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At the Cutting Edge: Touch Images in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum"[1]

JARKKO TOIKKANEN

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This article is the first entry in a debate on "At the Cutting Edge: Touch Images in Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Pit and the Pendulum'" http://www.connotations.de/debate/touch-images-in-poes-pit-and-the-pendulum). If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de

Abstract

The sense of touch, a less studied aspect of "The Pit and the Pendulum" (1842), is peculiar to how Poe's story is experienced. Along the way, both for the narrator telling his story in retrospect and for the reader responding to his words, there are strange and awful things to be *felt*—some of which go unseen, others appear in full view. The analysis will focus on the imagined touch perceptions the words mediate, and how they are rhetorically presented as literary images. In this use, the term "literary image" refers to how sensory perceptions and abstract ideas take shape in the form of words, with *touch images* as the special object of study. Their functioning is compared to other kinds of sensory images they are joined with in Poe's story.

I hypothesize that some images call for explanation, creating *ekphrastic anticipation* when they lead the narrator or reader on to a course of interpretation, speculating on ideas and searching for meaning. Some images are only felt, with no particular meaning attached, functioning as *hypotypotic cues* whose primary effect is to propel the narrative onward, while making the awful milieu tangible. Whereas previous readings have often searched for the meaning of universal themes such as life and death, I focus on *how* reading PP enables the search. What is specifically compelling about Poe's story? How does the interaction between perceptions, words, and ideas constitute a distinctive medial dynamic? Sensory studies and affect theory, as well as rhetoric and Burkean aesthetics, will be used as the theoretical framework, to which my three-tier model of mediality designed for the practical criticism of literary and other media texts adds a layer.

Readings of Poe's 1842 short story "The Pit and the Pendulum" (PP from now on), originally published in *The Gift for 1843* and revised for *Broadway Journal* in 1845, have attempted to find explanations for what the story is really about and what it tells the reader about life and death. Much like with the reading of any literary text, the reader perceives the words, begins to imagine things based on the words, and then the imagined things start to make sense in the form of ideas. Such is the basic structure of the reading process—it starts with a present experience of the story, of the words perceived and the things imagined, and ends with interpreting the ideas produced along the way. There is nothing different about reading PP in that respect. However, Poe's story is special in its engagement with the reader's senses. Whereas previous readings, which I will discuss at the end of the article in counterpoint to my analysis, have often searched for the meaning of universal themes such as life and death, in either a positive or negative light, I focus on *how* reading PP enables the search. What is specifically compelling about how the story's words mediate imagined sensory perceptions—i.e. what one imagines seeing, hearing, and feeling while reading—that excite the abstract ideas by which readers explain the meaning of the story? The interaction between perceptions, words, and ideas in PP constitutes a distinctive medial dynamic for study.

I will argue that the sense of touch, a less studied aspect in previous scholarship, is peculiar to the *intermedial experience* of PP. Along the way, both for the narrator telling his story in retrospect and for the reader responding to his words, there are strange and awful things to be *felt*—some of which go unseen, others appear in full view. The analysis will focus on the imagined touch perceptions the words mediate, and how they are rhetorically presented as literary images. In this use, the term "literary image" refers to how sensory perceptions and abstract ideas take shape in the form of words, with *touch images* as the special object of study. Their functioning is compared to other kinds of sensory images they are joined with in Poe's story. I hypothesize that sometimes the images call for explanation, either by the narrator or the

reader; at other times they are only felt, with no particular meaning attached. Here are prominent examples to be analyzed:

sensory images that call for explanation:

- "seven tall candles" (PP 682): visual image
- "rich musical note" (PP 683): auditory image
- pendulum as "the painted figure of Time" (PP 689): visual image
- "spectral and fiendish portraitures" (PP 695): visual image
- "the coolness of the well" (PP 696): visual and touch image

sensory images with no particular meaning attached:

- "flatness and dampness" (PP 683): touch image
- "my head […] touched nothing" (PP 686-87): touch image
- pendulum as "long, long hours of horror" (PP 691): visual, auditory, olfactory, and touch image
- rats' "sharp fangs in my fingers" (PP 694): touch image
- "a suffocating odor" (PP 696): olfactory and touch image

The analytical experiment that follows does not claim to have empirical access to any reader's individual list of responses, sensory or otherwise, but the point of the exercise is to read closely the literary images in PP that mediate imagined sensory perceptions in the first place, focusing on the sense of touch. The main aim is to disclose the key part of touch images in the intermedial experience of Poe's story as it excites the ideas on which readers base their individual interpretations. Sensory studies and affect theory, as well as rhetoric and Burkean aesthetics, will be used as the theoretical framework, to which my three-tier model of mediality designed for the practical criticism of literary and other media texts adds a layer.

Theory and Method

Sensory studies and affect theory provide useful support for the inquiry. In a recent study on Poe and the senses, Caitlin Duffy claimed that, in his fiction, "Poe relentlessly calls attention to the senses—most prominently to sight and sound" (70).[2] Duffy offers a corpus-based

study with the help of data visualizations to demonstrate how Poe's striving for poetic effect—"a persistent sensorial overload and a variety of perspectives that overwhelm his characters" to bring about an "affect of terror" (70)—can be analyzed within the affective theoretical framework of Teresa Brennan. Duffy notes the similarities between Brennan's theory and Poe's fiction as engaging with how the "atmosphere" of a place can be affectively reinforced by the people and the environment they encounter through their senses: Poe's imaginary characters are said to "infect each other just as much as the gloomy estates and crime scenes seep into their bodies" (72). Here Duffy overlooks the fact that Brennan, in her new materialist tendencies, does not refer to the imagined perceptions of reading literature but stresses the roles of the physical body and space, especially the function of smell in transmitting affects. Something else is needed to account for the non-physical affectivity of imagined sensory perceptions—the haptic ones in PP in particular[3]—, and the affect theoretical views of Lisa Blackman serve the purpose in effect. She has underlined "the body's potential for psychic or psychological attunement" (*Immaterial Bodies*, xxv) and sought to "construct a material-semiotic-affective apparatus that reorients perception toward new ways of seeing, hearing, listening, and feeling" ("Researching Affect", 26-27). In PP, the narrator's body is seized both in the present and past, his sensory perception affected by horrors either recalled or anticipated that the reader is compelled to imagine. Blackman's concept of "*mediated perception*" ("Researching Affect" 38, emphasis in the original) can be applied in the study of Poe's literary images as her concept is not limited to the physical (contra Brennan) but also involves the non-physical affectivity of intermedial experience.

The next theoretical question pertains to rhetoric—how to account for feeling things when the object is only there in imagination, verbalized in the form of a literary image? As in Duffy's reading of Poe, sight and hearing have traditionally been privileged as senses providing objects for contemplation. In Kant's *Anthropology*, for instance, the sense of touch did not enjoy the same advantage because felt objects could not be imagined but instead had to be physically present and "solid"

(Toikkanen, "Feeling the Unseen" 74). However, following Blackman's line of thinking, imagined, or non-physical, touch perceptions can also produce objects of contemplation verbalized as literary images. Analyzing the production of touch images thus belongs in the study of rhetoric, with direct links to PP. In his catalogue of Poe's rhetorical devices, under "Imagery," Brett Zimmerman gives examples of each kind of sensory image in the story—auditory, gustatory, kinesthetic, olfactory, tactile, thermal, and visual. He chooses PP because it is "one of torture" (237), with a protagonist whose senses are alternately "being overwhelmed, resulting in physical torment" and "being deprived, resulting in mental torment" (237), a medial dynamic of the story Zimmerman relates to Burkean aesthetics. In my analysis, sensory images of motion (kinesthetic), physical contact (tactile), and temperature (thermal) will go under the umbrella term of touch images. This is because, in reading a literary text consisting of words, all such images engage the sense of touch by making the reader feel something, rather than see, hear, taste, or smell. Imagined touch perceptions are a defining factor in the intermedial experience of PP since, when there is nothing or very little to see, other senses gain acuity and, in the story's rhetorical design, the touch images the reader is made to imagine become tangible.

