzung Elisabeths aus dem Französischen?', in *Zwischen Deutschland und Frankreich: Elisabeth von Lothringen, Gräfin von Nassau-Saarbrücken*, ed. by Wolfgang Haubrichs, Hans-Walter Herrmann, St. Ingbert 2002 (Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung 34), pp. 533–568.

13 On Aristotle's appearance here, see *The Pilgrimage of the Life of the Manhood*, ed. by Avril Henry, Oxford, vol. 2: *Explanatory Notes, Bibliography, and Glossary*, 1988 (EETS 292), p. 411. For a general introduction to the debates that surrounded the Eucharist, see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 14–49.

14 *Die Pilgerfahrt des träumenden Mönchs: Aus der Berleburger Handschrift*, ed. by Aloys Bömer, Berlin 1915 (DTM 25), 2794, 3185.

15 2791–2793.

16 2797–2807.

Das ist dar umb ich bin kommen her
Und dar umb ich bin geschicket her.
Nu lugent was antwert gebent ir der
Die mich hait gesant her![17]

I myself have never been aware of, never heard tell of, never at any time set eyes upon a thing of any kind that, whole, was not bigger than one of its parts. You, however, have made the parts in such a way that they are just as big as the whole itself was. This is indeed a major transgression against Nature and against me also. It is why I have come here and why I was dispatched here. Let's see what answer you have for her that sent me to you!

In response, Wisdom explains that although she instructed Nature and Aristotle, she did not tell them everything, and proceeds to repudiate Aristotle's objections with a series of thought experiments. Eventually, the Philosopher withdraws in defeat:

Werlich, ich entfinden wol
Das ich an uch nutsch gewynnen sol.
Is ist besser das ich enweg ghee
Dan daz ich tuschen uch arguiere me.
Ich gan enweg; was ir wollent, daz důnt!
Ir des guden urlaub hant.[18]

Truly, I see that I have nothing to gain here with you. It's better for me to leave than to continue this debate with you. I go; do what you will! I give you my farewell.

On one level, the defeat of Aristotle in the *Pilgerfahrt* reflects his status as a scholar from antiquity who, despite his knowledge and learning, was also a pre-Christian philosopher.[19] The passage is one of numerous responses to the problems this raised, ranging from Hugo von Trimberg's description of Aristotle as one of the wise heathens who yet had their blind spots, to Heinrich von Neustadt's discussion of whether he was damned, to Ulrich von Etzenbach's statement that 'Aristotiles der geprîste / von gote im [Alexander] gnuoc bewîste' ('the famed Aristotle / taught him [Alexander] plenty of things about God').[20] On another level, though,

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17   2853–2865.

18   3179–3184.

19   The classic presentation of Aristotle as a misguided pagan can be found in Dante's *Purgatory* when Virgil says: 'State contenti, umana gente, al *quia*; / chè se possuto aveste veder tutto, / mestier non era parturir Maria; / e disïar vedeste sanza frutto / tai che sarebbe lor disio quetato, / ch'etternalmente è dato lor per lutto: / io dico d'Aristotile e di Plato / e di molt'altri' (*The Divine Comedy*, trans. by John D. Sinclair, New York 1961, vol. 2: *Purgatorio* 3.37–44; 'Rest content, race of men, with the *quia*; for if you had been able to see all there was no need for Mary to give birth, and you have seen the fruitless desire of men such that their desire would have been set at rest which is given them for an eternal grief— I speak of Aristotle and of Plato and of many others').

20   Hugo von Trimberg, *Der Renner*, ed. by Gustav Ehrismann, Tübingen, vol. 1, 1908 (BLVS 247), 8447–8458; Heinrich von Neustadt, *Gottes Zukunft*, in Heinrich von Neustadt,

Aristotle's withdrawal reflects the risks attached to performance as a process in which there is the potential for failure. His learning is deployed in the context of a question-and-answer exchange in which knowledge is treated not as a given but as something drawn out in a temporal sequence, one in which Aristotle's words and examples ultimately fail to convince his interlocutor. The example is striking for two reasons. First, Aristotle's failure is represented in a way that highlights his physical presence as a character: his entry and exit are described, and he is portrayed through his contributions to a dialogue with another figure. This necessarily draws attention to the fact that he is performing a certain role; at the same time, his failure to perform that role successfully stands at odds with the more familiar image of Aristotle in narrative texts, most prominently the Alexander romances, in which he acts as Alexander's teacher and guide.[21] The coming pages aim to show that the *Pilgerfahrt* is not alone in this respect. They examine the interplay between Aristotle's performance as a character and the enactment of his authority in a range of other texts where his status is not merely affirmed but also questioned, in large part because lessons and roles take shape through actions and words.[22] The first example is the short verse narrative *Aristoteles und Phyllis* ('Aristotle

'Apollonius von Tyrland' nach der Gothaer Handschrift, 'Gottes Zukunft' und 'Visio Philiberti' nach der Heidelberger Handschrift, ed. by S. Singer, Berlin 1906 (DTM 7), pp. 329–452 (4807–4810); Ulrich von Etzenbach, *Alexander*, ed. by Wendelin Toischer, Tübingen 1888 (BLVS 183), 1633–1634. These examples are selected from those listed by Volker Honemann, 'Aristoteles', in *Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd edn, Berlin, New York, vol. 1, ed. by Kurt Ruh et al., 1978, cols 436–450 (cols 442–443).

21 Aristotle tutors Alexander in such topics as astronomy (Pfaffe Lambrecht, *Alexanderroman: Mittelhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch*, ed. by Elisabeth Lienert, Stuttgart 2007 (RUB 18508), Vorau version, 190–195/Strasbourg version, 219–226); the ways of rulership, the qualities of the virtuous man, and the seven liberal arts (Rudolf von Ems, *Alexander: Ein höfischer Versroman des 13. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Victor Junk, Leipzig, vol. 1: *Buch 1–3*, 1928 (BLVS 272), 1387–1840, 2156–2164); and the Greek alphabet and how to live as befits a prince (Ulrich von Etzenbach (n. 20), 1259–1292). These examples are among those listed by Wilhelm Hertz in the section 'Aristoteles als Lehrer Alexanders' of his 'Aristoteles in den Alexander-Dichtungen des Mittelalters', in Wilhelm Hertz, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, ed. by Friedrich von der Leyen, Stuttgart, Berlin 1905, pp. 1–155 (pp. 1–33), which remains a good survey of the primary literature.

22 The understanding of performance adopted here can be seen in terms of the ideas about the functions of language and of theatrical and narrative representation in Sybille Krämer, 'Sprache—Stimme—Schrift: Sieben Gedanken über Performativität als Medialität', in *Performanz: Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. by Uwe Wirth, Frankfurt a. M. 2002 (stw 1575), pp. 323–346; Gerhard Wolf, 'Inszenierte Wirklichkeit und literarisierte Aufführung: Bedingungen und Funktion der "performance" in Spiel- und Chroniktexten des Spätmittelalters', in *'Aufführung' und 'Schrift' in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller, Stuttgart, Weimar 1996 (Germanistische Symposien: Berichtsbände 17), pp. 381–405.

and Phyllis'), in which the threat to Aristotle's authority is not the intellect of Wisdom but the sensual allure of woman.

3

The tale of Aristotle being seduced by a captivating female was widespread in medieval Europe, where it existed in various forms in Latin, French, and German.[23] Two narrative versions from medieval Germany exist. The earlier one, known as the *Benediktbeurer Fassung* ('Benediktbeuern Version') and edited by Hellmut Rosenfeld, is preserved in two manuscript fragments found in Benediktbeuern; the later one, edited most recently by Klaus Grubmüller, is known to have existed in three manuscripts, of which only the Karlsruhe manuscript is still accessible (Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Codex Karlsruhe 408).[24] Although

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23 For overviews of the material with references to further reading including earlier literature, see Joachim Sorost, 'Zur Aristoteles-Sage im Mittelalter: Gattungsgeschichtliche, folkloristische und literarische Grundlagen zu ihrer Erforschung', in *Monumentum Bambergense: Festgabe für Benedikt Kraft*, ed. by Hermann Nottarp, Munich 1955 (Bamberger Abhandlungen und Forschungen 3), pp. 298–348; Wolfgang Stammler, 'Der Philosoph als Liebhaber', in Wolfgang Stammler, *Wort und Bild: Studien zu den Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Schrifttum und Bildkunst im Mittelalter*, Berlin 1962, pp. 12–44; Frauke Frosch-Freiburg, *Schwankmären und Fabliaux: Ein Stoff- und Motivvergleich*, Göppingen 1971 (GAG 49), pp. 96–104; Hanns Fischer, *Studien zur deutschen Märendichtung*, 2nd edn, rev. by Johannes Janota, Tübingen 1983, pp. 309–311; Bernhard Sowinski, 'Aristoteles als Liebhaber in den deutschen Dichtungen des Spätmittelalters', in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 69 (1987), pp. 315–329; Cornelia Herrmann, *Der 'Gerittene Aristoteles': Das Bildmotiv des 'Gerittenen Aristoteles' und seine Bedeutung für die Aufrechterhaltung der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung vom Beginn des 13. Jhs. bis um 1500*, Pfaffenweiler 1991 (Kunstgeschichte 2); *Novellistik des Mittelalters: Märendichtung*, ed. by Klaus Grubmüller, Frankfurt a. M. 1996 (Bibliothek des Mittelalters 23), pp. 1187–1191; Hedda Ragotzky, 'Der weise Aristoteles als Opfer weiblicher Verführungskunst: Zur literarischen Rezeption eines verbreiteten Exempels "verkehrter Welt"', in *Eros—Macht—Askese: Geschlechterspannungen als Dialogstruktur in Kunst und Literatur*, ed. by Helga Sciurie, Hans-Jürgen Bachorski, Trier 1996 (Literatur—Imagination—Realität 14), pp. 279–301; Marija Javor Briški, 'Eine Warnung vor dominanten Frauen oder Bejahung der Sinnenlust? Zur Ambivalenz des "Aristoteles-und-Phyllis-Motivs" als Tragezeichen im Spiegel deutscher Dichtungen des späten Mittelalters', in *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 59 (2004), pp. 37–66.

24 'Aristoteles und Phillis: Eine neu aufgefundene Benediktbeurer Fassung um 1200', ed. by Hellmut Rosenfeld, in *ZfdPh* 89 (1970), pp. 321–336; Aristoteles und Phyllis, ed. by Klaus Grubmüller, in *Novellistik des Mittelalters* (n. 23), pp. 492–523. For discussion of how the two versions relate to each other and to other Middle High German texts, foremost among them Gottfried's *Tristan*, see John L. Campion, 'Aristoteles und Phillis', in *Modern Philology* 13 (1915–1916), pp. 347–360 (pp. 356–360); Gisela Josephson, 'Die mittelhochdeutsche Versnovelle von Aristoteles und Phyllis', doctoral dissertation, University of Heidelberg 1934, pp. 51–61; *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld, pp. 331–332; Burghart Wachinger, 'Zur Rezeption Gottfrieds von Strassburg im 13. Jahrhundert', in *Deutsche Literatur des späten Mittelalters: Hamburger Colloquium 1973*, ed. by Wolfgang Harms, L. Peter Johnson, Berlin

the precise dating of the two versions is uncertain, they do seem to belong to the earlier and later thirteenth century respectively, and both are based on the same plot structure:[25] Phyllis seeks revenge on Aristotle after he exposes her amorous relationship with his student, Alexander. This she obtains by seducing the Philosopher into letting her mount him like a horse under the pretext that he will thereby win her favour in love.

Central to both versions is the way in which roles are performed before an audience. Phyllis, for example, acts out the role of the beautiful woman as it is defined in Gottfried's *Tristan* and other literary models. In the later version of the story, the description of her crown is drawn from the account of Isolde's entry to court in Ireland,[26] and she moves playfully through a scene assembled from the topoi of courtly love poetry, complete with flowers and a lime tree.[27] Likewise, in the earlier version, the description of Phyllis when she exposes the flesh of her leg ('Der lilien varwe dar vz dra*nc*' ('The colour of the lily radiated from it') recalls Hartmann's description of how Enite's body 'schein durch ir salwe wât / alsam diu lilje' ('shone through her faded clothes like a lily'),[28] and she moves singing like a nightingale (I, 51–58) through a scene whose narrow path and spring are reminiscent of the environs of the grotto in *Tristan*.[29] What is important where performance is concerned is the fact that Phyllis has not simply been given this role by the tale's unknown author as a literary allusion directed at recipients outside the story. Instead, she deliberately plays the part of the alluring woman before the figure of Aristotle inside the narrative world, and his status as a spectator is highlighted accordingly.

1975, pp. 56–82 (pp. 77–82); Alan Deighton, '*diu wîp sint alliu niht also*: Aristoteles und Phyllis and the Reception of Gottfried's Tristan', in *New German Studies* 6 (1978), pp. 137–150; Sibylle Jefferis, 'The *Fabliau* or *Maere* "Aristoteles und Phyllis": A Comparison of the Two Versions', in *Medieval Perspectives* 4–5 (1989–1990), pp. 80–90; Sibylle Jefferis, '"Aristoteles (and Phyllis)": *Fabliau, Mære, Spiel*', in *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 17 (1990), pp. 169–183.

25 The earlier version is conventionally dated to *c.*1200, but arguments for a later dating are put forward by Jefferis, '*Fabliau, Mære, Spiel*' (n. 24). In *Novellistik des Mittelalters* (n. 23), pp. 1185–1186, Grubmüller dates the later version to the last two decades of the thirteenth century on the basis of its use of Konrad von Würzburg's *Herzmäre* and *Engelhard*.

26 *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Grubmüller (n. 24), 238–252; Gottfried von Straßburg, *Tristan*, ed. by Karl Marold, 3rd repr., rev. by Werner Schröder, Berlin 1969, 10966–10980. See Wachinger (n. 24), p. 80; *Novellistik des Mittelalters* (n. 23), p. 1193.

27 *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Grubmüller (n. 24), 333–359.

28 *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld (n. 24), I, 97; Hartmann von Aue, *Erec*, ed. by Albert Leitzmann, Ludwig Wolff, 7th edn, rev. by Kurt Gärtner, Tübingen 2006 (ATB 39), 336–337 (Hartmann von Aue, *Erec*, trans. by Thomas L. Keller, New York, London 1987 (Garland Library of Medieval Literature B 12), p. 8). See *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld (n. 24), p. 335; Jefferis, '*Fabliau, Mære, Spiel*' (n. 24), pp. 173–174.

29 Jefferis, '*Fabliau, Mære, Spiel*' (n. 24), pp. 176–179.

Both versions draw attention to the fact that Aristotle sees Phyllis through a window of his study: 'Durch einez cleinez vensterlîn / sach er wol der vrouwen schîn' ('He saw the woman's figure through a small little window') and 'diz ersach durch ein vensterlîn / der alte meister und blickte dar / und nam ir gebærden war' ('When the aged scholar caught sight of this through a little window, he looked out and watched her movements').[30] As a result, two distinct spaces take shape, one where Phyllis is performing her role outside the study and one inside the study where Aristotle is watching her. This effect is strengthened in the later version, in which Aristotle's gaze through the window at her performance coincides with the description of its effect on him:

> die [her movements] dûhten in gar wunderlich.
> 'hei', dâht er, 'wie minneclich,
> wie schœne und wie gehiure,
> wie zartiu crêatiure
> ist daz minneclîche wîp!
> er sælic man, der sînen lîp
> solte mit ir elten!'
> in stiez an eine kelten
> unde eine hitze darnâch.[31]

> He thought them [her movements] rehmarkable indeed. 'Well,' he thought, 'how charming, how beautiful, how gentle this charming woman is. What a delightful creature! Happy the man who could grow old with her!' He felt his body turn cold and hot in turn.

The two spaces are in turn associated with two separate roles. We have already seen how the figure of Phyllis as seductive woman is associated with the space outside the study; the study itself, on the other hand, is the place where Aristotle acts out his conventional role as teacher and scholar. This is clearest in the earlier version, when, on seeing Phyllis, he says:

> her in so lege ich mine buch.
> Hie so lere ich mine kint,
> die nv alle spilen sint.[32]

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30 *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld (n. 24), I, 87–88; *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Grubmüller (n. 24), 340–342

31 *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Grubmüller (n. 24), 343–351. The earlier version also develops the notion of Aristotle's study as a contained space when, at Aristotle's window, Phyllis remarks: 'wie ist din gaden also cleine!' (*Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld (n. 24), I, 104; 'How small your chamber is!'). However, in this version it is aural perception of Phyllis's performance that triggers introspection on the part of the Philosopher: 'Der alte meister, do er da saz, / siner leren er vergaz, / Als er sie horte singen; / er sprach: "waz mac da clingen? / Richer got, wer ist der? / wolte er nacher komen her, / Ich wolte in gerne schovwen, / ez gelichet einer vrouwen"' (*Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld (n. 24), I, 59–66; 'The aged scholar forgot his teachings when he heard her singing as he sat there. He said: "Where can these tones be coming from? Almighty God, who's that? I would like to see him, if he were willing to come here. The sound is like that of a woman"').

I keep my books in here. It's here that I teach my boys, though they're all at play now.

The parallel with Phyllis is readily apparent: just as she sang like the nightingale yet had intentions that did not match the part she was performing, so here Aristotle's words present him as the expert scholar while arguably concealing his submission to the desires of the flesh. In fact, it is precisely when the boundary between Aristotle's space of learning and Phyllis's space of seduction fades that the Philosopher's difficulties begin.[33] He succumbs to the woman's charms and in so doing falls into a new role, that of the *Minnesklave*, or slave of love, which would have been well known to contemporaries in the form of catalogues of exemplary figures from biblical times and after who for all their greatness fell victim to the power of love.[34]

As was the case with Phyllis earlier, the function of Aristotle's new role as *Minnesklave* depends in large part on its effect inside the world of the story, for Phyllis's attempt to humiliate him will be fully successful only if his humiliation is seen by others. Thus, both versions of the story signal an awareness on the part of the characters that it is not in Aristotle's interests for events to be witnessed in public when he allows Phyllis to mount him like a horse. In the earlier version, Aristotle states this explicitly:

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32   *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld (n. 24), I, 106–108.

33   This moment of transition is captured explicitly by a physical gesture in the later version when Phyllis throws flowers in through the window to Aristotle (*Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Grubmüller (n. 24), 354–359) before joining him inside (362–377). It is also singled out for attention in the first of the two scenes from the Aristotle and Phyllis story in the tapestry known as the *Maltererteppich* ('Malterer Tapestry'), in which the Philosopher is depicted turning away from his desk and extending a hand through the window (the boundary between the two spaces) to caress the chin of Phyllis. On the *Maltererteppich*, see Jutta Eißengarthen, *Mittelalterliche Textilien aus Kloster Adelhausen im Augustinermuseum Freiburg*, Freiburg i. Br. 1985, pp. 23–30 (the scene in question is reproduced on p. 29); Herrmann (n. 23), pp. 77–80. For further discussion of how space is handled in the later version, see Michael Schilling, 'Liebe und Gesellschaft: Konkurrierende Konzepte und ihre Literarisierung in deutschen Verserzählungen des 13. Jahrhunderts', in *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 14/2 (1989), pp. 1–14 (pp. 2–5).

34   See Stammler (n. 23); Friedrich Maurer, 'Der Topos von den "Minnesklaven": Zur Geschichte einer thematischen Gemeinschaft zwischen bildender Kunst und Dichtung im Mittelalter', in Friedrich Maurer, *Dichtung und Sprache des Mittelalters: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, 2nd edn, Berne, Munich 1971 (Bibliotheca Germanica 10), pp. 224–248; Norbert H. Ott, 'Minne oder *amor carnalis*? Zur Fuktion der Minnesklaven-Darstellungen in mittelalterlicher Kunst', in *Liebe in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters: St. Andrews-Colloquium 1985*, ed. by Jeffrey Ashcroft, Dietrich Huschenbett, William Henry Jackson, Tübingen 1987, pp. 107–125.

*Der mei*ster sprach: 'da al zehant
iemer me bin ich geschant,
*Seh*ent ez die livte.'[35]

The scholar said: 'If the others see it, I will be disgraced for ever from that moment on.'

In the later version, on the other hand, Aristotle does tell Phyllis 'hie ist nieman mê dan *wir*' ('there's nobody here apart from us') before she enters the study,[36] as though aware that it would be better to be alone, but he does not display any explicit concern that the subsequent riding scene could be witnessed by others. Instead, it is Phyllis who addresses any unstated concerns he might have:

ir müezet mich lân rîten
in *dem* boumgarten;
dâ enmac uns gewarten
deweder wîp noch man.[37]

You'll have to let me mount you in the orchard; no one, man or woman, will be able to see us there.

The contrast between private and public situations is crucial to the roles being acted out and their functions in the story. Aristotle's mistake is exposed when his behaviour becomes a public act as follows:

Earlier version

*Der kiu*nic vnd die kiunigin
*vnd al i*r dienestmannen drin,
*Ovch al*exander daz kint
vf den palas komen sint
*Vnd nam*en wol daz wunder,
*daz de*r meister dar vnder
*Krouc*h vf allen vieren;
*sie sah*en in trottieren
*glich eine*m alten pherde;
*vro*v phillis also werde
*Oben v*f dem satel saz.
Do sprach der kiunic:
    'waz ist daz?'[38]

The King and the Queen and all their attendants, as well as the young Alexander, went to the

Later version

Daz ersach des küniges wîp
und ander ir juncvrouwen.
an den zinnen schouwen
begunden sî daz wunder,
daz Phillis dâ besunder
alsô hêrlîche reit.
des wart diu künigîn gemeit
und wunderte si harte vil.[39]

The King's wife witnessed this, together with her other maids. From the ramparts they saw the

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35   *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld (n. 24), II, 23–25.

36   *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Grubmüller (n. 24), 374.

37   412–415.

38   *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld (n. 24), II, 45–56.

39   *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Grubmüller (n. 24), 496–503.

parapet and beheld the strange
sight of the scholar crawling on all
fours below them. They saw him
trotting around like an elderly
horse, with the stately Phyllis
sitting on top of him in the saddle,
at which point the King said:
'What's this?'.

strange sight of Phyllis riding on
her own in such a grand style that
the Queen was amused and
considerably puzzled.

Both versions draw attention to the public setting of the action. This is
most obvious from the way that visual perception is highlighted using the
verbs 'sahen' and 'schouwen': the scene is witnessed not only by the
recipient of the text but also by the characters within it. In like manner, as
has been noted before, the earlier version accentuates the public element
in Aristotle's humiliation: Philip, the Queen, Alexander, and their retinue
behold what happens, whereas in the later version it is only the Queen and
her ladies-in-waiting who do so.[40] However, although the later version
does reduce the number of witnesses, it intensifies *what* they witness by
introducing an extra, aural level of sense perception by adding that Phyllis
was singing as she rode Aristotle on the way to the orchard: 'in eime
süezen dône / sanc si ein süezez minneliet' ('She sang a sweet love-song
to a sweet tune').[41] The narrative context allows the performance of the
love-song, otherwise a latent aspect of the texts of the *Minnesang*,[42] to be
described explicitly as part of Phyllis's role as the desirable woman.

At the same time, as a public disgrace, this act marks the culmination
of Aristotle's role as a *Minnesklave*. It is also marks the point at which the
two versions diverge significantly in their presentation of his response and
the message to be derived from the story. In the earlier version, Aristotle
flees in shame, literally taking his authority as a scholar away from the
court with him:

Er hiez sine dinc svchen
mit den schulbuchen.
Er lert ez allez in ein mal;

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40 See *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld (n. 24), p. 332; *Novellistik des Mittelalters* (n. 23),
    pp. 1195–1196.

41 *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Grubmüller (n. 24), 488–489.

42 See, for example, Peter Strohschneider, 'Aufführungssituation: Zur Kritik eines
    Zentralbegriffs kommunikationsanalytischer Minnesangforschung', in *Vorträge des
    Augsburger Germanistentags 1991*, ed. by Johannes Janota, Tübingen 1993, vol. 3:
    Methodenkonkurrenz in der germanistischen Praxis, pp. 56–71; Thomas Cramer, *Waz hilfet âne
    sinne kunst? Lyrik im 13. Jahrhundert: Studien zu ihrer Ästhetik*, Berlin 1998 (PSQ 148), pp. 9–
    49; Harald Haferland, *Hohe Minne: Zur Beschreibung der Minnekanzone*, Berlin 2000, pp. 65–90;
    Jan-Dirk Müller, 'Ritual, Sprecherfiktion und Erzählung: Literarisierungstendenzen im
    späteren Minnesang', in Jan-Dirk Müller, *Minnesang und Literaturtheorie*, ed. by Ute von Bloh,
    Armin Schulz, Tübingen 2001, pp. 177–208.

er vůr daz wazzer ze tal,
Daz da vor die borc vloz:
der livte schimphis in verdroz.[43]

He gave instructions for his belongings to be located, including the academic books. He emptied the lot into a bag and set off down the river that flowed past the town. He was fed up with being mocked by the people there.

The narrator then mentions that Alexander and Phyllis were free to love each other again, before concluding on both the dangers posed and the pleasures offered by women:

Als der meister dannen kam,
alexander die vrouwen nam
Ze einer ammien vnz an sinen tot.
Riuwe, kumber vnde not
Ist diche von wiben komen:
des hant ir ein teil hie vernomen![44]

When the scholar had left, Alexander took the woman as an *amie* until he died. Women have often been the cause of sorrow, torment, and distress; you have just heard about one such case!

The interplay between the two sides of Aristotle's figure, his role as expert scholar and his role as *Minnesklave*, is resolved in favour of the latter; the story's lesson appears to favour the love between Alexander and Phyllis, and it is stated by the narrator: Aristotle, it seems, has lost his authority as didactic voice.

The situation in the later version is more complex. On the one hand, the narrator concludes with a moral that is much more forthright than in the earlier version:

ich bin des komen überein,
daz dâvür niht gehelfen kan,
wan daz ein iegelîch wîse man,
der gerne âne vreisen sî,
sî ir geselleschefte vrî
und vliehe verre von in dan:
wan anders *niht* gehelfen kan.[45]

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43   *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld (n. 24), II, 81–86. Rosenfeld, p. 330 n. 29, suggests that *mal* means 'ship', but notes that it is not documented in this meaning elsewhere; the translation used here is that suggested by Jefferis, '*Fabliau, Mære, Spiel*' (n. 24), p. 172, who identifies the word as a shortened form of Middle High German *malhe*, 'leather bag' or possibly 'chest' (see Georg Friedrich Benecke, Wilhelm Müller, Friedrich Zarncke, *Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2.1, Leipzig 1863, p. 29).

44   *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Rosenfeld (n. 24), II, 89–94.

45   *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Grubmüller (n. 24), 548–554. The ending in the Karlsruhe manuscript differs considerably. After the narrator's moral, the text continues with a passage that begins 'Diʒ puchlin sei bekant, / Aristotiles ist eʒ genant' ('May this small book be well known; it is called Aristotle'), and ends in a prayer for God's mercy (*Codex*

I have come to the conclusion that there is no other course of action for any wise man who wants to avoid such horrors than to shun their company and take refuge far away from them, for this is his only hope.

Yet, right up to the end of the story, Aristotle retains his position of authority, for he flees in secret to an island where he begins work on a mysterious book about the evils of woman:

> er kam gevarn in eine stat,
> in ein insel, hiez Galiciâ.
> dâ beleip er unde machte dâ
> ein michel buoch und schreip daran,
> waz wunderlîche liste kan
> daz schœne ungetriuwe wîp,
> und wie diu leben unde lîp
> manigem hât versêret.[46]

> He arrived at a place, on an island, called Galicia. He stayed there and made a great book in which he wrote about the remarkable cunning of beautiful disloyal woman, and how she has inflicted pain on many a man in life and limb.

Irrespective of whether or not it is a deliberate reference to the passages in Book VII of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* that warn against the dangers of passion,[47] this final mention of the Philosopher returns to the performance of his authority: the story that led to him setting out a lesson about the nature of woman culminates in the depiction of him writing the book in which it is expressed.

4

The motif of Aristotle being seduced by a woman into letting her mount him like a horse also appears in several fifteenth- and sixteenth-century plays, which provide fresh perspectives on the relationship between this comic incident and the Philosopher's authority.[48] In the play written down with the incipit 'Horent ir lude uber alle' (University of Pennsylvania, Van

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Karlsruhe 408, ed. by Ursula Schmid, Berne, Munich 1974 (Bibliotheca Germanica 16), p. 362).

46 *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, ed. by Grubmüller (n. 24), 534–541.

47 See Sorost (n. 23), pp. 323, 338–339; Herrmann (n. 23), pp. 26–30; *Novellistik des Mittelalters* (n. 23), p. 1196. See also Klaus Arnold, 'Mentalität und Erziehung', in *Mentalitäten im Mittelalter: Methodische und inhaltliche Probleme*, ed. by František Graus, Sigmaringen 1987 (Vorträge und Forschungen 35), pp. 257–288 (pp. 263–264, 272–275).