Since Burkean aesthetics are indeed relevant to analyzing PP, some of the views in *A Philosophical Enquiry* (1757), should be considered in relation to the three-tier model of mediality explained below. Burke lists the causes that give rise to sublime astonishment, a state in which all the "motions" of the soul are "suspended, with some degree of horror" (Part Two, Section I, 53).[4] Two of his causes are obscurity and privation—the partial or total reduction of sensory perception that may be either real or imaginary. The reduction is real if the event is based on something occurring in nature, whereas it is imagined if affectively caused by an experience of art. PP's protagonist is undergoing torture first-hand, in his reality, whereas readers experience the horror and astonishment in their imagination. In doing so, they are subjected to an imaginary sensory reduction in a Burkean manner that will be analyzed

in terms of its rhetorical design. As sight is taken away, there is experience mediated through the other senses. In PP, the sense of touch is urgently engaged with, through words, to affect the ideas and meanings produced by the story. The three-tier model of mediality addresses each aspect of the reading process as kinds of mediation interacting with one another: 1) senses as media, 2) ways of presenting, including words, as media, and 3) conceptual abstractions, such as ideas, as media ("Feeling the Unseen" 73).[5] The strength of this model is that each element of the interaction is understood to occur simultaneously, materially productive of one another—integrating the study of Poe's sensorium, verbal design, as well as aesthetics, while revealing what is specific about each medial tier and how it may be rhetorically actuated.[6]

In my reading that employs the three-tier model of mediality, some of the touch images the reader is made to imagine occur in the instant, others make one wait. Present imagined touch perceptions (the damp stone of the prison dungeon, heaps of rats pressing on the body) can be rhetorically distinguished from anticipated imagined touch perceptions mediated through the other senses (the pendulum soon to slice through the flesh). In this fashion, the touch images of Poe's story serve a double rhetorical function that is often distinct from the visual and auditory images. As the three-tier analysis will demonstrate, the touch images act, on the one hand, as *hypotypotic cues* enforced on the first tier of senses as media.[7] Their primary effect is to propel the narrative onward (stone, rats), while making the awful milieu tangible—affectively reinforced by smell and taste. On the other hand, sensory images create *ekphrastic anticipation* on the third tier of ideas as media when they lead the reader on to a course of interpretation (the seven candles on the judges' table, the descending pendulum as Time), speculating on ideas and searching for meaning as motivated by the visual and auditory images. At the same time, reading PP on the second tier of words as media is conducive to sublime astonishment as the story generates both anticipation and narrative thrust through a distinctive medial dynamic to produce intermedial experience.[8] On this premise, the list of prominent examples can be supplemented as follows:

Sensory images that call for explanation by creating ekphrastic anticipation:

- "seven tall candles" (PP 682): visual image of a present imagined perception
- "rich musical note" (PP 683): auditory image of a present imagined perception
- pendulum as "the painted figure of Time" (PP 689): visual image of a present imagined perception
- "spectral and fiendish portraitures" (PP 695): visual image of a present imagined perception
- "the coolness of the well" (PP 696): visual and touch image of a present imagined perception

Sensory images that function as hypotypotic cues with no particular meaning attached:

- "flatness and dampness" (PP 683): touch image of a present imagined perception
- "my head […] touched nothing" (PP 686-87): touch image of a present imagined perception
- pendulum as "long, long hours of horror" (PP 691): visual, auditory, olfactory, and touch image of a present (visual, auditory, olfactory) and anticipated (touch) imagined perception
- rats' "sharp fangs in my fingers" (PP 694): touch image of a present imagined perception
- "a suffocating odor" (PP 696): olfactory and touch image of a present imagined perception

The history of usage of the two classical rhetorical devices, hypotyposis and ekphrasis, falls in line with the analytical practice I have traced from Quintilian and Longinus to Kant in which both devices are defined as involving a transition from one sensory medium to another (*Intermedial Experience* 36-42)—traditionally visual images to words but also senses other than sight, including touch. Hypotyposis is different

from ekphrasis in the function of the literary image: "ekphrasis, by definition, enforces multiple layers of meaning while hypotyposis does not—it merely enforces the image" ("Auditory Images" 46; see also "Failing Description" 273). As explained above, the touch images to be analyzed as hypotypotic cues in PP are ones that occur in the instant, spurring on the story without need for interpretation. By contrast, when a touch image excites the reader into ideas, it creates ekphrastic anticipation to search for its meaning. This is the premise of the exercise in terms of the rhetorical devices in effect.

Finally, to complement the analysis, two other rhetorical devices Zimmerman lists under "Enargia" (generic term for sensory description, 194-98) are employed as relevant ways of presenting PP's touch images on three tiers: *chronographia* (description of time, 167-69) and *topothesia* (description of an imaginary place, 321-23). They are relevant because they affect the functioning of the touch images in the story. On the one hand, the focus of chronographia is on whether time in the story appears as narrative thrust for anticipated events, or if it appears as "Time," inviting further speculation about its meaning. On the other hand, the point of topothesia is to study how, in the protagonist's imprisonment, the total absence of light and, by degrees, the slowly growing amount of light affects the description of the space in which he is confined. How does it feel, for instance, to rest one's head on emptiness after taking a tumble in the dark (PP 686-87), and what is it like to feel the heat with demonic figures staring from the closing walls (PP 695)? The spatio-temporal qualities of the touch images, including the titular pit and pendulum, will affectively reinforce the intermedial experience of PP, propelled by the rhetorical design along the way of the story.

Analysis

In the beginning of the story, the topothetic description of the place of sentencing is saturated with auditory images complemented by visual images that revert to the encompassing acoustic space:

> The sentence—the dread sentence of death—was the last of distinct accentuation which reached my ears. After that, the sound of the inquisitorial voices seemed merged in one dreamy indeterminate hum. […] I saw the lips of the black-robed judges. […] I saw that the decrees of what to me was Fate, were still issuing from those lips. I saw them writhe with a deadly locution. I saw them fashion the syllables of my name; and I shuddered because no sound succeeded. (PP 681)

The narrator's sighting of the seven candles on the table briefly enables him to defy horror and disbelief, understanding them as figures that wear "the aspect of charity" and appear as "white slender angels" who might save him (PP 682). The ekphrastic illusion does not last long:

> […] but then, all at once, there came a most deadly nausea over my spirit, and I felt every fibre in my frame thrill as if I had touched the wire of a galvanic battery, while the angel forms became meaningless spectres, with heads of flame, and I saw that from them there would be no help. (PP 682)

The "thrill" that disrupts the narrator reflecting on the candles is a touch image that snaps him back into reality. The visual dream of heavenly salvation is replaced by a hypotypotic cue. It should be noted that, as a figure of speech, there is nothing metaphorical about the shift—the shock of the "galvanic battery" is presented as a simile drawn from technology that is as real as the table, candles, and the impending doom faced by the protagonist. The horror makes him faint, as soon as the interlude of another auditory image ("a rich musical note" [PP 682]) that lures him with the pleasantries of death ("what sweet rest there must be in the grave" [PP 682]) fades.

The chronographic transition from the Inquisition's court to the prison dungeon materializes as a report on the metaphysical. The hope of the afterlife is sustained ("no! even in the grave all is not lost" [PP 682]) as speculation on what lies at the heart of consciousness:

> In the return to life from the swoon there are two stages; first, that of the sense of mental or spiritual; secondly, that of the sense of physical, existence. (PP 682)

The claim is that, in how sensory perception is mediated, behind all recognition of the familiar—both everyday and otherworldly—there must be the work of the unconscious mind, or the soul. The implication is that what one secondarily sees and senses on earth might only be a replica of primary existence somewhere else. However, in making his claim, the narrator refers to "that condition of *seeming* unconsciousness" (PP 683, my emphasis) in which he can vaguely recall being carried down to his dungeon. He never fully took leave of his senses and so cannot grant temporal priority, in terms of "two stages," to any spiritual sense over that of physical existence.[9] The narrator's ekphrastic speculation on "the impressions of what I have termed the first stage" (PP 682) is abruptly halted by the hypotypotic cue of "flatness and dampness" (PP 683) once his final destination is reached. The story moves on:

> Very suddenly there came back to my soul motion and sound—the tumultuous motion of the heart, and, in my ears, the sound of its beating. Then a pause in which all is blank. Then again sound, and motion, and touch—a tingling sensation pervading my frame. Then the mere consciousness of existence, without thought—a condition which lasted long. Then, very suddenly, *thought*, and shuddering terror, and earnest endeavor to comprehend my true state. Then a strong desire to lapse into insensibility. Then a rushing revival of soul and a successful effort to move. (PP 683-84)

Touch images beset the narrator's restoration of his bearings, reinforced by auditory images, as "motion and sound" bring about "a rushing revival of soul." There is the interoceptive perception of the heart that is synaesthetically perceived as sound too, after which the nervous system starts in "a tingling sensation" before there is any kind of conscious thought. A sense of physical existence is primary to the cerebral that encompasses urge and desire. As long as there is no ekphrastic relief to enable third-tier speculation on hypotypotically enforced touch perceptions on the first tier, the affective impact of the intermedial experience nears the paralytic.