48 For an introduction to Shrovetide plays and the relationship between their performance and the social order, see Volker Mertens, 'Das Fastnachtspiel zwischen Subversion und Affirmation', in *Topographies of the Early Modern City*, ed. by Arthur Groos, Hans-Jochen Schiewer, Markus Stock, Göttingen 2008 (Transatlantische Studien zu Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit 3), pp. 43–60.

Pelt Library, Cod. Ger. 4; 'Take heed you people everywhere'),[49] for example, Aristotle changes his views as the action progresses. He initially advises Alexander to shun the company of an unnamed queen on the grounds that the relationship does not befit him and places him under her control:

> Iß duncket mich nyt eyn gude wieße,
> Want du bist eyn ritter van prieße
> Und keres dich an eyn junges wijff
> Die dich brenget umb dynen lieff.[50]

I don't consider this a good way to proceed, for you are a knight of fame and are turning to a young woman who will rob you of your life.

> Du bist eyn herre van hoer art
> Und haist ergeben zu dießr fart
> Den liebsten eigen willen dyn,
> Das eyn frauwe deß moiß meister syn![51]

You are a man of noble blood but have now surrendered your will, that which is most dear to you, so that a woman will have mastery over it.

The Queen then obtains revenge on Aristotle by seducing him into letting her mount him. She also persuades Alexander to be present and witness what happens; in an attempt to placate him, Aristotle adopts a new stance, one that he hopes will be more acceptable to his master:

> Ich sehen nu woil und ist also,
> Daß nye keyn man wart recht froe
> Dan alleyn van wiben;
> Si kunnent alles leit verdriben.[52]

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49 'Ein unveröffentlichtes Spiel von "Aristotiles und der Königin"', ed. by Otto Springer, in *ZfdA* 111 (1982), pp. 22–52 (= *Aristotiles und die Königin*). On the basis of features such as past-tense stage directions, it is thought that the text was not intended for direct use in performance. It has also been suggested that it could have been the source for the plays *Mayster Aristotiles* and *Aristotiles der hayd*, discussed below, and that it was derived from a version of the *Aristoteles und Phyllis* narrative. See Victor Michels, *Studien über die ältesten deutschen Fastnachtspiele*, Strasbourg 1896 (Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker 77), pp. 40–47; Otto Springer, 'A Philosopher in Distress: Apropos of a Newly Discovered Medieval German Version of *Aristoteles und Phyllis*', in Otto Springer, *Arbeiten zur germanischen Philologie und zur Literatur des Mittelalters*, Munich 1975, pp. 259–269 (pp. 268–269); *Aristotiles und die Königin*, pp. 22–28; Sibylle Jefferis, 'Das Spiel "Aristoteles und die Königin" (University of Pennsylvania, Cod. Ger. 4): Ein Vergleich mit seiner Hauptvorlage, dem Märe "Aristoteles und Phyllis"', in *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 15 (1989), pp. 165–181; Eckehard Simon, '"Aristotiles und die Königin"', in *Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd edn, vol. 11, ed. by Burghart Wachinger et al., Berlin, New York 2004, cols 130–133.

50 *Aristotiles und die Königin* (n. 49), 393–396.

51 429–432.

52 734–737.

> I now see clearly—and this is how things are—that no man has ever gained true happiness unless it has come from women. They can dispel every sorrow.

Still the learned figure, he is able to refer to the Old Testament as a source of written evidence for his new view:

> Iß steit geschreben in der alder ee,
> Das man deß hait gedreben mee
> In den alden zijden,
> Das man die frauwen nyt plach zu myden.[53]

> It stands written in the Old Testament that in those times it was less common for people to make a habit of avoiding women.

Aristotle's volte-face, however, is undermined by the comic element in the way it takes place. When Alexander saw him being ridden by the Queen and asked what was going on, Aristotle's initial response was to pretend that nothing had happened. Aristotle, according to a stage direction, 'floch myt dem zayme / und quam weder, als hette ers nyt gtane' ('fled with the reins and came back as if he hadn't done anything'),[54] and challenges Alexander as follows:

> Du sprichs, ich habe mich laißen riden!
> Sage myr, wanne und zu welchen zijden,
> Want ich das nyt han getane,
> Sicher du bist uff boißen wayne![55]

> You say that I let myself be mounted! But, tell me, when and at what time, for I didn't do so: your beliefs are surely pernicious!

It is only when presented with the physical evidence of what he was doing that Aristotle abandons his pretence and embarks on the sudden change of heart described above.[56] So, far from being a straightforward reassertion of his authority, Aristotle's new position has a farcical element which, given the scene that has just taken place, remains when he professes a commitment to his revised teachings as follows: 'Ich wil in [women] umber weßen underdane, / Wurde ich als alt als Mathusalem' ('I will always submit myself to them [women], even if I grow as old as Methuselah').[57] In the later version of *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, a comic episode led up to Aristotle's statement of a moral lesson; here, on the other hand, the statement of the lesson itself is a comic event. In

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53   747–750.

54   711a–b.

55   718–721.

56   The argument here depends on the interpretation of Alexander's 'Ist das dyn pater noster zu dießr fart / Ader was hais du da myt gedane?' (723–724; 'is this your pater noster I see, or have you been doings something else with it?') as an ironic reference to the bridle (see *Aristotiles und die Königin* (n. 49), p. 52; Briški (n. 23), p. 51).

57   *Aristotiles und die Königin* (n. 49), 757–758.

performing the role of the scholar, Aristotle also performs the role of a figure who is the object of ridicule.[58]

A similar tendency for Aristotle's performance of authority to run into difficulties can be observed in the Shrovetide play *Ein spil von fursten und herren* ('A Play about Knights and Princes').[59] It can be divided into three parts, the first involving Aristotle as a physiognomist, the second the riding scene, and the third a dialogue between two fools. In the first part, a knight proclaims Aristotle's status as an expert in physiognomy to the guests gathered at the Sultan's court:

> Ir mocht noch abenteur hie horen
> Mit hoher kunst und maisterschaft,
> Damit dieser gelert maister ist behaft.
> […]
> Er kan erkennen am gesicht,
> Warzu ider mensch sei gericht,
> […].
> Wer solche kunst von im wolle leren,
> Der findt sie bei dem meister drat.
> Darumb euch mein herr geladen hat.[60]

> You're about to hear wondrous things involving skill and expertise, with both of which this learned scholar is endowed. […] He can discern the leanings of any man by looking at his face […]. Anyone who wants to learn such artfulness from the scholar will be able to witness it from him very soon. That's why my lord has invited you here.

When he appears, Aristotle succeeds in performing the role with which he has been associated. He interprets the physiognomy of four kings who are among the Sultan's guests, and he manages to defend himself when they try to turn his teachings against him. By revealing that the kings are womanizers, he exposes them to the displeasure of their partners; in

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58 On the figure of the literate scholar in medieval German comic literature, see Sebastian Coxon, '"schríber kunnen liste vil": Literate Protagonists and Literary Antics in the Medieval German Comic Tale', in *Oxford German Studies* 31 (2002), pp. 17–62; Sebastian Coxon, *Laughter and Narrative in the Later Middle Ages: German Comic Tales 1350–1525*, London 2008, pp. 159–164.

59 *Ein spil von fursten und herren*, in *Fastnachtspiele aus dem fünfzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. by Adelbert von Keller, Stuttgart 1853, vol. 1 (BLVS 28), pp. 138–153 (no. 17). For a good introduction to the play, see Bernhard Sowinski, 'Zur Stofftradition und Handlungsstruktur des Fastnachtspiels "Von fürsten und herren"', in *Virtus et Fortuna: Zur Deutschen Literatur zwischen 1400 und 1720: Festschrift für Hans-Gert Roloff zu seinem 50. Geburtstag*, ed. by Joseph P. Strelka, Jörg Jungmayr, Berne, Frankfurt a. M., New York 1983, pp. 106–117.

60 *Ein spil von fursten und herren* (n. 59), p. 138, l. 27–p. 139, l. 20. The *hofmeister* (Master of the Royal Household) later presents Aristotle in a similar manner: 'Der maister sagt euch, was er sol. / Gefellt es eurem herzen wol / Und wollet ir das horen gern, / Er kan eim idem wol beweren / Sein conplex und all sein list, / Warzu ider geneigt ist' (p. 141, l. 34–p. 142, l. 4; 'The scholar will speak to you as befits him. If it pleases your heart and you are eager to hear, he can reveal anyone's complexion and mind, anyone's inclinations').

response, the kings try to fool Aristotle by giving him a picture of himself to interpret. Initially, he identifies failings in his own image and thus seemingly undermines his own authority:

> Es hat gar poser prechen drei.
> Es ist ein morder und ein diep
> Und groß unkeuscheit hat es liep
> Und ist ein recht lugner zwar;
> Das beweist sein gesicht furwar.[61]

> There are three malicious vices. This is a murderer and a thief, fond of being unchaste, and a fine old liar; the face is sure evidence of this.

However, he then regains the upper hand by pointing out that he can overcome these failings:

> Die drei prechen hab ich gar schlecht;
> Darfur ich erznei kan gar vil,
> Das ich nit mord, raub oder stil;
> Ich bin auch vor unkeusch frei,
> Das macht, ich wone nit frauen bei.
> Ein ider, der sich zwingen kan,
> Der mag der ubel wol frei stan.[62]

> I make no secret of having these three vices; but I also have ample medicine against them to prevent me murdering, thieving, or stealing. There's no sign of me being unchaste either; this is because I don't spend time with women. Anyone who can keep himself under control will certainly be able to steer clear of this evil.

At this point, therefore, Aristotle has asserted himself as *the* figure of authority in the play. He has, in a sequence of actions, enacted and defended the static teachings on physiognomy that are attached to him in chapters 75 to 76 of the *Secretum secretorum* ('Secret of Secrets'), which was translated into German vernacular prose in 1282.[63]

The Sultan summarizes Aristotle's status with 'Ir seit ein hochgelerter man, / Das euch niemant betriegen kan' ('you are such a highly learned man that no one can deceive you'),[64] at which point his wife

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61   p. 146, ll. 24–28.

62   p. 147, ll. 24–30.

63   See Sowinski, 'Stofftradition und Handlungsstruktur' (n. 59), pp. 108–109. The shift from static to dynamic expertise on Aristotle's part involves not only physiognomy in general but also specific knowledge about infidelity: 'Schwartz farb an der haut chündet ainenn ungetreuen' (Hiltgart von Hürnheim, *Mittelhochdeutsche Prosaübersetzung des 'Secretum Secretorum'*, ed. by Reinhard Möller, Berlin 1963 (DTM 56), 76, 28; 'A skin of black colour is the mark of the unfaithful'). The attribution of the translation to Hiltgart is erroneous (see Regula Forster, *Das Geheimnis der Geheimnisse: Die arabischen und deutschen Fassungen des pseudo-aristotelischen 'Sirr al-asʿār/Secretum secretorum'*, Wiesbaden 2006 (Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter 43), pp. 167–168).

64   *Ein spil von fursten und herren* (n. 59), p. 148, ll. 13–14.

announces that she intends to dupe Aristotle and mount him like a horse. As in the other versions of the story, the attempt to seduce the Philosopher is successful; on this occasion, Aristotle attempts to retain his authority afterwards by deriving his humiliation from a general principle:

> Genadt mir, edler herre mein,
> Kein man auf erd so weis mag sein,
> Ein weip efft in, ob sie wil.[65]

> Have mercy on me, my noble lord; there can be no man on this earth who is so wise that a woman cannot dupe him if she wants to.

The moral lesson itself, however, is expounded not by Aristotle but by other characters. The Sultan, for example, links the case of Aristotle to a catalogue of *Minnesklaven* from the Old Testament:

> Des woll wir euch genießen lan,
> Seit frauen vor oft betort han
> Die weisen in der alten ee
> Und euch, meister, nu merket me,
> Konig Davit und herrn Salomon,
> Den Sampson und herr Absolon
> Und Aschwerum den konig her
> Den uberwant die schon Hester,
> Und Olofernus ward geschent
> Von einem weib, Judith genennt.[66]

> We will not condemn you for this, for women deceived the wise men of the Old Testament on many occasions in the past as well as you. Recall, further, King David and King Solomon, Samson and Absalom, and the magnificent King Ahasuerus who was won over by the beautiful Esther; and Holofernes was put to shame by a woman called Judith.

He then observes that the fate of such figures was caused by the sexual allure of women:

> Kein man auf erd so wild nie kam,
> Er ward von zarten frauen zam;
> Wann er an iren weißen armen
> Ie solt in solcher lieb erbarmen,
> Wem do sin ror nit auf tet stan,
> Ich sprich, er wer kein rechter man.[67]

> There was never a man on earth so wild that he was not tamed by tender women, for he would always have to grow warm in their white arms with such love that anyone whose shaft didn't harden then would not, I say, be a real man.

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65   p. 150, ll. 27–29.

66   p. 151, ll. 2–11.

67   p. 151, ll. 16–21. As *erbarmen*, 'to have pity or mercy on', does not fit the syntax of the sentence, the translation treats the word as a misspelling of *erwarmen*, 'to grow warm'.

One of the Sultan's knights develops this lesson, enumerating all the things done for the sake of women before concluding:

> Das macht ein fleck kaum einer hant preit;
> Derselbig fleck mit seinen trollen
> Macht, das wir thun was weiber wollen.[68]

> This is all because of a patch hardly the size of a hand; this patch with its demons is what makes us do what women want.

Aristotle, who was at first given the role of didactic authority by other characters and performed that role to perfection, is now deprived of it by the Sultan and his knight. It is they who state the moral of his story, they who make the judgements about character and behaviour that were initially his to make. The brief third part of the play emphasizes his foolishness a final time by comparing his behaviour with that of two fools. In a scene mirroring the events involving the Queen and Aristotle, Geutlein tries to arouse Heinzlein and make him let her mount him. The outcome is different, though, for Heinzlein responds:

> Das thu ich nit, Geutlein, du nerrin!
> Weist nit, das ich weiser, dan der meister, bin?
> […]
> Ich sprich: Ein man sol keiner frauen
> Auf ir suße wort getrauen.
> Du hast es selber wol gesehen,
> Wie disem meister ist geschehen.[69]

> I'm not doing that, Geutlein, you fool! Don't you know that I'm wiser than the scholar? […] I tell you: a man should not take any woman at her word, sweet as it may be; you saw yourself what happened to this scholar.

Even the fool is cleverer than Aristotle, having learnt from the lesson of his story as expounded by the Sultan and his knight. Aristotle's performance of authority has failed, depriving him of his didactic voice, which is replaced by the didactic function that his tale has for others.[70]

The play *Aristotiles der hayd* ('Aristotle the Heathen'), written down by Vigil Raber in 1511, takes a step further in this direction.[71] The *precursor*, or

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68 p. 151, l. 36–p. 152, l. 1.

69 p. 152, ll. 16–23.

70 On the role of the fools here, see Hedda Ragotzky, 'Der Bauer in der Narrenrolle: Zur Funktion "verkehrter Welt" im frühen Nürnberger Fastnachtspiel', in *Typus und Individualität im Mittelalter*, ed. by Horst Wenzel, Munich 1983 (Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur 4), pp. 77–101; Ragotzky, 'Aristoteles als Opfer' (n. 23), pp. 293–295.

71 *Aristotiles der hayd*, in *Sterzinger Spiele: Die weltlichen Spiele des Sterzinger Spielarchivs nach den Originalhandschriften (1510–1535) von Vigil Raber und nach der Ausgabe Oswald Zingerles (1886)*, ed. by Werner M. Bauer, Vienna 1982 (Wiener Neudrucke 6), pp. 73–88 (see p. 558 for the dating).

herald, addresses the audience and sets the scene for the action by announcing that the play will demonstrate what love can do to a man:

> Dem sy [love] khan gesign an,
> des nempt war von dism mann.
> Der waß ain weiser haiden.
> daruon wirt man och dy sach peschaiden,
> Wie der frauen lieb den mannen gesiget an,
> als noch geschicht mangem man.[72]

> Behold this man as an illustration of who it [love] can overcome. He was a wise heathen. You'll be taught how love of women overcomes men, as still happens to many a man today.

An introduction of this kind by a herald is not in and of itself remarkable; what is striking, however, is that the didactic voice is split between the herald and the characters, beginning immediately when Aristotle enters and restates the lesson of the play, declaring that he himself is to serve as its model:

> Aristotiles ad populum:

> Nun hort ir herrn, all gemain,
> paide groß vnd auch khlain,
> Ich pin der haid Aristotiles.
> ein exempl nemend des:
> Frauen lieb mich so ser entzundet hat,
> von ainer leid ich grosse not,
> Als ich euch schier peschaiden will.[73]

> Aristotle *ad populum*: Listen up my friends, all together, great and small alike; I'm Aristotle the heathen. Draw a lesson from this: the love of women has inflamed me so much that I'm suffering in great distress because of one in particular, as I'll explain to you very soon.

The storyline has been streamlined to focus on this message. The play concentrates on Aristotle and his infatuation with a woman identified as Amor, likened by her name to the figure of Lady Love.[74] The riding scene neither results from Aristotle's disapproval of his master's relationship nor contrasts with expertise he demonstrates in front of fellow characters. Instead, it occurs when Aristotle is finally able to visit Amor in person after exchanging a series of messages with her. The role of Aristotle as an exemplary figure for the audience is highlighted again at this point. Amor, for example, tells him

> Ir muest mich auf euch reytn lan.
> Vnd thuet ir das vor diser schar,

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72   *Aristotiles der hayd* (n. 71), 18–23.

73   26–33.

74   See *Sterzinger Spiele* (n. 71), p. 495.

so seyt ir gebert von mir zbar
Vmb alles, was ier mich pittn seit,
des red ich furbar an allen neidt.[75]

You'll have to let me mount you. And if you do so in front of this crowd, you will be granted everything you say you want from me. Truly, there is no malice in my words.

As there are only a small number of other characters in the play (two of Amor's ladies-in-waiting, Aristotle's servant, and possibly the *rusticus*, or peasant, who appears later),[76] it seems reasonable to interpret 'vor diser schar' ('in front of this crowd') as a reference to the audience: both characters are aware that they are performing a lesson for the spectators who, although situated outside the action of the play, are brought into its world by being addressed in this manner.[77] Then, after Aristotle agrees to submit to Amor's demands, she explains to the audience the moral of what has happened:

Amor ad populum:

Ir khinder, habt ir nun gesechn
waß wunders da ist geschechn
An dism kunstreichstn haidnischen man?
wie khindisch hat er heut getan!
Das khan die lieb zurichtn vnd machn,
Ich mueß sein gleich wider mich selb lachn.[78]

Amor *ad populum*: Children, did you see what strange things happened to this most clever heathen man just now? How childishly he has behaved today! This is what love can cause and do; I can't resist having a laugh about him myself now.

Aristotle does suggest to Amor that this shame has been inflicted on him because of his age, and provides an anecdote to support a claim about female infidelity, but these are no more than token attempts to establish his authority in the world of the play. His primary role has been to perform consciously a lesson for those outside it, his own exemplary tale of a heathen who succumbed to the madness of love, and the success of this role depends on his failure in the world of the play.

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75 *Aristotiles der hayd* (n. 71), 474–478.

76 The *rusticus* attempts to persuade Amor to mount him as well; Bauer has suggested that he is a 'Mann aus dem Publikum, der gegen Ende des Spiels die Verbindung mit der Zuschauerrealität durch unmittelbare Nutzanwendung der Spielaussage wiederherstellen sollte' (*Sterzinger Spiele* (n. 71), p. 496).

77 On the blurring of the boundary between characters and audience in religious plays, see Erika Fischer-Lichte, 'Theater und Fest: Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis von Theatralität und Ritualität in den geistlichen Spielen des Mittelalters', in *Transformationen des Religiösen: Performativität und Textualität im geistlichen Spiel*, ed. by Ingrid Kasten, Erika Fischer-Lichte, Berlin, New York 2007 (Trends in Medieval Philology 11), pp. 3–17.

78 *Aristotiles der hayd* (n. 71), 492–498.

Alternatively, Aristotle could retain his role as a teaching authority inside the world of the plays, as is apparent from the Shrovetide play bearing the title *Hie hebt sich ain spil an von mayster Aristotiles* ('Here Begins a Play about Aristotle the Scholar').[79] It can be divided into two parts; the first, the focus of attention here, presents a variation on the theme of the ridden Aristotle, the second a comic encounter between various figures who attempt to seduce the Queen and her maids. Aristotle's entry is announced by the *vorlauffer*, or herald, who carries Aristotle's chair and immediately places him in the role of the expert scholar:

> Ich thuo euch abentewer kundt
> Hye zu diser stundt
> Von ainem mayster, der ist weyß.
> Er ist alt vnd dar zu greyß.
> Aristotiles ist ers genant.
> Er füert ain puoch in seiner hant.
> Er füert da her aus der hohen schuol.
> Man sol im setzen ain stuol.
> […]
> Setzet euch nider auff den stuole!
> So hören euch dye lewte zue.[80]

> I'll tell you a tale right now about a scholar. He is learned, old, and grey; Aristotle is his name. He's got a book in his hand and he's on his way here from the university. Someone should fetch him a chair. […] Take a seat on the chair! Everyone will listen to you then.

As Aristotle will have been carrying out these actions as the *vorlauffer* describes them, the latter's words serve to highlight the fact that Aristotle is performing the role of the scholar. At the same time, the line 'So hören euch dye lewte zue' ('Everyone will listen to you then') draws attention to the two possible addressees of what Aristotle is about to say: the characters in the play and the audience outside it. Aristotle now points to his own expertise, explaining 'Ich will vns ain püech dichten, / Da mit wir die welt berichten' (I'm going to write us a book with which we will describe the world'),[81] and goes on to give instructions for the necessary writing materials to be supplied:

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79   *Hie hebt sich ain spil an von mayster Aristotiles*, in *Fastnachtspiele aus dem fünfzehnten Jahrhundert: Nachlese*, ed. by Adelbert von Keller, Stuttgart 1858 (BLVS 46), pp. 216–230 (no. 128). An introduction to this play focusing on the presentation of Aristotle as learned figure can be found in Klaus Ridder, 'Der Gelehrte als Narr: Das Lachen über *artes* und Wissen im Fastnachtspiel', in *Artes im Mittelalter*, ed. by Ursula Schaefer, Berlin 1999, pp. 391–409 (pp. 399–402).

80   *Mayster Aristotiles* (n. 79), p. 217, ll. 22–35.

81   p. 218, ll. 2–3. On the meaning of *berichten* here, see Sowinski, 'Aristoteles als Liebhaber' (n. 23), p. 324 n. 34.

Nun solt dw pald da hyn faren
Vnd solt das nit lenger sparen,

Tintten, pappier soltu mir pringen.
Des weges soltu nit lengern.[82]

Make haste and go now; don't hesitate any longer. Bring me paper and inks, and take the fastest route you can find.

It is here that the sequence of events leading to the riding scene begins: after the King asserts that Aristotle has no desire to seek the pleasures of beautiful women, the Queen declares that she will try to outwit him by filling him with desire for her. Aristotle initially responds to her overtures by turning to his role as a teacher:

Fraw, wolt ir nu lerne,
So lernt ich euch so gerne
Gramaticam, loicam,
Philosophiam und rethoricam
Und ander künste vil,
Der ich yetz nit nennen wil.
Das sprich ich an allen wan.
Ich will euch selber wesen vndertan.[83]

My lady, if it were your wish to learn, I would be more than glad to teach you grammar, logic, philosophy, and rhetoric and many other arts that I'm not going to name now. I say this with all certainty: I want to submit to you.

The subjection involved, though, is erotic, and Aristotle readily takes up the Queen's offer to do what he wants if he lets her mount him. In response to the King's bewilderment at what follows, Aristotle shifts the blame onto the Queen and turns his story into one that should act as a warning for the King himself:

Herr, nun gnad mir des leybs!
Dye schuld ist ewres weybs,
[…].
Darumb warn ich ewch, lieben gesellen guot,
Tragt ain freyhen frischen muot
Vnd hüettet euch vor weyben,
Dye enck macht vmb treyben,
Vnd gelaubt nit zu vil (das ist mein rat),
Es sey frwe oder spat!
Des gelaubet mir auff meinen ayd,
Sy pringen euch in arbayt,
Also mir ain weyb hat gethan.[84]

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82 *Mayster Aristotiles* (n. 79), p. 218, ll. 12–15.

83 p. 219, ll. 28–35.

84 p. 221, l. 28–p. 222, l. 10.

> My lord, have mercy on me! The guilt lies with your wife, […]. And so I warn you, my dear good friend: be of clear and independent mind and beware of women, who can put you at their beck and call; do not, I tell you, be too trusting, be it early or late! Take this to heart; I swear that they will bring discomfort upon you just as a woman has done to me.

The initial presentation (and self-presentation) of Aristotle as someone who would actively instruct the audience has been discarded. For them, he is now the *Minnesklave*, the ridiculed scholar; but within the world of the play, he reasserts his authority and presents his story as a lesson for the King.

The final play to be considered here is Hans Sachs's *Comedia mit 7 personen: Persones, die königin, reit den philosophum Aristotelem, und hat 5 actus* ('Comedy with Seven Characters: Persones the Queen mounts Aristotle the Philosopher, in Five Acts'). Sachs not only shows Aristotle presenting his experiences as a lesson for his master but also depicts the success of this performance of authority. Aristotle's forthright opening words attempt to persuade Alexander to shun the company of his wife, Persones,[85] as it is preventing him from carrying out his duties:

> Besser wer mein herr könig todt,
> Sich etwas von seim weib abziehen,
> Ihre beywonung zimlich fliehen,
> Mit ir nit stät in wollust leben.[86]

> It would be better were my lord the King dead, to put some distance between him and his wife, to avoid her presence as is appropriate and not to live with her in constant passion.

> Da werden dir durch die wollüst
> Dein krefft, sin und vernunft verwüst.
> Das ist dir gift und mechtig schedlig
> Und versaumbst dardurch mainig redlich
> That im köngklien regiment.[87]

> Then your mind, strength, and reason will be laid to waste by passion. This will poison you and cause great harm to you, and as a result you will fail to perform many noble acts of governance in your reign.

Alexander yields to the authority of Aristotle, who remarks that he will provide written evidence about the dangers of passion ('Kumb! ich will dir deß wollusts gift / Probiren durch treflich geschrift' ('Come! I'll show you the poison of passion with the help of distinguished tracts')).[88]

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85 On the name 'Persones' (she is the daughter of Darius), see Stammler, (n. 23), p. 28.

86 Hans Sachs, *Comedia mit 7 Personen: Persones, die königin, reit den philosophum Aristotelem, und hat 5 actus*, in *Hans Sachs*, Tübingen, vol. 12, ed. by Adelbert von Keller, 1879 (BLVS 140), pp. 241–264 (p. 242, ll. 35–38).

87 Sachs (n. 86), p. 243, ll. 3–7.

88 p. 244, ll. 8–9.

Accordingly, he continues to enact the role of the bookish scholar; when he next appears, his entrance is described as follows:

> Aristoteles geht ein mit einem offnem buch, redt mit im selber unnd spricht:

> In diesem buch Propleumatis
> Ich find warhaftig und gewiß
> Sehr vil der frawen heimligkeit,
> Die unbestendig alle zeit
> Sind in ihrer liebe und trew.
> Derhalben ich mich heimlich frew,
> Das ich von der weiber gefer
> Bin unbetrogen blieben biß her.[89]

> Aristotle enters with an open book, talking to himself, and says: In truth and without doubt, in this book called *Problemata* I find much about the secrets of women, who are forever inconstant in their fidelity and love. That's why I'm secretly happy that I've so far resisted the threat of deception they pose.

When he is eventually trapped in love for Persones, however, Aristotle's interest in the written word is ironically channelled into the composition of a 'lob-gedicht' ('poem of praise'),[90] which he plans to present to her at their rendezvous—while in the eyes of Alexander he has buried himself in his books to write a scholarly tract:

> Ich hab heut und gester in nehen
> Aristotelem nit gesehen,
> Meinen zuchtmeister trew und frumb.
> Wo geht er nur in büchern umb?
> Etwan ein newes buch zu machen
> Von der natur und der-gleich sachen?[91]

> I've not see my faithful, virtuous tutor Aristotle around today or yesterday. Where can he be poring over his books? Perhaps he's making a new book about nature and such things?

In a by now familiar move, this is the very status that Aristotle claims back for himself when Alexander discovers what he was really doing. When caught in the act of being ridden by Persones, Aristotle offers as explanation:

> Schaw, könig! das die ursach sendt,
> Das diß spiel dein weib hat anghricht,
> Mit irer falschen lieb erdicht.
> Schaw! also hats betrogen mich,
> Mein herr könig, und darzu dich
> Durch ir practick und hinderlist.
> Darumb keim weib zu trawen ist. […]

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89   p. 250, ll. 2–11.

90   p. 257, l. 15.

91   p. 257, ll. 19–24.