How can the reader respond to the narrator's musings? Whereas PP's beginning calls on the reader to experience it *with* the narrator—the Inquisition's court is vividly imaginable and the direness of the protagonist's situation elicits sympathy—the metaphysical digressions may begin to count *against* him. As the reader has no access to the narrator's psychology apart from conjectures based on a reading of the second-tier story's words, ekphrastic descriptions of present sensory perceptions on the third tier (candles as angels, death as a musical note) have the potential to make the reader search for spiritual and metaphysical meanings and forget about the narrator's distress. Then again, since touch images as hypotypotic cues (the body's "thrill," "flatness and dampness") have the effect of presenting an imagined touch perception without this kind of interpretive demand, they are more readily shared without breaking immersion in ekphrastic anticipation of the narrator's next ordeal.

In the next scene, he enters the state of totally reduced visual perception:

> So far, I had not opened my eyes. I felt that I lay upon my back, unbound. I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon something damp and hard. There I suffered it to remain for many minutes, while I strove to imagine where and *what* I could be. I longed, yet dared not to employ my vision. I dreaded the first glance at objects around me. It was not that I feared to look upon things horrible, but that I grew aghast lest here should be *nothing* to see. At length, with a wild desperation at heart, I quickly unclosed my eyes. My worst thoughts, then, were confirmed. The blackness of eternal night encompassed me. I struggled for breath. The intensity of the darkness seemed to oppress and stifle me. The atmosphere was intolerably close. I still lay quietly, and made effort to exercise my reason. (PP 684)

For him, the surrounding blackness is real, while the reader is made to imagine it. Burke says that "[t]o make any thing very terrible, obscurity in general seems to be necessary" (Part Two, Section III, 54) and, in PP, the taking away of sight is indeed a source of horror, a cause for sublime astonishment as sensory privation. Elsewhere in the *Enquiry*, Burke ponders on darkness philosophically (criticizing Locke), cultur-

ally (in the form of crudely racialized examples), and neurophysiologically (on how the eye works), making a host of analogies between the experience of darkness and quotidian occurrences. His key conclusion is that "[c]ustom reconciles us to everything" (Part Four, Section XVIII, 135), a state Poe's narrator also seems to embody as he struggles to regain his powers of reasoning. He reflects on the flow of time and mulls over his whereabouts. The idea of having been entombed alive mortifies him for a moment, and he recalls stories of other people's fates at the hands of the Inquisition—that he can do so is proof of partial reconciliation with his sensory surroundings. He sets out to probe the space:

> My outstretched hands at length encountered some solid obstruction. It was a wall, seemingly of stone masonry—very smooth, slimy, and cold. (PP 685)

The hypotypotic cue of the vividly haptic stone wall ushers in a turn of events, as the narrator feels his way around the prison dungeon, and the reader imagines the sensory perception without needing to search for any further meaning embedded in the touch image. In the absence of sight, the process of measuring spatial dimensions is tortuously slow, made worse by fatigue and inanition, while the topothetic description of the lightless place results in imaginary echolocation. How large can it be? Touch is the dominant sense, proprioceptively reinforced by motion and balance to add to the embodied awareness of space.

The protagonist then trips over and falls on his face:

> In the confusion attending my fall, I did not immediately apprehend a somewhat startling circumstance, which yet, in a few seconds afterward, and while I still lay prostrate, arrested my attention. It was this: my chin rested upon the floor of the prison, but my lips, and the upper portion of my head, although seemingly at a less elevation than the chin, touched nothing. (PP 686-87)

He is literally staring into the titular pit, and although he does not see it, he feels it—as "nothing." The unexpected lack of physical matter serves as another hypotypotic cue that leads the narrator to reflect on

the "most hideous moral horrors" (PP 687) that seem to have been reserved as his fate. He drops a piece of masonry into the pit to sound its depth and, in a sudden flash of light out of nowhere, he sees the outline of the pit: "I saw clearly the doom which had been prepared for me" (PP 687). The sound of the plummeting rock coupled with the sighted realization of his predicament turn into ekphrastic visual and auditory images that represent his assent to the terror of existence:

> By long suffering my nerves had been unstrung, until I trembled at the sound of my own voice, and had become in every respect a fitting subject for the species of torture which awaited me. (PP 687)

The narrator flits in and out of consciousness, aided by drugs (as he says) mixed in the water he has been given, until he starts back into a state of partially restored visual perception:

> By a wild, sulphurous lustre, the origin of which I could not at first determine, I was enabled to see the extent and aspect of the prison. (PP 688)

In the half-light, he is able to see how incorrect his measurements and material approximations in the dark had been. On the walls, he can spot pictures of "hideous and repulsive devices to which the charnel superstition of the monks has given rise" (PP 689), such as skeletons and monsters that, nonetheless, do not appear to have much impact on the narrator as he quite coolly recounts his visual situation.[10] It is only in the next instant when he proceeds to describe his freshly altered haptic experience that the narrative again gains thrust—he is tightly strapped to a wooden frame, prostrate on his back.

Apart from being able to move his left arm slightly, the narrator's body is transfixed,[11] and it is now only through his vision that he can make sense of his surroundings. The touch image of the wooden frame, coupled by the cloth restraint that binds him down, quite literally compels the protagonist to search for other sensory means in escape from his misery. The "pungently seasoned" (PP 689) meat on the floor, for which there is no water to allay his thirst, sparks a gustatory plight that,

in his perception, makes the necessity to flee even more pressing. In imagining the narrator's panic, the reader is affected by the hypotypotic cues in ekphrastic anticipation of any kind of relief. In the ceiling of the dungeon, a "very singular figure" (PP 689) is spotted:

> It was the painted figure of Time as he is commonly represented, save that, in lieu of a scythe, he held what, at a casual glance, I supposed to be the pictured image of a huge pendulum, such as we see on antique clocks. (PP 689)

The ekphrastic description of the visual image metaphorically emphasizes time (or "Time") as a metaphysical entity that, as such, does not result in profound speculation on who or what time is. Once the narrator thinks he sees the "pictured image" of the pendulum move, he is momentarily occupied by the perception "somewhat in fear, but more in wonder" (PP 689) until the fascination wears off. He is distracted by the sound of rats springing forth from the pit, complementing the topothetic scene as a further source of physical and mental discomfort, if not initially much else.

After a while of lying down, the narrator looks back up and notices "it had perceptibly *descended*" (PP 690). In the passage, where a second-tier picture turns into first-tier reality, horror is hypotypotically cued by jointly reinforced visual and auditory perception—by the "crescent of glittering steel" (PP 690) combined with the sound of the pendulum ("the whole *hissed* as it swung through the air" [PP 690]). It is PP's defining instance of its kind, interpretable as a chronographic rhetorical turn that upends and literalizes metaphorical speculation on Time as meaningless in the face of present sensory perception.[12] There are "long, long hours of horror" in which the narrator can but count "the rushing oscillations of the steel" (PP 691). To him, it seems days must have passed in the agitation—with the olfactory image of the personified pendulum's "acrid breath" (PP 691) adding to the multisensory experience—until he is finally exhausted by the thought of impending death.

In coming back to his senses, the protagonist is not as taken aback by the contraption as before, and he begins to hatch plans of escape, even

if the lack of nourishment has made him witless. He wonders if he had the nerve to wait until the blade had severed the first layer of his cloth restraint, allowing him to flee before the apparatus cuts into his flesh:

> I forced myself to ponder upon the sound of the crescent as it should pass across the garment—upon the peculiar thrilling sensation which the friction of cloth produces on the nerves. I pondered upon all this frivolity until my teeth were on edge. (PP 692)

The touch image ("the peculiar thrilling sensation" based on "the friction of cloth") is perceived as sound, too, in a manner similar to the narrator's synaesthetic experience of his heartbeat earlier in the story. The haptic quality that has been implicit in the visual and auditory (and olfactory) image of the pendulum is brought to the fore. The horror of the pendulum is not ultimately rooted in how the device looks, sounds, or smells—it is embedded in the feeling of the descending blade. Whereas most of PP's touch images rely on present touch perceptions, in this extraordinary instance the explicitly non-haptic hypotypotic image of the pendulum provokes an anticipated touch perception mediated through sight, hearing, and smell on the first tier. The intermedial experience of the blade is imagined by both the narrator and reader, as they are suspended in sublime astonishment at grasping the prospect of an ekphrastic touch image that keeps the narrative at its cutting edge:

> Down—steadily down it crept. I took a frenzied pleasure in contrasting its downward with its lateral velocity. […]
>
> Down—certainly, relentlessly down! It vibrated within three inches of my bosom! […]
>
> Down—still unceasingly—still inevitably down! I gasped and struggled at each vibration. I shrunk convulsively at its every sweep. (PP 692)

Anticipation of relief from the horror only manages to sustain the horror, as third-tier speculation on the imagined touch perception cued by the loud and noisome steel blade is what excites it—"steadily," "certainly," "relentlessly," "unceasingly," and "inevitably." In his bid to escape, the narrator despairs at the thought whether his tormentors had

actually considered the chance and prepared for it accordingly. A new idea goes up in his brain as he wonders if he could make the rats gnaw through the restraint. He smears the cloth with the remaining bit of meat, and the rats are indeed attracted as another vividly haptic scene unfolds:

> In their voracity the vermin frequently fastened their sharp fangs in my fingers. […] They pressed—they swarmed upon me in ever accumulating heaps. They writhed upon my throat; their cold lips sought my own; I was half stifled by their thronging pressure; disgust, for which the world had no name, swelled my bosom, and chilled, with a heavy clamminess, my heart. (PP 694)

At the end, the protagonist's attempt is successful, after a couple of swings on the skin. He flees the pendulum and the machine is instantly retracted—the Inquisition is watching, ready to launch their next device. There is a period of relief ("a dreamy and trembling abstraction" [PP 695]) from the horror of touch images, as the narrator distractedly meditates on the topothetic surrounding space. He sees the source of the half-light that suddenly intensifies and fully illuminates the pictures, or "the spectral and fiendish portraitures" (PP 695), on the dungeon walls:

> Demon eyes, of a wild and ghastly vivacity, glared upon me in a thousand directions, where none had been visible before, and gleamed with the lurid lustre of a fire that I could not force my imagination to regard as unreal. (PP 695)

The terrifying aspect of the visual images is reinforced by the first-tier olfactory perception of the "vapor of heated iron" that brings about a "suffocating odor" (PP 696), making it difficult for the narrator to breathe ("I panted! I gasped for breath!" [PP 696]). Rhetorically, the "demon eyes" on the walls recall the figure of Time in the ceiling as an ekphrastic visual image on the third tier that makes way for the hypotypotic cue of the hot stench, an image both haptic and olfactory. As the narrator frantically looks for another means of escape, there is no need to speculate on the meaning of the demons. The heat in the chamber

becomes intolerable and gives rise to a unique imagined touch perception:

> Amid the thought of the fiery destruction that impended, the idea of the coolness of the well came over my soul like balm. I rushed to its deadly brink. (PP 696)

In the intermedial experience of PP, the anticipated relief of "the coolness of the well" remarkably disrupts the pattern of hypotypotic touch images, as it not only imagines the pleasant feeling of the well, but excites third-tier speculation on the idea of coolness. Whereas the steel blade was simply a steel blade, what else might "coolness" mediate except physical temperature—is it heavenly salvation and metaphysical bliss? Reading the touch image in this fashion turns it into a haptic ekphrasis that, in terms of the narrator's philosophy of "two stages" between the spiritual and physical, appears to surpass in significance the visual and auditory ekphrases (candles, musical notes, Time, demons) whose effect was fleeting—chronographically, the well feels like eternity.

However, as the inside of the well is lit by the "glare from the enkindled roof" (PP 696), the narrator sees something down there that is never shared with the reader ("Oh! any horror but this!" [PP 696]). On the spot, the dungeon begins to contract, its walls being drawn close, with the narrator manically calling for any other fate except that of the pit, quoting his own speech in declaration ("'Death,' I said, 'any death but that of the pit!'" [PP 696]). At the end of the story, there is a tension between the haptic ekphrasis of the well conflicted by the hypotypotic cue of an unknown visual perception the reader is forced to imagine—is it hell itself down there?[13] The topothetic scene comes to a sensory boil with the heat and the sights left unsaid and, eventually, the auditory images ("low rumbling or moaning sound" [PP 696] of the collapsing dungeon, as well as the narrator's "one loud, long, and final scream of despair" [PP 697]) that usher in the sonorous finale of improbable rescue as the protagonist falls into the pit.

There is little in PP to take as evidence of the temporal gap between the narrator's time of telling and the time of what is told. In describing the Inquisition in the opening scene, he refers to their lips as "whiter than the sheet upon which I trace these words" (PP 681), which makes it clear the story is being written in retrospect. In this sense, all first-tier perceptions leading on to third-tier speculation on images are mediated through the second-tier medium of writing as a story in words with a medium-specific rhetorical design. The fact raises questions of the credibility or reliability of the narrator as the teller of his own story, and the role of the reader in interpreting the events accurately. Questions have indeed been asked of the historical inaccuracies surrounding the narrator's miraculous rescue by the French Army and the unbelievable timing of General Lasalle's grasp ("An outstretched arm caught my own as I fell" [PP 697]).[14] Is the redemption for real or a dying fantasy—must the narrator stay alive to tell his story? At the point of swooning, for one last time, the touch image of a tactile contact saves the narrator both spiritually and physically. The reader is left to speculate on the hypotypotic cue in an ekphrastic state of astonishment that recalls the Burkean sublime.

* * *

I promised to return to previous readings of PP in counterpoint to my analysis. Through the basic structure of the reading process of any literary text—starting with a present experience of the story, of the words perceived and the things imagined, and ending with interpreting the ideas produced along the way—readers have often searched for the meaning of universal themes such as life and death, in either a positive or negative light. According to Scott Peeples, such interpretations tend to dismiss "the reality status of the narrator's experience because they treat the story symbolically anyway, as a drama of spiritual or artistic redemption" (100-01). Once what happens in the present is substituted with the kinds of religious and metaphysical ideas it might excite, the

story is thought to take on another dimension, one that may be construed positively or negatively. Michael Clifton, Jeanne M. Malloy, and David Ketterer are, for Peeples, among the hopeful readers as they celebrate the narrator's rescue through good fortune or a kind of providence, and Allan Emery strikes a similar note when he understands Poe's story as being about learning to accept and attain "the possibility of transcendence after life" (39) through hardship.[15] Taking a critical stance, Peeples concurs with David H. Hirsch in how positive readings fall out of line with the author's "theory of internal coherence or single effect" by disrupting the story's logic. To keep the negative effect intact, Peeples prefers to read the narrator's redemption as "absurd" (101), as a random turn of events that only happens to make way for the next misfortune in a state of prolonged duress. In a similar way, Jason Haslam has echoed Joan Dayan in describing the finale as "a hyper-extended fiction, an ending that is unbelievable even within the artifice of a gothic tale" by which Poe addresses "the arbitrariness of detention, punishment, and their duration" (Haslam 280), a topical legal issue both then and now. For Haslam, PP is about the terrifying reality of suffering imposed from the outside, a contextual interpretation of the story's overall effect.

In both the positive and negative readings, readers have focused on the search of the meaning—the *what*—of the story. By contrast, I have detailed *how* reading PP enables the search.