> Derhalben thet ich dich trewlich warnen.
> Vor deines weibs arglisting garnen
> Ist mir die thorheit widerfahren.[92]

> See, King, how it came about that your wife was behind this plot, having composed it in false love. See how she's deceived me, my lord the King, and you also with her devices and deceitfulness. That's why no woman is to be trusted. […] This is why I was being loyal when I warned you. I succumbed to stupidity when I was caught in your wife's web of malice.

What sets this apart from the end of the *Spil von fursten und herren*, for example, is that rather than having his closing advice expounded by a fool, Aristotle retains his authority even in apparent defeat. His words force Alexander to reinterpret what has happened, so that what he saw as Aristotle's disloyalty becomes a warning from which he himself will learn:

> […] so will auch ich
> Mich vor ihrer bey-wonung hüten,
> Mich abziehen von ir in guten
> Und außwarten meim regiment.[93]

> […] Therefore I too will beware of spending time with her; I will withdraw from her with decency and attend to the demands of governance.

In the end, therefore, Aristotle ends up achieving precisely what he set out to do. Accordingly, when the herald draws the play to an end, he cites Aristotle not just as an illustration of how age is no protection from foolishness but also as a model figure of wisdom:

> Zum dritten man hie klerlich sicht,
> Alter helff für kein thorheit nicht
> Und wie auch einem weisen zwar
> Kein kleine thorheit widerfahr,
> Wie Aristoteli geschach,
> Der durch weißheit die list hernach
> Fürsichtigklichen uberwandt.[94]

> Third, it can be clearly seen here that age is no barrier to foolishness, and how a wise man came to show not a small degree of foolishness in the case of Aristotle—who then adeptly employed wisdom to overcome deceit.

In these words the two main roles performed by Aristotle in the texts considered above are united: Aristotle the humiliated *Minnesklave* and Aristotle the expert authority. In descriptive terms, it is true that the association between them is straightforward in so far as the former depends on the latter for its effect; what the plays show, however, is that

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92   p. 262, l. 33–p. 263, l. 9.
93   p. 263, ll. 25–28.
94   p. 264, ll. 18–24.

when Aristotle is not just described but is part of a story, his roles are witnessed by others, are shaped by means of actions and words, and unfold in time. These three features allow us to capture more precisely what was described above as the 'dynamic nature' of performance. Their importance has been noted before, in the performance of literary forms as described by Jan-Dirk Müller and Volker Mertens,[95] or in the precariousness of performed ritual as described by Gerhard Wolf, for example,[96] but it should now be clear that they have an importance of their own rather than being bound to other problems such as the function of the written text or the role of ritual: they serve to make something tangible and present in the here and now.[97] With this in mind, the final section draws together the main properties of performance thus understood and shows how they relate to the texts discussed earlier in the essay.

<div align="center">5</div>

The first aspect of performance that has become prominent in the works discussed above is the fact that to perform is always to perform *to or for* someone. In the *Pilgerfahrt* Aristotle acts out the role of authority in his confrontation with Wisdom; in the *Aristoteles und Phyllis* narratives he plays the part of teacher in the eyes of Alexander and his father; and in the *Spil von fursten und herren* he demonstrates his ability as an expert on physiognomy. At the same time, Aristotle also performs a role for the audience outside the text. Implicit in the *Pilgerfahrt*, this role is highlighted by the narrator in the lessons stated at the end of the two short narratives, and it is pointed out by Aristotle and other characters in the plays: his part is that of the heathen expert who must yield in the face of Christian knowledge or female seduction. The (mis)recognition of roles, of the fact that something is being performed and what that something is, is therefore of crucial importance. It is why Phyllis is able to seduce Aristotle by presenting herself in terms of a particular model; it makes possible the ironic mismatch between Aristotle's work on a 'lob-gedicht' ('poem of

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95 Müller (n. 42); Mertens (n .48).

96 Wolf (n. 22).

97 This is an allusion to the distinction between *Präsenzkultur* ('culture of presence') and *Bedeutungskultur* ('culture of signification') put forward by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, 'Präsenz-Spuren: Über Gebärden in der Mythographie und die Zeitresistenz des Mythos', in *Präsenz des Mythos: Konfigurationen einer Denkform in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. by Udo Friedrich, Bruno Quast, Berlin, New York 2004 (Trends in Medieval Philology 2), pp. 1–15.

praise') and Alexander's belief that he is engaged in cerebral research activity; and it is why we as readers are able to see him in relation to the catalogues of *Minnesklaven* with which we are familiar from other texts.

Consequently, it is no accident that attention is repeatedly drawn to the fact that Aristotle is performing his roles in front of the figures in the world of the text and the recipients outside it. In some cases, Aristotle talks about his own actions, be it by announcing to Wisdom that he has come to put her back on the right track, by explaining to Phyllis that his study is where he keeps his books and teaches his pupils, or by proclaiming his intention to write a book about the nature of the world in the *Spil von mayster Aristotiles*. Alternatively, other characters can draw attention to the roles played by the Philosopher, as Amor does when she tells the audience that his story illustrates what love can do in *Aristotiles der hayd*, or as the Sultan does by linking Aristotle to a list of Old Testament *Minnesklaven* in the *Spil von fursten und herren*. In other words, the texts make clear that to perform is always to perform *something*; this feature of performance is at its most obvious when Aristotle informs the audience of *Aristotiles der hayd* that he is going to play the exemplary heathen who is overcome by love.

To perform something is in turn to perform an action, or series of actions, *in time*; the concept of performance captures what happens when Aristotle is more than a name behind a particular text or linked to a set of facts and becomes instead the bearer of roles that, as presented by himself or others, can be acted out in several ways, not necessarily successfully. The potential for future failure is always at hand; indeed, the typical pattern is that Aristotle initially assumes the role of the expert scholar but then finds himself in difficulty as he attempts to perform it. In some cases he is left stripped of that role; in others, such as the plays and the later version of *Aristoteles und Phyllis*, he seeks to re-establish himself in it using various strategies of rhetoric and argumentation. Yet, even if this fails, he has still performed something successfully, albeit not always what he set out to perform (the role of the *Minnesklave*, for example). Performance is therefore not limited to that which is done and carried out intentionally (though it can be, as is the case with Aristotle in *Aristotiles der hayd* and the deliberate deception in which Phyllis engages); it is instead a way of describing in more general terms the processes by which roles are acted out and characters portrayed and perceived.

This essay has sought to show how this concept of performance can be used to illuminate some of the techniques used in the presentation and self-presentation of literary figures. It is perhaps not surprising, given the use of verbs such as 'to act out' and the everyday understanding of the word 'performance', that these processes are at their most obvious in the

plays. At the same time, the techniques used to represent them are also found in the other texts described above as examples of performance. The *Pilgerfahrt* draws attention to physical presence, on which the plays also depend; the concept of performing space is crucial to both versions of the *Aristoteles und Phyllis* narrative; and all three texts make use of verbal self-presentation and dialogue. Taken together with the plays, and compared with the Aristotle mentioned by Death in the *Ackermann* with which we began, they show that performance is one way in which a name can be made a character.

Fabian Lampart

Dante's reception in German literature:
a question of performance?

1

This paper deals with the concept of performance as a way of studying the reception of Dante's works in German literature. The leading argument is that the German reception of Dante from around 1800 onwards can be explained as a series of attempts to reflect on performative structures inherent in Dante's works, especially in the *Divina Commedia*. This reflection attempts to deal with historical and cultural contexts extremely different from those informing Dante's own texts. I am going to use some aspects inspired by discussions around the concept of performance in order to highlight problems of the reception of medieval literature and culture in the ninetheenth and twentieth century.

The ways in which the *Divina Commedia* is read and some of its motives, structures and stylistic qualities are selectively used and developed in other literary texts, are related to the ways in which performance is displayed in Dante's text. The *Divina Commedia* is an attempt to depict a specific historical world with literary means; in other words, it can be seen as an experiment in creating, by poetic means, a vision of the world that presents itself as true.[1] It is this complex mimetic claim which modern writers try to reflect or even to integrate into their texts, and it is this 'active, world-making use of language'[2] which allows us to view Dante's *Commedia* in terms of performance. On the other hand, the historical difference, the profound otherness of how Dante's text designs a view of reality, is a challenge to modern authors whose writing is determined also by doubts about the possibility to offer a literary mimesis of reality which is comparable to Dante's representation of the world as

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1   For this argument, I refer specifically to Teodolinda Barolini, *The Undivine 'Comedy'. Detheologizing Dante*, Princeton 1992.

2   Jonathan Culler, 'Philosophy and Literature: The Fortunes of the Performative', in *Poetics Today* 21/3 (Fall 2000), pp. 503–519, here p. 507. Cf. also Jonathan Culler, *Literary theory*, Oxford 1997, pp. 97 f.

hereafter. Thus, Dante inspires modern authors to draft other ways of textualizing performance. This paper is going to demonstrate this through a close examination of three literary examples belonging to the history of the German reception of Dante: Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's novella *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs* (1883), Rudolf Borchardt's writings on translating Dante into German—*Dante und deutscher Dante* (1908) and, most importantly, *Epilegomena zu Dante* (1923)—, and Peter Weiss's drama *Die Ermittlung* (1965), which is the 'Paradiso' part of a projected dramatic trilogy called *Divina Commedia*.

In spite of the frequent use of Dante in literary and in semi-literary texts, distance remains a common feature in the history of his reception: representations of Dante from 1800 onwards are dominated by a notion of alterity[3] or perhaps by what Harold Bloom called his 'strangeness'.[4] There is a gap between the late medieval author Dante and his modern readers. Dante, in writing a text, designs a highly particular view of the world according to his knowledge about it—which is informed by medieval theology and anthropology and also by popular and vernacular depictions of the afterlife.[5] Even if modern readers are generally aware of the fundamental differences between their cultural and epistemological background and that of Dante, their approach tends to be restricted to those features which they can somehow harmonize with their own cognitive parameters or at least, by interpretative manipulations, adjust to their previous knowledge.

The reception of Dante in German Literature began in the middle of the eighteenth century, and from that time onwards it has mostly been characterised by interpretative reductions[6]—or, to put it in positive terms, by productive misreading.[7] The reception of Dante's works usually remained restricted to a few motifs and thematic centres of the *Vita Nuova* and the *Divina Commedia*. In the *Divina Commedia*, these are the episodes of Paolo and Francesca, Ulysses, and Ugolino in *Inferno* 5, 26 and 33, while in the *Vita Nuova* it is the very personal constellation of Dante and Beatrice. Even at this stage, the reading of Dante was dominated by biographical material: for German authors and readers, Dante the poet is much more

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3   See Dieter Lamping, '"Was hätte sein können". Rudolf Borchardts "deutscher Dante"', in
     Ästhetische Transgressionen. Festschrift für Ulrich Ernst zum 60. Geburtstag, ed. by Michael
     Scheffel, Silke Grothues, Ruth Sassenhausen, Trier 2006, pp. 155–169, here pp. 155 f.
4   See Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon. The Books and School of the Ages*, New York 1994.
5   See Manuele Gragnolati, *Experiencing the afterlife. Soul and Body in Dante and Medieval Culture*,
     Notre Dame 2005.
6   See Eva Hölter, '*Der Dichter der Hölle und des Exils*'. *Historische und systematische Profile der
     deutschen Dante-Rezeption*, Würzburg 2002.
7   The term is used especially by Harold Bloom; see *The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry*,
     New York 1973; and *A Map of Misreading: With a New Preface*, 2nd ed., Oxford 2003.

important than his texts. Dante's works, like those of Petrarch, were read mainly in terms of biography. The theoreticians of early German Romanticism added another way of reading Dante. August Wilhelm Schlegel, his brother Friedrich, and Friedrich Schelling regarded Dante as the creator of a poem embracing the totality of the world.[8] They were convinced that Dante's *Commedia* was the first example of 'progressive Universalpoesie'—their project of a literature that should encompass firstly all literary genres and at last all parts of human life and thus realize a synthesis between the most heterogeneous disciplines, systems of knowledge and of thinking. In attributing to Dante a specific competence for universal wholeness, the Romantics provided a forceful example how his work can be adjusted to one's own very particular intentions—in this case, to the need to find a literary example for a philosophical theory.[9]

During the nineteenth century Dante became established in German culture, though mainly by means of philological approaches. Literary attempts to rewrite Dante or aspects of Dante's works remained restricted to a small number of motifs and themes from the *Vita Nuova* and the *Divina Commedia*.[10] As before, the reading of Dante was often dominated by biographical material, so that Dante the poet tended to be more important than his texts. Arguably, this particular form of biographical reception is based on the two aspects of Dante's self-representation in the *Divina Commedia*, where he figures simultaneously as narrator and as character; the latter is often referred to as Dante-as-pilgrim. The author Dante inscribes himself in his epic text in two ways: on the one hand, he appears as the narrator who is telling the whole story of his pilgrimage through hell, purgatory, and heaven and thus as a textual image of the empirical Dante. On the other hand, there is Dante the character who walks through the hereafter and tries to understand what he sees—mainly by means of asking his guides and by describing it.[11] Though naturally Dante-as-narrator and even more Dante-as-character are textual

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8   See August Wilhelm Schlegel, 'Dante—über die göttliche Komödie' (1791), in *Kritische Schriften und Briefe I. Sprache und Poetik*, ed. by Edgar Lohner, Stuttgart 1962, pp. 67–87; Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe. Charakteristiken und Kritiken I (1796–1801)*, ed. by Hans Eichner, München 1967, esp. pp. 206, 297, 327, 347; Friedrich W.J. Schelling, 'Über Dante in philosophischer Beziehung' (1803), in *Schellings Werke 3. Schriften zur Identitätsphilosophie 1801–1806*, ed. by Manfred Schröter, München 1927, pp. 572–583.

9   See Peter Kuon, 'Die kreative Rezeption der *Divina Commedia* in Klassik und Romantik', in '*Italien in Germanien*'. *Deutsche Italien-Rezeption von 1750-1850*, ed. by Frank-Rutger Hausmann, Michael Knoche, Harro Stammerjohann, Tübingen 1996, pp. 300–317, here pp. 304–5.

10   See Hölter, *Dante-Rezeption*.

11   See Ulrich Prill, *Dante*, Stuttgart, Weimar 1999, pp. 142–153.

constructions, this duality of roles is what makes the use of Dante in literature and arts attractive: reception very often works with reference to Dante as a character, mixing biographical features with aspects drawn from the text of the *Commedia*.[12] The motif of Dante's exile is very often used in this sense. In twentieth century literature, the most important new feature is Dante's function as a literary set of images and motifs that can be adapted in order to represent the Holocaust.[13] Obviously, this aspect is not limited to German literature; one of the most important examples for this use of Dante's *Divina Commedia* is Primo Levi's *Se questo è un uomo*.[14] The *Divina Commedia* becomes one of the most significant points of reference for such literary attempts at approaching the Holocaust by means of language.[15] Dante's attempt to put into words the tortures of hell are seen as somehow comparable to the challenge of expressing details of the acts of murder committed in the concentration camps. The core of the analogy is that Dante's text is seen as the most authoritative literary attempt at describing the indescribable, at representing what cannot be represented in the medium of language because the hereafter is an experience beyond words. Thus, even in this case, it is the question of how to find an appropriate language for the inexpressible which makes Dante's *Commedia* an important starting point for reflexions on the aesthetical representation the Holocaust. Once again, the textual enactment of verbal performance is at the centre of the problem.