From candles and portraitures to sharp steel and "long, long hours of horror" (PP 691), the analysis has shown the effect of the taking away of sight, and the kinds of imagined sensory perceptions mediated in the form of touch and other sensory images. Through close reading the functions of rhetorical devices informed by the three-tier model of mediality, the non-physical affectivity of intermedial experience has been brought to the fore. PP's medial dynamic makes the reader feel things that cue the story and excite ideas in the form of prominent touch images. The horror of Poe's story has to do with feeling what occurs in the instant, at the cutting edge, and what we are made to wait for, punish-

ing both the body and mind. Individual readers of Poe's story take different cues in search for their meanings as they imagine what the words compel them to imagine.

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NOTES

[1]Early work on this article was endorsed by the Finnish Cultural Foundation and the Academy of Finland (project number 285144, "The Literary in Life: Exploring the Boundaries between Literature and the Everyday"). I wish to thank the anonymous reviewers appointed to *Connotations* for their valuable and inspiring commentaries.

[2]Sensory studies in Poe have been a recent trend, often from the viewpoint of media technologies and arts involved in Poe's fiction. Well-received examples include Barbara Cantalupo and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney.

[3]In addition to advancing Poe studies, the article at hand could potentially contribute to haptic media studies, or the "haptic moment" of our contemporary media environment, from an interdisciplinary perspective. See David Parisi, Mark Paterson, and Jason Edward Archer.

[4]On the influence of Burke's ideas, Dennis Pahl finds in Poe "the irruptive power of the sublime lodged inside, or within the framework, of the beautiful" (33) which leads him to question the ideal stability of the aesthetic categories as such. Instead, in Poe, there are "inherent material qualities within poetic writing that produce violent and disruptive emotional effects" (37). The eye turns back to the words on the page from the ideas they might excite the reader into. See also Michael J. Williams. For more on Burke's influence on Poe in the context of "The Pit and the Pendulum," see Kent Ljungquist.

[5]It must be stressed that, in the three-tier model of mediality, the interaction between the different aspects of the reading process is not sequential but simultaneous. All three tiers require each other, and although one must first read the words of a literary text to imagine sensory perceptions, they must first use their eyes to read the words that mediate the imagined sense perceptions and abstract ideas. Of course, ears could also be used to listen to someone speaking the words, and, with media beyond literature, the ways of presenting on the second tier can involve any other sense. However, any work of art or media product must appear in some sensory form to be experienced at all.

[6]Rachel Polonsky, in her view on Poe's aesthetics, says that the author, who never used the term "aesthetic" in his writings, "was more likely to poke fun at than to resort to the unwieldy and vaporous philosophical ideas and terms" (61) doing their rounds in the early nineteenth century. Instead, Poe was concerned with "ef-

fect," for Polonsky "a keyword in Poe's theoretical work as a whole" (69), indicating a practical stance towards working with words and ideas. This stance goes well together with the three-tier model of mediality.

[7]Hypotypotic cues are enforced in the sense that, when encountering a sensory image in reading literature, one cannot help but imagine the sensory perception. For instance, in reading the word "pit," the pit is automatically enforced to be imagined in a sensory form. It must also be noted that the rhetorical device of hypotyposis is preferred in the analysis over alternatives such as *evidentia*, *demonstratio*, or *adumbratio* because hypotyposis stresses the sensory as image as such—not as evidence, demonstration, or adumbration of whatever the image might represent.

[8]As noted, the umbrella term of touch images is here used for perceptions of motion, physical contact, and temperature. It can be a future challenge for the three-tier model of mediality to broaden the first-tier range of sensory capacities to categorize proprioception (movement, balance) and interoception (sense of the internal body) as set apart from the sense of touch. However, in this case, the relations between the five classical senses—sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste—will evidence the rhetorical argument.

[9]Jennifer Ballengee has described the recurrence of the state in Poe's work as reflecting his "fascination with a level of experience that falls into neither consciousness nor unconsciousness." According to Ballengee, Poe's hope in trying to capture such "liminal experience" in writing was to create "something utterly unique" (31) in literature.

[10]Ljungquist looks for moments of calm observation in PP as proof of Poe using Burkean techniques "in dealing with a range of violent and unpleasant experiences." By exposing the narrator to unimaginable torture and then finding literary devices (such as retrospective narration) to defuse "the tension of narrator and reader alike," Poe was able to elevate "the terror of the human soul" (28) to new heights. See also David Halliburton. For a more detailed discussion of the distinction between terror and horror in Poe, see Paul Hurh.

[11]In studying aspects of kinesthesia in PP, Lawrence J. Oliver Jr. has discussed the lack of being able to control motion but, interestingly, with a focus on the inability of the protagonist to stop being pushed into the pit by the contracting walls of the dungeon at the end (74-75). Oliver does not mention his tribulation on the wooden frame.

[12]Ballengee has characterized this rhetorical turn as the instance when the narrator "becomes excruciatingly aware of the passing of each moment." The victim is said to feel "literally the passage of time as a series of horrifying shocks, a repeated and persistent moment in which he encounters his own impending death" (34-35).

[13]To intensify the liminal experience of Poe's tale, Ballengee compares the pit to the "abysmal pit of Revelation" in the Bible. In examining what "can (still) be told" (38) in modern storytelling, she employs the religious angle to what can be said in language about that which resists description.

[14]For Poe's historical sources, see David Lee Clark; and Margaret Alterton.

[15]Emery reads PP as a series of events by which the narrator learns how to prepare for the afterlife, even through the "miraculous and inexplicable surprise" (37) of the positive ending. In the process, Emery argues against the "seemingly contradictory arguments" (30) of J. Gerald Kennedy and Kenneth Silverman, the first of whom is stuck in the negative finality of death whereas the second opts too easily for religious consolation.

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The Authorship of *De Doctrina Christiana*: A Response to David V. Urban[1]

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For further contributions to the debate on "Milton's *De Doctrina Christiana*," see https://www.connotations.de/debate/de-doctrina-christiana-and-milton/. If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de

Abstract

Urban proposes that the doubts about Milton's authorship of *De Doctrina Christiana* make it acceptable to ignore the work when one writes about the theology in Milton's late biblical poems. I reply that: (1) The doubts are being exaggerated. Copious and many-sided evidence supports the attribution to Milton. Stylometry is inconclusive. (2) The work's style and argumentation show clear continuity from *DDC* into his other prose works, both Latin and English, and also some poems. (3) Continuities extend, though in more complex ways, even to the late poems. These ways show Milton's theological thought changing and developing: the relationship depends on topic and interest, as recent research is demonstrating. (4) Thus to forswear the knowledge and use of *De Doctrina* would not be enabling to Milton studies but impoverishing.

In his thoughtful and thorough contribution David Urban suggests that "the debate's conclusion in favor of Miltonic provenance was declared prematurely" (156). He narrates the history of the debate, along with his "own scholarly journey with *DDC* [*De Doctrina Christiana*] and its attendant controversies," to close on "reflections regarding how […] scholars might choose to use or not use *DDC* in their future work" (157).[2] He proposes that "one consequence of the larger debate should be the liberty for scholars to analyze Milton's theological presentations in his poetry *apart* from the specter of *DDC*" (156; italics mine).

I see the provenance of *De Doctrina* differently, because Urban's focus on conclusions—on which scholar concluded what—overshadows the key things, which are the premises and method, evidence and reasoning. I see the liberty of analysis differently too, for although something depends on genre and medium, to ignore *DDC* for Milton's *prose* would be myopic, licence not liberty. And even for his verse, *DDC* helps us understand his developing and changing mind, in new ways, by this evidence. I feel no "specter" about *DDC*. It is not a hindrance but a help, and a challenging resource.

The History of the Debate since 1991

I have few misgivings about Urban's narrative itself, which is thorough and uniquely full. However, its coverage leads to a certain impact of disproportioning. Scholars who uphold the ascription to Milton are differentiated, according to their own purposes, be they to argue for a more radical Milton, or for one who changed his views in the late great poems, or for something else. By contrast, scholars who doubt or deny the ascription, though fewer in number, seem unified by their doubts, which makes doubt more formidable than the evidence warrants. A narration of my own would have allowed difference of purpose or emphasis as simply usual within Milton studies. It would have included difference, and indeed changes of mind and emphasis, among the sceptics; changes and variation in the grounds of doubt. For if Milton did not author *DDC*, who did? Who meets the criteria better? Successive suggestions have not caught on.