It will be suggested that performance can be one key to understand how some of those modern approaches to Dante work. The way Dante represents his world in his epic poem is essentially performative in at least two respects: not only does the narrator Dante tell the story of his pilgrimage through the afterlife; in talking and discussing the single stages and episodes with his guides, the afterlife is literally given presence[16] This process of naming and describing the afterlife has been highlighted by some poets commenting on Dante in the twentieth century, especially Osip Mandelstam and Durs Grünbein.[17] For them, Dante-as-pilgrim's never-tiring willingness to ask his guides about almost every phenomenon

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12 Hölter, *Dante-Rezeption*, pp. 117–184.

13 Cf. Peter Kuon, *Lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore. Die produktive Rezeption der 'Divina Commedia' in der Erzählliteratur der Moderne*, Frankfurt a. M. 1993.

14 Kuon, *Lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore*, pp. 111–125.

15 Hölter, *Dante-Rezeption*, pp. 99–108.

16 The concept of verbal performance leading to effects of presence has been emphasized by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence. What meaning cannot convey*, Stanford 2004.

17 See Osip Mandelstam, 'Conversation about Dante', in *The Poets' Dante: Twentieth Century Responses*, ed. by Peter S. Hawkins, Rachel Jacoff, New York 2001, pp. 40-93; Durs Grünbein, 'Galilei vermißt Dantes Hölle und bleibt an den Maßen hängen', in *Galilei vermißt Dantes Hölle*, Frankfurt a. M. 1996, pp. 89–104.

they encounter indicates a sort of epistemological curiosity.[18] On the part of the narrator, this curiosity is met by a fascinating capacity to describe and reformulate even the slightest part of the infernal reality. Thus, the narrative reflection on how reality is created by means of uttering words lies at the very heart of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. In the *Divina Commedia*, the narrator Dante enacts textual performance in telling the story of how he explores the afterlife—we could call this performance to the first degree—, and simultaneously in representing within the text Dante-as-pilgrim listening and talking to his guides. Thus, the issue of performance is transposed into the framework of Dante's story. On the thematic level of narration, the dialogues between Dante and his guides illustrate the aesthetic problem of how to talk about the hereafter. They outline a performative situation in which the continual attempts to verbalise a world beyond the limits of human experience is translated into dramatic dialogue. For this reason, important parts of the action are depicted in the form of dialogues and speeches—a kind of second degree performance which can be seen as a metapoetic reflection on the aesthetic conditions of the *Divina Commedia*.

These very basic notions of performance as a dialogic structure at the heart of Dante's *Commedia* would already be sufficient to shed light on the reflections on Dante by the three authors whom I am going to discuss here. Dante's text has a performative quality which is most visible in the double textual presence of Dante as narrator and as character. Thus, the fictional framework offers a basic structure of how statements about reality can be made. Dante's journey through the hereafter offers a reflection on the conditions and consequences of how verbal statements can create and determine a particular view of the world.

On the basis of Erich Auerbach's famous notion that Dante, in representing the afterlife, created an essentially realistic vision of his own historical present,[19] it is possible to identify a third degree of performance within Dante's text. In the *Divine Comedy* Dante not only performs the 'I' of an author in his two textual configurations as narrator and pilgrim. He also creates a textual world. First of all, this textual world is based on all sorts of religious and theological conventions. But in a way this, too, is a mimesis of Dante's historical world. There are references to historical characters and events, and by means of Dante's particular way of representing their earthly nature as wholly present under the

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18   Cf. Karlheinz Stierle, *Das große Meer des Sinns. Hermeneutische Erkundungen in Dantes 'Commedia'*, München 2007, pp. 120–177.

19   See Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis. Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur*, Tübingen, Basel 1994, pp. 167–194; see also by Auerbach, *Neue Dantestudien*, Istanbul 1944 and *Dante als Dichter der irdischen Welt*, Berlin, Leipzig 1929.

circumstances of the hereafter,[20] the *Divina Commedia* is evoking an image of Dante's world around 1300. Thus, the author Dante uses the literary mode of telling something—he employs constative speech acts (or, in the later terminology, locutionary speech acts).[21] On the other hand, by transposing reality into the hereafter, Dante sketches a new design of the world he knows, and thus he *creates* an order: he shows a specific context of situations, thoughts, and images which are essential in order to allow the elements of reality about which he tells his story to function. In other words, Dante *performs* the world he represents, he designs it in speaking about it. Using Austin's terminology, one could say that Dante's speech acts have an illocutionary force at least inasmuch as he intends to refer to his 'earthly' and historical reality. In his verbal performance of the framework of the hereafter, Dante attempts a mimetic refiguration of his present world.

Using the concept of performance in this way can help in describing the mimetic aspect of literature.[22] Literary texts consist of elements which simply tell something, such as characters acting in time and space, but they also contain aspects in which language is used to create thoughts and images. In this way, literary language can shape a design of the world—or rather, of particular views of the world. This process of creating something new out of the known reality by means of language can be seen as performance, a process which Iser sums up by stating that Mimesis is not possible without performance.[23]

Iser also highlights that this process of performance is bilateral, in that it not only refers to the part of the writer, or to the process of textual production, but also to the reader. It is the reader who, in the act of reading, produces an effect from the dead score of the text—ideally a new way of seeing reality or parts of it.

In a way, the process of writing by re-using older texts is a continuation of bringing texts to life by reading them. Authors tend to use older literary texts within their own writing, and in doing so, they are usually selective in their preferences, though there is certainly a quality of

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20   Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 191.

21   John L. Austin, *How to do things with Words*, ed. by J. O Urmeson and Marina Shia, 2nd edn, Oxford 1975.

22   Here I refer to Jonathan Culler's notions on the performative cited above; cf. Culler, 'Philosophy and Literature', p. 507; for the use of the concept 'performance' in literary theory see also *Performanz. Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed by Uwe Wirth, Frankfurt a. M. 2002, pp. 25–34 and William Egginton, 'Performance and Presence', *Journal of Literary Theory* 1/1 (2007), pp. 3–18.

23   See Wolfgang Iser, 'Mimesis und Performanz', in *Performanz*, ed. Wirth, pp. 243–261; see also Uwe Wirth, 'Der Performanzbegriff im Spannungsfeld von Illokution, Iteration und Indexikalität', in *Performanz*, pp. 9–60, esp. pp. 28 f.

the original text that is important. Dante's modern readers were highly selective since the historical distance between readers in the nineteenth or twentieth century just seems too great to make the complexity of Dante's text wholly accessible.

The three cases of reception mentioned above have one thing in common: all three authors focus on the way the *Divine Comedy* is told and attempt to translate some basic notions into their own poetic language. The particular 'high' tone of Dante's poetry seems have struck all of them, and thus it is the voice speaking in the *Divine Comedy* which, in very different ways, they attempt to imitate, to reproduce, or to adjust to their own aesthetics. Meyer in his realistic and historicist nineteenth century novella does this by introducing the author Dante as a character in the frame-story, where he starts to tell his own novella as a performing poet. On the basis of his translation of Dante, Borchardt formulates a theory of translation based on linguistic history and develops an artificial medieval German that is intended to correspond to Dante's Italian. Finally, Peter Weiss sees in Dante's language a design of a world in the hereafter that can be a starting point for the literary representation of the Holocaust in a counterfactual post-war version.

In these three cases at least, the reception of Dante is not possible without the re-interpretation and revitalisation of the performative structures in Dante's texts. It appears that the reception of Dante in modern literature is bound to the effect created by the historically determined performance in Dante's texts. Attempts to modernize or to actualize Dante's works therefore tend to imply reflections on, or even revisions of, their performative structures.

In this way, I think, it can be argued that the reception of Dante is connected to the performative framework set by his texts. In a way, it is easier for modern readers to realize those performative structures. Thus, Dante-as-narrator is more accessible to modern readers than the historical contexts required for the understanding of the philosophical and historical contents of the *Commedia*. This is one reason why the reflexion on Dante's 'narrative voice' is so central to the productive readings and re-readings of the *Divina Commedia*.

2

In the framework story of Meyer's novella *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*, Dante appears as a historical character and tells the novella of the monk's wedding to the members of the court of Cangrande di Verona, where he

lives in exile.[24] Dante improvises the story. He knows the plot, but in the process of telling it he uses appearances and qualities of persons belonging to his courtly audience, thus creating analogies between the reality of the court and the story. Again and again, these analogies are described objectively by the narrator of the framework story, leaving it to the reader to reflect on the possible intentions of Dante and on the implications for the novella of the monk. Meyer creates a historically modified version of a fundamental constellation. Dante functions as the narrator of a novella in front of a courtly audience. With the character of Dante as story-teller, the novella reflects on the problems and implications of a situation which is essentially performative. Dante is mainly shown as a performing poet, putting elements of his actual reality into a story and using it in order to comment on and to understand his own reality.[25]

There are three aspects in Meyer's novella which indicate that performance is an important pattern used to illustrate the historical distance between the late nineteenth-century author Meyer and Dante. Firstly, Meyer presents Dante as distant even to his contemporaries; secondly, Dante is connecting different aspects of his own empirical reality in order to tell his story; and thirdly, Dante is telling a novella, which means that in making him use a narrative genre which is highly popular in German realism, again the author is brought closer to his modern readers.

Firstly, Dante is a character in the framework story, and at the same time, the narrator of a story which is told within the story. The way in which Meyer pictures Dante as a character emphasizes his strangeness with regard to the court. Before Dante arrives, the circle around Cangrande is described as 'sinnlich[ ] und mutwillig[ ]' (7; 'senuous and impulsive'); when he is entering, the situation changes: Dante is portrayed as 'ein gravitätischer Mann, dessen große Züge und lange Gewänder aus einer anderen Welt zu sein schienen' (7; 'a man of gravitas, whose large features and long robes appeared to come from another world'). He appears 'as if he came from another world', and this has a double significance: not only does the formula imply that Dante is the poet of the 'Inferno' who is intent on completing his life's work, the *Commedia*, allowing himself the distraction near the central fireside in Cangrande's

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24 The text is quoted according to Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, *Sämtliche Werke, Novellen II*, ed. by Alfred Zäch, Bern 1961, pp. 5–98.

25 Cf. Wolfgang Lukas, 'Conrad Ferdinand Meyers historische Novellen', in *Realismus. Epoche, Autoren, Werke*, ed. by Christian Begemann, Darmstadt 2007, pp. 139–155, esp. pp. 151 ff.; Andrea Jäger, *Die historischen Erzählungen von Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. Zur poetischen Auflösung des historischen Sinns im 19. Jahrhundert.* Tübingen, Basel 1998, pp. 263–279; John Osborne, *Vom Nutzen der Geschichte. Studien zum Werk Conrad Ferdinand Meyers*, Paderborn 1994, pp. 91–95.

castle only because of the coldness of his own room. More importantly, the physical evocation of Dante in Meyer's novella is an image for the historical distance between the medieval author Dante and his modern readers. As Eva Hölter has shown, Mayer evokes the canonical iconography attributed to Dante: he is lonely and sublime, strange and proud, and he is a sad poet in exile.[26] This becomes even more evident at the second description of Dante's physical appearance: he is referred to as a long shadow that resembles one of the three Fates: 'Das Schattenbild Dantes glich einem Riesenweibe mit langgebogener Nase und hangender Lippe, einer Parze oder dergleichen.' (8; 'Dante's shadow resembled a giantess with hook nose and drooping lip, as if she were one of the Fates or some such'). In this imagery, the character Dante embodies a past that seems so remote that it can best be approached by means of mythological allusions—not by historicist reconstruction. Dante in Meyer's novella is even more distant than the historical poet. He carries with him the historical strangeness accumulated in six centuries.

On the other hand, just by presenting Dante in historical surroundings and by referring to well-known biographical facts, the temporal distance is relativised. As soon as Dante enters the courtly society he is also depicted as an individual governed by moods and preferences. Dante is 'unsociable' (8). This quality can be attributed to his iconic part of an outsider to his contemporaries and even more to posterity, but in the text, it is connected to the fact that he considers the court jester a highly disagreeable person—and perhaps, too, that he dislikes the duke's 'Zweiweiberei' (8; 'bigamy'); since Cangrande appears publicly in the company of his wife as well as his lover. Thus, in attributing to Dante traits that apply to ordinary characters as well, Meyer attempts to bridge the historical distance while at the same time emphasizing it in the physiognomic description. Dante is presented, as it were, in an ambivalent way. The distance is stressed, but at the same time reduced.

Secondly, Meyer offers a narrative reflection on how the character Dante uses elements of his reality in order to create literature. Once he is integrated into the historical and realistic context of the scene at Cangrande's court, Dante is presented as a character telling a story. Thus, the text alludes to questions of literary creativity. Which means of creating a fictional world is Dante using? How does the world of his story relate to Dante's biographical reality evoked in the novella? Again, Meyer plays with the ambivalence of presenting Dante as a present human being and simultaneously as an almost inaccessible myth. The courtiers around Cangrande are telling each other stories, and Dante is asked to join them.

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26   Hölter, *Dante-Rezeption*, p. 171.

They are aware that for Dante, this will mean leaving the sublime world of his epic poem where he is competing with Homer and Virgil: "'Verschmähe es nicht, du Homer und Virgil Italiens", bat er, "dich in unser harmloses Spiel zu mischen. Laß dich zu uns herab und erzähle, Meister, statt zu singen.'" (8; 'Don't, o Italian Homer and Virgil, spurn our harmless game. Descend to our level and tell a story, o master, instead of singing.') Telling instead of singing—that is the formula used to focus on the process of separating Dante temporarily from his vocation as one of the greatest poets of literary history. The courtly company in this context represents a posterity which is trying to approach Dante biographically and, in doing so, creates a Dante who can be seen as subjective.

According to the rules, Dante will have to tell a story on a given subject. In this case, it is 'Plötzlicher Berufswechsel […] mit gutem oder schlechtem oder lächerlichem Ausgange.' (8; 'sudden change of profession with good or bad or comic outcome'). The proverb is the first element of the story Dante is going to tell; the second is an epitaph about a monk who was buried with his wife by the tyrant Ezzelin—who appears as 'Azzolino' in the *Divina Commedia* (*Inf.* 12.109). Dante is making up a story that explains the 'sudden change of profession': since his brother has died and no other male heir is left, the monk has to go back to secular life and take over as head of the family. But instead of marrying his brother's wife, he falls in love with Antiope and marries her—which leads to a tragic conclusion in which both the monk and Antiope die.[27]

While the proverb and the epitaph are different versions of a nuclear plot, the elements of Dante's story are taken from his immediate reality—that is, from the courtly society. Names, details of physiognomy, characteristics, accents, even certain interpersonal relations are transferred from the court life to the surface of the story. The listeners are completely aware of Dante's use of their reality within his narrative framework. The two women—Cangrande's wife and his lover, Antiope—even pick up Dante's suggestion to mirror themselves within the story's characters. Dante on his part likes this reaction; he 'lächelte zum ersten und einzigen Mal an diesem Abende, da er die beiden Frauen so heftig auf der Schaukel seines Märchens sich wiegen sah' (64; 'he smiled for the first and only time on that evening when he saw the two women rock themselves so energetically on the swing of his fairy-tale'). Thus, the author Dante is de-mythologized. In order to tell a story, even he has to refer to his everyday reality—in this case to the people present at the court. In this way, Meyer

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27   For an analysis of the monk's story and its complex relations to the framework story cf.
      Wolfgang Lukas, 'Kontingenz vs. "Natürlichkeit". Zu C. F. Meyers *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*',
      in *Conrad Ferdinand Meyer im Kontext. Beiträge des Kilchberger Kolloquiums*, ed. by Rosmarie
      Zeller, Heidelberg 2000, pp. 41–75.

anticipates Auerbach's point that Dante, according to different cultural and literary conventions, in the *Commedia* gave an image of his reality. With his narrative construction of Dante as the narrator of a novella, Meyer shows Dante as an author confronted with some of the basic problems of telling a story that is fictive but refers at the same time to his own reality.[28]

Finally, this attempt to explain Dante's authorship needs to be seen in connection with Meyer's choice of the novella as a genre.. For Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, as is common in German realist literature, the novella was the most popular narrative genre. Authors like Gottfried Keller or Theodor Storm made sophisticated use of the novella and engaged in intense discussions on the aesthetic possibilities of the genre. Mainly due to its publication in literary reviews, the novella was a genre used for a wide range of stories[29] and could be adapted to many different subjects: stories about the present, romantic novellas, and historical novellas, for which Meyer was famous. Using Dante as a character not only in a novella but also within the story highlights once more how Meyer tries to bring the author Dante closer to his own present.

Yet there is a second aspect connected to this set of questions in Meyer's *Hochzeit des Mönchs*. It has to do with the history of the novella as a genre that only emerged shortly after Dante's lifetime. Of course, there had been novellas before Giovanni Boccaccio in Italian Literature, but the rise of the genre is intricately connected to the author of the *Decameron* (written between 1348 and 1353). In terms of genre conventions, the novella differs significantly from Dante's epic *Commedia*. Dante chose the term 'comedy' as a title for his work because, according to medieval genre conventions, the main feature of a comedy was the happy ending. Even though Dante's poem defies the rhetorical categories of the time and instead emphasizes the concept of linguistic variety, Meyer's allusion to medieval genre rules when stating the subject of the novella (8) refers to this canonical version. The novella did not a have a place comparable to that of epic poetry in the hierarchy of genres. Rather, it was loosely defined by the social circumstances of its origins, as a form of sociably telling each other news and stories.[30] The novella became the genre in which new and everyday subjects were told,[31] and historically, therefore,

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28   'Vergangenheit wird [...] nicht nur erzählt, sondern gleichsam reinszeniert. Meyers Texte führen die 'Macht' der Sprache vor, die eine absente Realität zu substituieren vermag' (Lukas, 'Meyers historische Novellen', p. 153).

29   Hugo Aust, *Realismus*, Stuttgart, Weimar 2007, pp. 207 ff.

30   See 'Novelle', in *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, vol. 2, ed. by Harald Fricke, Berlin, New York 2000, pp. 725–731.

31   Wolfgang Rath, *Die Novelle*, Göttingen 2000, pp. 74 f.

the novella is highly suitable for representing Dante as an author who is ultimately not so very far removed from contemporary problems and contexts. Showing Dante as the protagonist as well as the author of a novella is thus a third way of bridging the historical gap between the medieval author and nineteenth century contemporary culture.

Meyer's novella at first seems a *mise en scène* of Dante's historical distance, yet it turns out to be a complex narrative construction employed to deconstruct exactly this distance. At the heart of Meyer's attempt to claim Dante as an almost living author lies the transfer of the performative structure on which the *Commedia* rests into a nineteenth century novella. Once again, Dante the character turns into Dante the narrator—but this time within the framework of historicist realism. By means of a doubly staged performance, Dante's historical strangeness is reflected and even relativised.

<p style="text-align:center">3</p>

The striking point about Rudolf Borchardt's reflexions on translating Dante into German is that it represents an attempt to offer much more than a translation. His aim is 'die durchgeführte Anspielung auf ein ideell denkbares und geschichtlich fehlendes Werk, das Werk, das unser nationales Schicksal uns nicht gegönnt hat' ('the realized allusion to a work which, although imaginable, is not attested historically, a work which our national fate has denied us').[32] Borchardt wants his translation of the *Divina Commedia* to be a creative reconstruction of a German language which while possible, had never been realised historically. In his view, 'die neuhochdeutsche Dichtersprache ist ein Geschöpf des Flachlandes und der sinnenfremden Schreibstube' ('the modern German poetic language is a product of the lowlands and of the arid scriptoria'),[33] and thus it represents a stage in the linguistic history of German which is wholly unsuited to creating an equivalent to Dante's language—an idiom 'im Jugendalter flüssiger Bildung' ('in the youth of fluid education').[34] Since New High German in Borchardt's view was too advanced to be able to cover Dante's language without destroying its freshness and its experimental character, he invents a version of something resembling Middle High German. What he wants to create is a late medieval version of a non-courtly German open to the European influence. This language

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32   Rudolf Borchardt, 'Epilegomena zu Dante II: Divina Commedia', in *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelbänden. Prosa II*, Stuttgart 1959, pp. 472–531, here p. 472.

33   Borchardt, 'Epilegomena zu Dante', p. 514.

34   Borchardt, 'Epilegomena zu Dante', p. 516.

historically had never existed and certainly never formed a tradition—but in Borchardt's view, it could have been the language that corresponded to Dante's Italian. So, it was his aim to transpose Italian into a fictive German, one located somewhere between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. His experiments 'ergaben ein Deutsch, das zwischen 1250 und 1350 im ganzen Oberdeutschland sehr leidlich verstanden worden wäre.' ('resulted in a form of German which would have been reasonably intelligible across Upper Germany between 1250 and 1350').[35]

Borchardt's extensive reflections on his translations are full of details on how to transpose Dante's text into a German translation which was intended to echo the relationship of the original towards spoken Italian. The part of the translator is that of a speaker who is able to revive the original by means of his particular linguistic sensitivity. 'Mein Ohr, mein deutsches, durch so lange Horcharbeit wie zu einem zweiten Gehöre erzogen, erwiderte den dantischen Hall automatisch mit einem deutsch zurückklingenden Echo.' ('My ear, my German ear which by long and arduous listening had been trained to become a second form of hearing, responded automatically to Dante's sound with a German-sounding echo.')[36] In this way, the act of translating is a performative act in which the translator as far as possible adapts his own feeling for the language to the needs of an original speaker. The translator not only searches for the appropriate German translation, he is also an inventor of a counterfactual linguistic tradition adjusting his language to the text according to the needs of the text.

This is not the place to discuss how or if Borchardt's ambitious plan did indeed succeed. Its complex implications have recently been analysed by Dieter Lamping.[37] He emphasizes that Borchardt's project, despite all attempts at historicizing his translation, still remains an individual creation. Referring to Schleiermacher and Adorno, Lamping argues that Borchardt's reconstruction of something which is historically irretrievable will always result in a non-negotiable difference between 'einer—im Nachhinein—"subjektiv gesetzten" poetischen und einer geschichtlich nachweisbaren Nationalsprache' ('a national language which has been subjectively posited in retrospect, and one which is historically attested.')[38] In one way, therefore, Borchardt's plan to translate Dante into a medieval German is a new and innovative attempt to bridge the historical gap between modern and medieval culture, yet in using a fictive language the translator only ends up emphasizing the distance he wanted to reduce.

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35 Borchardt, 'Epilegomena zu Dante', p. 522.
36 Borchardt, 'Epilegomena zu Dante', p. 520.
37 Cf. Lamping, 'Rudolf Borchardts "deutscher Dante"', pp. 163–169.
38 Lamping, 'Rudolf Borchardts "deutscher Dante" ', p. 166.

Most importantly, Borchardt's tendency to focus on the linguistic dimension of the *Commedia* again implies that the performative structure of Dante's text is the point from which any attempt to reduce the historical and cultural differences separating Dante from a twentieth century present needs to start. At first sight, Borchardt's project might seem very different from Meyer's novella. Closer inspection, however, reveals similarities in their reflection on the role which a historically determined variant of performance may play in the process of reception. Borchardt differs from Meyer only in his approach. Instead of placing Dante within a fictional framework in which differences and similarities in his approach to literary mimesis of reality can be juxtaposed, Borchardt identifies the problem of performance in the language used in the *Commedia*. Linguistically, he not only tries to translate Dante into a German cultural context, but also to bridge the historical gap. Paradoxically, this happens by emphasizing the differences of linguistic history. For Borchardt, a fictive historical language is most suited to reconstructing the qualities of Dante's mimetic and world-making language. Thus, the attempt to get closer to the performative structure of the *Commedia* is decisive for Borchardt's project as much as Meyer's.

<div align="center">4</div>

Peter Weiss's drama *Die Ermittlung* is one of the most prominent examples of dealing with the Holocaust in German literature.[39] The drama is based on the legal proceedings about Auschwitz held in the 1960s in West Germany. It engages with Dante's *Commedia* in several respects. Since 1945, the *Divina Commedia*, in particular the *Inferno*, had been seen as a metaphor that could bridge the gap between the horrors of reality and literary treatment of the Holocaust. For Weiss, Dante is important first and foremost from a conceptual point of view.[40] Since 1963/64 he had considered a project in which the *Divina Commedia* was to be translated into a realistic present. The project was intended to consist of three plays, each of which each should reflect one part of the *Commedia*. An interview with the London *Times*, described his plan as follows:

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39 Peter Weiss, *Die Ermittlung. Oratorium in 11 Gesängen*, commented by Marita Meyer, Frankfurt a. M. 2005.

40 For Weiss' reception of Dante cf. Kuon, *Die produktive Rezeption der 'Divina Commedia'*, pp. 336–371. For detailed reconstruction of the writing process of *Die Ermittlung* see Christoph Weiß, *Auschwitz in der geteilten Welt. Peter Weiss und die "Ermittlung" im Kalten Krieg*, Part 1, St. Ingbert 2000, pp. 55–148.

Mr Weiss now is working on a new play, a modern version of *The Divine Commedy*. Inevitably, there are three parts, ironically conceived: the Inferno, where 'sinners live in this world unpunished'; the Purgatorio, 'a very modern world of doubt and mixed values'; the Paradiso, a world of 'disaster, difficulty, and no reward'. The dramatist has been getting material for his Paradiso by attending the current Auschwitz trial, 'a drama in itself'.[41]

Die Ermittlung was supposed to be an ironic counterfact to Dante's *Paradiso*, whereas the *Inferno* drama, whose first draft remained unpublished until 2003, focuses on Dante's fictive return to Florence from exile, commenting on the difficult situation of German exile writers returning to Germany after 1945.[42]

During the last two decades, the '*Divina-Commedia* project' by Weiss has been widely discussed.[43] In 1993, Peter Kuon suggested several stages in Weiss's reception of Dante.[44] The first one comprises the unpublished *Inferno* drama and *Die Ermittlung*, along with two shorter texts—*Vorübung zum dreiteiligen Drama divina commedia* and *Gespräch über Dante*[45]—whereas the second and third stages are characterised by Weiss's plans to draft a kind of world theatre, and by his return towards more traditional techniques of intertextuality employed in his novel *Die Ästhetik des Widerstands*. Analysing more closely the first stage of Weiss's study of Dante, it is possible to identify two attempts at transforming the structures of performance specific to Dante's *Commedia* into a modern version. The first one consists of Weiss's reflections on how to adjust the reality which Dante describes in the *Divina Commedia* to a depiction of his present. Secondly, at a certain point of his project, Weiss's decided to focus on the *Paradiso*—which later became *Die Ermittlung* and thus one of the most important attempts at representing the Shoah in German literature.

Between 1963 and 1965 Weiss was reflecting about how Dante's journey through the hereafter needed to be changed in order to serve as a mirror for the historical and social problems of West Germany in the early 1960s. After 30 years of exile, Weiss returned to Germany in 1964; as early as 1960, the first of his books had appeared in Germany. At first, Dante

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41 'Playwright of Many Interests', *The Times*, 19 August 1964. Quoted from Christoph Weiß, 'Nachwort', in Peter Weiss, *Inferno. Stück und Materialien*, ed. by Christoph Weiß, Frankfurt a. M. 2003, pp. 121–143, here p. 122.

42 Peter Weiss, *Inferno. Stück und Materialien*, Frankfurt a. M. 2003.

43 The most comprehensive study on the entire project has been published only recently; cf. Yannick Müllender, *Peter Weiss' 'Divina-Commedia'-Projekt (1964–1969). "... läßt sich dies noch beschreiben"—Prozesse der Selbstverständigung und der Gesellschaftskritik*, St. Ingbert 2007.