My own piece of the debate is seen in *Milton and the Manuscript of DDC* (henceforward *MMsDDC*), summarized and supplemented in *Milton's Scriptural Theology* (ix-xii, 1-3; henceforward *MST*). As the Latinist of the multidisciplinary enquiry launched by Gordon Campbell and Thomas Corns, I first looked for words or names which Milton in other works, like the *Letters of State*, would have abominated as "bad" (unclassical) Latin. This method had helped distinguish Milton's draft presence among the many letters. I found no such thing in *DDC* to disauthenticate it, wholly or partly. What I did notice was a liking for

the word *duntaxat*, that full-blooded version of "only," along with synonyms and parallel stipulative idioms like *non nisi*. Quantity and quality made these a distinctive, personal group. They likewise appear in Milton's known Latin prose. For *DDC*, they show the spirit of the individual mind when aroused. For me, *duntaxat* encapsulates its governing spirit, from the epistle and title-page onwards.[3] I became further convinced when reading the whole manuscript in its original handwritten Latin, transcribing it as part of editing *DDC* for the Oxford Milton. No evidence or reasoning that has since been offered countervails. Only stylometrics could do it—if, I mean, it could show that the Latin is plainly *not* compatible with Miltonic authorship (which I discuss in a moment), but furthermore if only I could understand and use it for myself! This admission epitomizes and complicates the debate. Where many Milton scholars have competence neither in Latin nor in stylometrics, they may prefer to put decision at a layman's distance. The debate drags on because of this distance. We need that rare bird, a Miltonist who knows the ways of Latin and of statistics, impartially. Perhaps the debate in *Connotations* will find out this bird. I persist, nonetheless, in gratitude to Campbell and Corns for the initiative of a multidisciplinary, collective enquiry; and to the concatenation of its findings.

Indeed, the gathered findings have not been controverted; for sceptics have not met them all fully, but harp on the gaps and silences. Since the main findings stand, I turn to them, to restate them and amplify; which, moreover, is a continuing process, particularly within the editorial tradition.

Criteria of Provenance

Successive reports of the enquiry strengthened the case for a Miltonic provenance. Here is a recent summation of the Campbell-Corns findings:

> Our case is based on multiple strands of evidence:

1. The history of the manuscript ties it firmly to a Miltonic provenance.
2. Milton demonstrably has connections with the two principal scribes: Picard's hand appears elsewhere on Miltonic manuscripts; Skinner had access to his *Nachlass* [estate] and extracted other documents from it.
3. The format of the manuscript is consonant with the working practices of a blind author (in fascicules) and a civil servant (wide left margins, still used in the UK civil service).
4. Stylometric analysis is unlikely to provide a definitive verdict in a genre in which authors so heavily appropriate the work of their predecessors; however, our stylometric analysis found no evidence to *exclude* a Miltonic authorship.
5. The Latinity is expert to a level uncommon among Milton's contemporaries but wholly consonant with Milton's accomplishment elsewhere.
6. While there are some minor discrepancies between the theology of *DDC* and *PL* [*Paradise Lost*], they are explicable in terms of genre (Milton not wanting to alienate readers of an epic poem directed to a broad Protestant consensus) and date (work on *DDC* probably being suspended at the Restoration). The editorial tradition has identified numerous points of close similarity where the treatise illuminates the poem. (Campbell and Corns, "Re: Confirming *MMsDDC*")

The summary is stated calmly, almost understated. The opening metaphor of "strands" merits attention. Strands, in weaving, strengthen one another.

Individual strands, too, deserve expansion for present purposes. Thus "firmly" (1) and "demonstrably" (2) deserve more of a fanfare, and "consonant with" (5) might be put more strongly; and so with the final sentence of (6). Points one to three, especially when taken together, might well clinch the matter—given also that analysis of the Latinity (5) and work within the editorial tradition (end of item 6) are regularly adding linguistic similarities which accompany the connectedness of the ideas. To repeat, the six points *together* validate the whole.

I illustrate this before turning to David Urban's second point, about the fit application of *DDC* to Milton's other work (especially but not only the poems).

1. History of the MS: "[Daniel] Skinner had access to [Milton's] Nachlass and extracted other documents from it" (2). Why would Skinner, seeking to publish Milton's dangerous State Letters of undisputed authorship take the additional risk of passing off somebody else's heterodox theology along with those Letters? And prior to that, what other English-based author had published on divorce, in a work relying plentifully on John Selden?

2. Scribes: "Milton demonstrably has connections with the two principal scribes" (2), Jeremie Picard and Skinner. This strand interweaves with the first. Although (or because) the blind Milton's own hand will not be found on the MS, Skinner, whether transcribing or ending it off, adds the name, and does it in one of the hands he uses more generally.

3. Format of the MS: fascicules, and the wide left hand margins especially, are not as widespread as might be thought: these points tighten the weave from points (1) and (2).

4. Stylometrics is a harder matter. Scholars who are as baffled by it as I am must speak with caution, though more so if they do not read *DDC* in its original Latin either. From the two obstacles together may derive the intermittently cautious wording and apparent hesitancy in the language of the debate as Urban has recorded it, and also the occasional outbursts of exasperation. To speak for myself, the imitative, classicizing Latin of humanists, their purist obsession with using words and idioms that Roman practice authorizes, poses special problems of identification. It makes authentication harder. A stately but impersonal impression may result from the prevailing periodicity and hypotaxis, and so too with the flexibility of word-order which inflectedness allows. Thus the reader feels a distinctive mind without seeing how to test it statistically. What with the need for the computer to parse every inflection, and with the persistent hyperbaton which inflected word-forms encourage, these aspects drive me to look elsewhere, to details which do carry personality and so enable identification, albeit corroboratively.

May the current forum, based in Europe, encourage new contributions on these technical matters![4] Meanwhile, I have been convinced of Milton's authorship by attention to the *ipsissima verba,* points (5) and (6), below. (As for the matter of my reliance on *duntaxat* and its kindred of stipulative idioms, I was persuaded by the statistics which came out of stylometric comparison with the Latin of two English congeners, by Ames and Wolleb, the two which *DDC* uses most, alongside Latin prose works on other topics by Milton and Tom May, as reported in Chapter 4 of *MMsDDC*. It may be that *duntaxat* etc. figure significantly in theologies not examined by our consortium. Certainly I hope that subsequent lexicographical work or new dictionaries will enable such examining.)

5. Accomplished Latinity: Whatever the prose of *DDC* may share with other theologians writing in Latin, it shows the continuity with Milton's other Latin prose when at its most impassioned in advocacy (my own preferred criterion). I have probed this in *Milton's Scriptural Theology*, throughout, and most fully in the chapter on its opening *Epistle* (7-17). Furthermore, I have recorded the Epistle aloud, to test its impassioned and partisan individuality.[5] Kinship with Milton's other appeals to fair-minded readers (the trope of *Candido Lectori*) emerges. I return to this in a moment, when adducing the work of John Creaser to show continuity with Milton's prose of controversy as well as accomplishment.

6. Philology: Allusions, Words, Phrases, Mannerisms; parallel passages in *Artis Logicae*. Consider some instances from each category:

(a) *Allusions to favourite pagan authors. DDC* adduces Homer, Euripides, and Ovid, all lifelong favourites of Milton's. The allusions are not slight but substantial in length and weight, expertly argued, with a flair similar to that in Milton's other prose.[6]

(b) *Words.* The water of baptism in *DDC* must be *profluentem*, "flowing forth," not static nor in symbolic droplets (Oxford 732, MS 340). Similarly in the epic at *PL* XII.442, baptism is stressed as originarily in the

"profluent stream." The choice of word is insistent in its context, and *OED* cites other contemporary uses as mainly medical.

(c) *Phrases.* Donald Cullington noted that in the Epistle the verbal doublet *excutere*…*ventilare*, probing and winnowing, turns up again in the *Second Defence* (*MST* 2). Doublets being a habit in the Epistle, might we seek them out generally through Milton's Latin prose? To move, more tellingly, from word and phrase to a whole sentence and proposition: "to God all times are not present," "*tempora omnia praesentia non sunt*," reverses the orthodox idea that "all times are present to God." This appears in *DDC* and in *Artis Logicae* (*MST* 2 item (iv)).