44 Kuon, *Die produktive Rezeption der 'Divina Commedia'*, pp. 336 f.

45 *Vorübung zum dreiteiligen Drama divina commedia*, *Gespräch über Dante* in Peter Weiss, *Rapporte*, Frankfurt a. M. 1968, pp. 125–141 and 142–169.

seemed to him the 'Portalheilige zur abendländischen Kunst' ('gatekeeper saint to Western culture')[46] and therefore more than distant. But in reading the *Commedia* and connecting Dante to the painter Giotto, Weiss developed the idea of a dialogue between both artists. For Weiss, Giotto represented a realist view on the late medieval world in northern Italy, and so he could become a means of connecting Dante's theologically informed portrait of the early fourteenth century to the reality of post-war Germany. It appears that Giotto was to replace Virgil, and it was Weiss's plan to create a productive tension between the different conceptions of art represented by Dante and Giotto: 'Spannung würde entstehn beim Vergleich der Welten die sie in sich trugen, / der Maler und der Schreiber, bei Giotto alles vom Diesseitigen geprägt, / bei Dante vom Glauben an das Übernatürliche.' ('Tension would be created in comparing the two worlds which they embodied, the painter and the poet; Giotto, for whom this world gave shape to everything, whereas for Dante, it was a belief in the supernatural.')[47]

Linking Dante the poet and Giotto the painter, Weiss comments explicitly on the importance which he attributes to an adequate adaptation of Dante's way to enact a verbal performance:

> Ich stelle mir vor, / Dante würde seine Wanderung nicht mit Vergil unternehmen, sondern / mit Giotto, und was ihnen widerfuhr würde lebendig werden / unter der präzisen Bemessung von Worten und den Erfindungen / in den Formen und Farben des Malers. […] Dante und Giotto, / so glaubte ich anfangs, sollten auftreten mit den charakteristischen / Einzelheiten ihrer Lebzeiten, […] doch alles was sie aussprachen, / und was geäußert wurde über sie, sollte sich beziehen auf die Zeit, / in der ich lebte und in der ich wiedererkannte, was Dante und Giotto begegnet war.[48]

> I imagine Dante undertaking his journey not with Dante, but with Giotto; whatever they encountered would come to life in response to the precise measuring of words and the inventions in the shapes and colours of the painter. Initially I believed that Dante and Giotto should enter the stage in period detail, yet everything they said and what was said about them should refer to the period in which I lived, and in which I recognized what Dante and Giotto had encountered.

Only in talking to Giotto, who is able to complement Dante's religious view of reality by a sensual and material aspect, can the most important point in Weiss's project be realised: The topographic frame of Dante's *Divina Commedia* can be used for representing a contemporary reality, but the contents have to be adjusted to it. This adjustment is accomplished by means of changing the performative structure of the original text. Kuon

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46   Weiss, *Gespräch über Dante*, p. 142.

47   Weiss, *Vorübung*, p. 128.

48   Weiss, *Vorübung*, p. 130.

points out that Weiss probably had in mind a drama set in a historical past, but intended to interpret that past in a way that could sharpen the notion of the present.[49] Giotto is the character who can change Dante's performative creation of the next world reality and shift it towards an analysis of West German post-war capitalism and society. In Weiss's view, Dante can be transposed to the present, but the way in which he is talking about and performing the hereafter has to be rearranged.

The aim of transposing Dante's journey to a historical present is what informs Weiss's first attempt to write a drama on Dante, the first draft of *Inferno*. The whole idea of an earthly hell is based on the assumption that a contemporary version of the *Divina Commedia* has to be set within the limits of earthly life and within history. This approach is fused with Weiss's biographical background: after more than two decades in exile, he returned to Germany in the early 1960s and found that those who had driven him out of the country now had somehow come to terms with the new order. Therefore, *Inferno* shows Dante returning to Florence where all the sinners depicted in hell in the *Divina Commedia* still live unpunished. *Inferno* turns the story of Weiss returning to West Berlin in 1964 into a modified scenario of Dante's Florence, and the metonymic reference is created by Vergil who also shows up as Giotto: he comments on the differences between Dante's concept of hell and the reality of Florence.[50] Thus, Weiss's *Inferno* can be read as the first attempt at realising the change in the performative conditions of the *Commedia*.

Weiss's second attempt to rewrite Dante resulted in the play *Die Ermittlung*. Repeatedly, Weiss points out parallels between Dante descriptions of humiliation in the abysses of the Inferno. He imagines Dante in our world, and this has consequences.

> Ich stelle mir Dante in unserer Welt vor, beim Antritt der Höllenwanderung. Könnte er hier den Blick noch heben und die Möglichkeit einer Erlösung sehn? In unserer Hölle liegen doch die Unschuldigen. Sie haben nichts abzubüßen, denen er dort begegnen würde. Was sie erdulden müssen, übertrifft seine Phantasien. Er konnte sich zu einem Richter machen. Zu einem Sprachrohr göttlichen Waltens. […] Doch was sagt er, wenn er zu unseren Verdammten kommt? Kann er da weitergehn, kann er da noch Verse finden, hat er da noch Erklärungen zur Hand?[51]

> I imagine Dante in our world, setting out on the journey through hell. Would he still be able to lift his eyes and see the possibility of redemption? For our hell is populated by the innocent. Those whom he would meet there have nothing to repent. What they are made to suffer surpasses his imagination. He could turn himself into a judge. Into a mouthpiece of the divine. [...] Yet what would he say

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49   Kuon, *Die produktive Rezeption der 'Divina Commedia'*, p. 338.

50   Cf. Christoph Weiß, 'Nachwort', p. 125–128.

51   Weiss, *Gespräch*, p. 146.

> when he reached the condemned of our time? Would he be able to move on, to
> find lines of poetry, to come up with explanations?

Again, Weiss argues that Dante's philosophical background is different
from ours. Confronted with Weiss's contemporary reality, a moral order
in which each sin is translated into a proportionate punishment—the
famous system of the 'contrappasso'— no longer works. The sinners
survive—and Dante or whoever intends to use Dante's voice in order to
verbalise the suffering of the doomed of our time is confronted with
something much more serious:

> Auch in unserer Welt werden Versuche unternommen, die Erniedrigung auszu-
> forschen. Es hieß ja lange, es sei diesen Dingen mit Worten nicht beizukommen.
> Diese Dinge waren ebenso unfassbar, wie es für Dante damals die Abgründe der
> Hölle waren. Und dann kommen wir doch wieder dazu, daß gerade dieses Un-
> faßbare beschrieben werden muß, so genau wie möglich. Es gehört zu unserm
> alltäglichen Leben, so wie die dunkle Vorstellung der Hölle damals zum alltäg-
> lichen Leben gehörte.[52]

> Even in our time, attempts are made to explore humiliation. For a long time it
> was said that words could not capture these things. These things were as
> incomprehensible as the abyss of hell had been for Dante. And then we reach a
> stage in which these incomprehensible things are supposed to be described again,
> as exactly as possible. That is part of our everyday life, just as dark images of hell
> were part of everyday life then.

At this point, there is a remarkable shift in Weiss's reflections. Thinking
about the 'doomed', at first he seems to repeat the arguments first used in
his *Inferno*: those who have sinned today are not being punished, and being
confronted with this injustice can leave someone speechless. But then,
Weiss talks about those who are humiliated and suffer, about the victims
of the Holocaust. Now he compares the problem of how to represent that
which cannot be represented, the incomprehensible suffering of those
who were killed in the concentration camps, to Dante's task of putting
into words the inconceivable topography of hell. His focus is no longer an
attempt to highlight analogies between Dante's historical background and
post-war Germany, but the question of how the inexpressible can be
expressed.

From there, it is only a step to the *Ermittlung*. Attempting to establish
the topography of the *Divina Commedia* in a historical present, Weiss
characterises the *Paradiso* as the space where sinners and victims live
together. In contrast to the *Inferno*, in Weiss's *Paradiso* it is possible to tell
the truth about the culprits, to find the words with which their crimes can
be marked. Biographically, this step is closely connected to Weiss's
attendance of the first of the so-called 'Auschwitz proceedings' which

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52   Weiss, *Gespräch*, p. 146.

took place from December 1963 to August 1965. Initially, Weiss had been sceptical about the possibility of finding an adequate poetic expression for the Holocaust:

> Zur *Endlösung*: […] Wir müssen etwas darüber aussagen. Doch wir können es noch nicht. Wenn wir es versuchen, missglückt es. / Da sind die Sachberichte. / Aber was ist das heute für uns. / Und ist es nötig, etwas darüber zu sagen—lasst es ruhen. / Wir müssen versuchen, etwas darüber zu sagen. / Was war es?[53]

> On the *Final Solution*: [...] We must make say something about it. And yet we can't do that yet. If we attempt it, we fail. There are factual reports. But what do they mean to us today. And is it necessary to say something —let it rest. We need to attempt to say something. What was it?

It was only whilst attending the proceedings that Weiss arrived at the conclusion that Auschwitz was something done by humans to humans, and he began to see ways of describing in words what happened: 'zuerst dachte ich, es ließe sich nicht beschreiben, doch da es Taten sind, von Menschen begangen, an Menschen auf dieser Erde' ('at first I thought it wasn't possible to describe it, but because these were deeds committed by human beings, against human beings on this earth').[54] From that point onwards, Weiss starts planning and writing the *Paradiso*, which later on, after deleting the title, the prologue, and the term 'canto' (which was replaced by the German term 'Gesang'),[55] was to become *Die Ermittlung*.

In *Die Ermittlung,* Weiss focuses on the aesthetic question whether and how the Holocaust can be discussed in language. *Die Ermittlung* is composed as a kind of oratory, in eleven cantos. These cantos are organised topographically from the edges of the *Lager* ('the camp', i.e. the station where the trains arrived) towards the centre, the 'Feueröfen' ('furnaces'). The topographic organisation of the drama combines the structure of Dante's *Inferno* with that of the *Paradiso*, according to Weiss's conviction that in a post-Holocaust world even in heaven there could be no redemption. With this topographic framework, the drama attempts to give a contemporary response to the language of Dante. Another one is the language of the drama. The text is mainly based on protocols of the legal proceedings on Auschwitz. It uses free verse and is organised as a dialogue between the investigating judges, witnesses and the accused. Taking up the legal form of questions and answers between judges and lawyers, accused and witnesses, Weiss transposes the performative structure of the *Paradiso* and of the whole *Commedia*—Dante-as-narrator, asking questions of his guide, exploring and describing the hereafter on his journey—into an austere and effective contemporary language whose

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53   Peter Weiss, *Notizbücher 1960-1971,* vol. 1, Frankfurt a. M. 1982, p. 211.

54   Weiss, *Notizbücher 1960-1971,* p. 226.

55   Weiß, 'Nachwort', p. 142.

central aim it is to name the truth about the murder. This particular way of designing a sober and at the same time poetic language in *Die Ermittlung* is an essential element of Weiss's second attempt to take up Dante's performative language and to shift it towards the post-Holocaust historical reality.

<div align="center">5</div>

Can the concept of performance be a way of explaining how the differences separating Dante's *Divina Commedia* from nineteenth and twentieth century history and culture change literary texts based on a direct intertextual reference? Looking at the three examples examined in this paper, it is evident that focusing on the performative aspects of Dante's text can be of help when analysing some of the modern approaches to this singular medieval author. Meyer's, Borchardt's, and Weiss's readings of Dante's *Divina Commedia* are highly determined by particular interpretations of its performative structure.

Meyer's novella can be read as a narrative reflection on the different degrees of performance in Dante's work. He shows Dante as a character and at the same time as an author who, in order to tell a story, combines elements drawn from his immediate reality with elements taken from his imagination. The result is a historicized image of the author Dante: he is shown less as a poet designing a distant theological world order but as one who is using almost realistic techniques of narrative representation. What is more, Dante in Meyer's novella is a human being who even in performing his story within the story is exposed to moods and subjectivity. Meyer's portrait of Dante manifests an implicit tendency to minimize the historical distance separating Dante from nineteenth century readers inasmuch as Dante's way of representing his eschatological view of the world as true is shown as somehow comparable to telling a novella on a subject that is taken from his social reality. As a result, Dante's representation of the hereafter appears as a kind of realistic representation of his own time—a view which in some ways anticipates Auerbach's interpretation of Dante's figurative art as a historically specific kind of 'realism'.[56] Transferring performance to the thematic level of the narrative is a way to highlight how important it is in the *Divina Commedia*. Moreover, this technique enables Meyer, within the experimental frame of the novella, to reflect on the historical context of Dante's narrative in the

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56 For the problems and possible advantages of a transhistorical amplification of the term 'realism' cf. Fabian Lampart, 'Realismus', in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, ed. by Gert Ueding, Tübingen 1992 ff., vol. 7, Pos–Rhet, 2005, cols. 621–640.

Divina Commedia. Performance becomes a way of bridging the historical distance.

In contrast, Borchardt emphasizes the linguistic aspect of performance in his considerations on how to translate Dante into German. For him Dante's way of telling the *Divina Commedia* is bound to the historical conditions of the language he uses. For a German-speaking reader who wants to understand Dante, it is not enough to translate his text into German. Even in translation, language has to reflect the historical conditions of the author who is performing his view of the world. Borchardt's theory of translation is based on a counterfactual linguistic history and nonetheless suggests a historical view of Dante's works. His problematic strategy to overcome the disproportion of the historically different performative situations is the invention of a fictive medieval German.

Weiss on his part experiments different strategies to adjust the performative structure of the *Divina Commedia* to his present. As long as he emphasizes the idea that a productive reading of Dante should primarily be a way to comment on the post-war economic and social situation of Germany, his strategy aims at actualising Dante's historically distant medieval world view. When it comes to the question to find a performative frame for verbalising and describing what happened in the concentration camps, Weiss uses not only the topographic structure of the *Commedia*, but sees in Dante a kind of precursor, one who—under different historical and cultural circumstances—did try to give words to the inexpressible. Dante shows a way when confronted with the task to describe the Holocaust.

In all of the three cases, the reception of Dante is not possible without the interpretation and revitalisation of the performative structure in Dante's texts. Performance is reflected in two ways: On the one hand, as the general act of telling a narrative, and on the other hand as a textual reflection on all sorts of utterances about reality which is integrated into the text. This happens in the *Divina Commedia* by means of integrating an image of the author as character in the text. Authors who refer to Dante work with one or, in Meyer's and Weiss's cases, even with the two aspects. In a way one could argue that in splitting up narrator and character, Dante is almost mapping the field for later attempts to take up his specific poetics of literary performance. But still, the 'modern' answers to Dante are tied to the alienating effect created by the historically determined performance in Dante's texts. Despite all attempts to emphasize parallels and analogies, Dante's *Commedia* remains a distant text. Attempts to modernize or to actualize Dante's works therefore tend to affect also their performative aspects. Performance as a basic constituent of literary

language can be a useful means to describe the mechanisms employed in rewriting a canonical and historically distant text. And therefore: yes, to some degree, Dante's reception in German Literature *is* a question of performance.

Abbreviations

ATB	Altdeutsche Textbibliothek
BLVS	Bibliothek des literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart
CDS	Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte
DTM	Deutsche Texte des Mittlelaters
EETS	Early English Text Society
EETS os	Early English Text Society, original series
GAG	Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik
MLN	Modern Language Notes
MTU	Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
PL	Patrologia Latina
PSQ	Philologische Studien und Quellen
PROME	The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England
RUB	Reclams Universal-Bibliothek
stw	suhrkamp taschenbuch wissenschaft
ZfdA	Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur
ZfdPh	Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie

Selected Bibliography

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Index