(d) *Mannerisms.* The calm pedagogy of Milton's *Art of Logic*, from which he promised to exclude theological examples, is interrupted whenever he does exemplify from theology. The most startling comes when he explains that things which differ in number differ in essence also, and adds *Evigilent hic theologi*, "here let the theologians awake!" (*MMsDDC* 103). Trinitarians, beware. In thought (the disjunctive arithmetical axiom) this accords with *De Filio*, chapter 6 of *DDC*. Compare the similar injunction to *Politici* in *DDC*.[7] Note, too, how often Milton, prizing his own independence of thought, likes to lump the so-called professionals into a dismissive plural, at points throughout *De Doctrina* and his prose in general. It is a mannerism or habit of thought; arrogant but individualizing; an Abdiel standing out against the conformist herd. Mental acts or turns of phrase alike show us the same *personality* in prose action. He quips on the name of a theological opponent, Placaeus, saying "*ut placet Placaeo*." "As Placaeus pleases": being too easily pleased he lays himself open to anti-Trinitarian squelching (Oxford 196, MS 84; see *MST* 50, 53-54. In *Pro Se Defensio*, where the primary target of obloquy is (erroneously and wilfully!) named as Morus, the name triggers repeated punning on *morus*, "mulberry." In *Prima Defensio* the name "Salmasius" triggers punning on *salmo*, "salmon." Not, alas, an unusual form of so-called wit, but in Milton it seems willed, habitual in controversies; no surprise, then, that it pops in during *DDC* also.

For the present discussion, these scattered quiddities combine to suggest a single mind and its tastes, deploying a Latinity shared across prose genres. No such evidence has been offered for other candidates in the debate on provenance. And when gathered together, do not the quiddities persuade more than separately as to provenance? And further, when added to the main Campbell-Corns evidence, tie those threads still more tightly?

Prose of Controversy, English and Latin Alike

We can move now to Urban's second contention about the suitability of applying *DDC* to Milton's other work (especially but not only the poems). I see no misfit at least between *DDC* and his prose of controversy. I see continuities in its obloquy, 6 (c) above, in argumentation, and in the whole characteristic of "'irritable' writing for victory" (Creaser 175) that John Creaser deplores because it clouds Milton's fundamental insights. Using Creaser's approach, I have charted this trait further in *Milton's Scriptural Theology*, and not only for *De Doctrina* but for *Paradise Lost* (*MST* ch. 10).

Creaser is not mentioned by Urban. That is because Creaser is exploring all of the prose together, English and Latin alike. That wider coverage and its premising implicitly question Urban's. To me, it suggests that when separation is premised one may miss similarity and connection—even, as I shall suggest, in the late biblical poems. Not that continuity or connection entail sameness or exact repetition.

Just before considering those late poems, however, compare the Abdiel tone in *DDC*, the lone voice against the muddled herd, with the tone in some sonnets: "I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs […]" The herd are likened in their voicing to noisy beasts, "a barbarous noise […] / Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs" (Milton, *Complete Poems* 82). Milton himself (honest Joe) speaks only for truth's sake, on a vital issue. Is this this not exactly how the *DDC* Epistle appeals at its

close, for a fair hearing after heaping obloquy on rivals and their tedious long and self-contradictory volumes? If so, Milton in polemical sonnets of the Interregnum sounds like the indignant voice within *DDC*, dated by Campbell and Corns to the same period. Does the continuity of *DDC* with Milton's bilingual prose and these sonnets extend further, to the late biblical poems?

The Late Biblical Poems

Now one might see the continuity in eristic from *DDC* to Milton's prose of controversy to certain of the sonnets, without following it into the late poems, whose theology is of greatest concern. I have myself upheld the valuable distinction made by C. A. Patrides between the "closed" theology of *DDC* and the "open" theology of *Paradise Lost* (*MST* 113, 115). Patrides contrasts theology which closes down or limits interpretation with theology which opens it up to alternatives. If this distinction were simply a difference of author, or at any rate an all-important difference of genre, such that readers could safely ignore the unwelcome rigidities, perhaps as aberrations, Urban's desired "liberty for scholars to analyze Milton's theological presentations in his poetry *apart* from the specter of *DDC*" (156; italics mine) would come as a relief.

To the contrary, although in *MST* I have recently endorsed and exploited Patrides's distinction, to separate for practical scholarship the treatise from the epic strikes me as extremism. An inclusive position holds truer to the evidence, and to the complexities of Milton's mind in action, indeed in development; and also (as regards Urban's practical emphasis) gives us *more* to work with, and in the end clarity more than confusion. Working life becomes more, not less, interesting.

Here are some ways in which *DDC* actively benefits understanding and appreciation of the epic:

- At times, *PL* evinces the *same* mind in action as *DDC* and the prose. The spirit of *duntaxat* prevails in them all when Milton reviles an opposite opinion or rigidly subordinates Father to Son at the expense of the spirit if not also the letter of scripture (See *MST* ch. 9). This is how from Pope to Empson readers have responded, not to *DDC* but to *PL* itself; to the same embedded intransigence.
- The epic is more open than the treatise *without* being always open. Contrariwise, neither is the treatise always closed (the "openness of [Milton's] fundamental insights"; Creaser 175): see Book One, Chapters 4 on predestination and 17–18 on renewal and regeneration.
- Complexities and asymmetries *belong* in Milton's "egotistical sublime," the one-sidedness of his self-belief. In general, too, middle or moderate or mixed positions suit real life, even when extremes sound clearer and do challenge opinion when it seems too settled. But extreme views do also distract and do damage. Vide Aristotle in the *Ethics*. Virtue is both extreme and a *meson*. Urban's position is extreme rather than moderate!
- Current research into the asymmetries should be applauded and heeded, not shelved or ignored…
- … for that is to simplify the complexities of a master spirit, impoverishing debate.

Accepting the findings of the Campbell-Corns enquiry stimulates fresh enquiries, not vitiated as some of Kelley's were by the over-enthusiastic or one-for-one glossing of *PL* from *DDC*. *DDC* helps us share Milton's developing view. One result of Hunter's disauthenticating zeal and the enquiry's considered rebuttal of it is that a new generation can examine the priceless evidence of treatise in its manuscript, without expecting a simple straight-line development. The cancellations and redefinitions show us how Milton thinks and went on thinking. Jeffrey Miller and Jason Kerr have been doing this. By the same impetus, does I.10 develop or only summarize the thinking of the English pamphlets about divorce (for this is one time when *DDC* follows, not precedes,

echt-Milton)? Taken together, these instances prompt me to reflect on further forms of relation between treatise and epic, using for this not changes of thought manifested within the MS but the stark distance between MS and poem in that central personage, Satan. Whereas comparison of the Son in the two works produces complex debate, whether and how far the poem is anti-Trinitarian, comparison of the two Satans shows the treatise simple and expository, almost perfunctory. I find it equally worth asking Why, and How. It tallies with what we know of the poem's gestation.

At all events, the relationship of treatise to poem varies according to topic. This varying needs charting and assembling. It deserves full attention from the community of scholarship, undeflected by lingering doubts of authorship or imputations of motive.

In Conclusion

All in all, one does not absolutely need to know *De Doctrina* to probe the theology of Milton's poems. Its thinking can be invoked unseasonably. Yet despite such provisos, the treatise and its manuscript give us a rich resource. To ignore it is false economy, impoverishing debate. It reveals, uniquely, his mind in action: how it argues, develops, even changes. Let it encourage new research! Warts and all, it belongs in the DNA of *Paradise Lost*.

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NOTES

[1]I must record thanks to David V. Urban himself for the accuracy and fullness of his Response, reviving my sense of indebtedness since 1990 to many of the scholars he names, such as William Hunter and Michael Lieb; to Thomas Corns, Donald Cullington, and Jason A. Kerr for discussing the questions raised; and to Megan Kitching for her help in preparing the MS.

[2]*De Doctrina Christiana* is cited henceforward in the notes as "*DDC*." Reference is by page number with "Oxford" and the manuscript numeration, thus "Oxford 684, MS 311."

[3]/ex sacris duntaxat libris petita/ (Oxford 16, MS 7). One extreme instance comes at Oxford 862, MS 429, in a threefold insistence. Another comes at Oxford 678, MS 308, where /Israelitis potissimum/ can be seen in the MS hardening into /Israelitis duntaxat/. Anecdotally, I heard some sounds of recognition and change of mind from my audience at IMS Grenoble in 2005 when I suggested *duntaxat* as a key to the modality of *DDC*, its tone of voice. It struck a chord. The whole matter is discussed in *MMsDDC*, "The Latin Style," ch. 6, 137-42.

[4]For example, was it mistaken for *MMsDDC* to suggest that the liking for doublets in the Latin of DDC was distinctive (145-47)? Several more suggestions made in that chapter have not received a rebuttal.

[5]To listen to our reading, go to https://arc-humanities.org/blog/2019/10/23/recording-milton/.

[6]See further John K. Hale, "A Study of Milton's Greek."

[7]*Politicis etiam atque etiam legendum* ("to be read again and again by Statesmen"), Oxford 1242, MS 728; see also *MMsDDC* 128 with 103.

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"There's Something Wrong Somewhere": Disenfranchisement and Diegesis in David Goodis's *Down There*

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This article is the first entry in a debate on "'There's Something Wrong Somewhere'": Disenfranchisement and Diegesis in David Goodis's *Down There.*" http://www.connotations.de/debate/david-goodis-down-there/. If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de.

Abstract
Described by critics as a "poet of the losers" who masterfully portrayed the "economic struggles, in a truly Kafkaesque sense, of the underbelly of America during his time," noir novelist David Goodis often used postwar Philadelphia as a microcosm of urban blight and disenfranchisement. At the same time his down-and-outers are typically unable to account for their predicaments. A brother of protagonist Eddie Lynn in *Down There* (1956) voices this bafflement when he says that "there's something wrong somewhere." A strong sense of the American Dream's bankruptcy in the 1950s, coupled with the inability of Goodis's characters to analyze it, lies behind his reliance on the narratological devices of internal dialogue, silent conversations, and indirect discourse to project the solipsistic repercussions of withdrawal from an alienating, ultimately hostile environment. Though defeated in the end, Goodis's inner-city denizens are valorized by an attempt to escape from the prison-house of self and act on behalf of another person. Diegesis is central to this author's exploration of the pervasive sense in *Down There* that "the sum of everything was a circle [...] labeled Zero."

In the expanded edition of a book first published in 1981, Geoffrey O'Brien described David Goodis as a "poet of the losers" who presented "traumatic visions of failed lives" (90).[1] The vague sense that

haunts all the protagonists in Goodis's seventeen novels released between 1946 and 1967, most of which appeared as paperback originals issued by Fawcett Gold Medal and Lion Books, is what a character in *Down There* (1956) voices when he says that "there's something wrong somewhere" (16). Although Turley Lynn hardly knows what he means by that statement, it encapsulates Goodis's awareness that postwar America's cultural trajectory, as reflected by Norman Rockwell covers of *The Saturday Evening Post* during the 1950s and early 1960s, had abandoned a sizeable number of its inner-city citizens. Agreeing with Woody Haut that this writer excels at "conveying urban angst" (21), Richard Godwin asserts that in his noir narratives Goodis ranks as "the master of class depiction and the demotic and economic struggles, in a truly Kafkaesque sense, of the underbelly of America during his time" (1). At the center of this author's attention is the inability of his characters to realize the fabled American Dream given the scope of their disenfranchisement.

Goodis's critique of the postwar period that crippled many of his countrymen's prospects for a better life typically is conveyed through diegesis. This essay will argue, more specifically, that the narratological devices of internal dialogue, silent conversations, and indirect discourse in *Down There* allow Goodis to project the repercussions of withdrawal from an alienating, ultimately hostile world. Solipsism is the price that his down-and-outers pay for their dispossession, but though defeated in the end they are valorized by an attempt to escape from the prison-house of self and act on behalf of another person. Goodis's characters, claims Nathaniel Rich, "are not genuinely cynical. Deep down each possesses a pitiful innocence that, at times, borders on idealism" (39). This trait separates his "losers, victims, drop-outs, and has-beens" from the usual orientation of stereotypical hard-boiled "heroes" who, when faced with a choice between involvement and non-involvement with others, usually opt, like Sam Spade in Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* (1930), for the latter (Schmid, "David Goodis" 157). In another essay the same critic contends that "Goodis's protagonists spectacularly fail to maintain a tough masculine façade because they

are open, vulnerable, and desperate to break out of their isolation and establish a physical and/or emotional connection with another person" ("Different Shade" 156).

Framed at its outset from an omniscient point of view, the first chapter of *Down There* establishes Eddie Lynn as a refugee from a personally traumatic past. Unattached and with "no debts or obligations" (7), he now in his early thirties plays the piano six nights a week at a dive in the Port Richmond section of Philadelphia for a salary of thirty dollars plus tips.[2] While at the keyboard, directing "a dim and faraway smile at nothing in particular" (5), he improvises a "stream of pleasant sound that seemed to be saying, Nothing matters" (6). So reports the third-person narrator, but the text routinely embeds internal dialogue, as when the protagonist's brother is seeking to evade enforcers from an underworld crime syndicate:

> But you can't do that, he told himself. You gotta get up and keep running. [...]
>
> Maybe this is it, he thought. Maybe this is the street you want. No, your luck is running good but not that good, I think you'll hafta do more running before you find that street, before you see that lit-up sign, that drinking joint where Eddie works, that place called Harriet's Hut. (3)

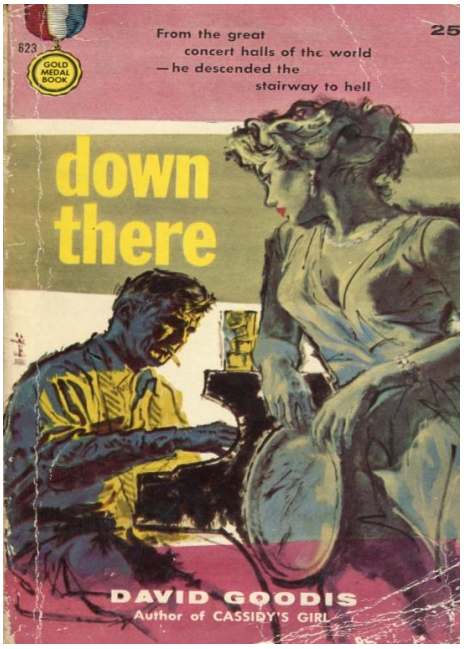
Combined with indirect discourse, the passage alerts readers to the novel's intradiegetic register. When Turley finds his way to Eddie's place of employment, however, and appeals for his brother's help, there ensues a contest of loyalties narratologically framed by an evocation of Eddie's silent counsel to himself. Adamant about not getting involved in his brother's plight—"Don't look, Eddie said to himself. You take one look and that'll do it, that'll pull you into it. You don't want that, you're here to play the piano, period" (20)—he cannot shut himself off completely from Turley's appeal to fraternal solidarity amid their shared isolation in an indifferent urban environment. As Lee Horsley observes (see 168), Eddie is confronting the noir dilemma that the past, in Goodis's words, will not remain confined to "another city" (104) and that "the sum of everything was a circle [...] labeled Zero" (82).

Edward Webster Lynn was not always in retreat from the world, as the middle chapters of *Down There* reveal in a significant shift to extradiegetic discourse. Growing up in a dilapidated farmhouse set deep in the woods of southern New Jersey with a dysfunctional family, Edward became a child prodigy when his father taught him to play the piano. After receiving a scholarship to study at the Curtis Institute of Music, he at age nineteen gave his first concert in Philadelphia, coming to the attention of a respected manager based in New York City. On the day of signing a contract for his début recital, however, he was drafted into the U. S. Army and wounded three times in Burma during World War II. After convalescing, the ex-G.I. returned to New York, supporting himself by giving piano lessons to tenement-dwellers in the West Nineties, and fell in love with Teresa Fernandez. Three months later they were married. Not long thereafter tragedy struck when Teresa's husband, then twenty-five and under contract to a manager named Arthur Woodling, gave four performances at Carnegie Hall, only to discover that Woodling had been sexually blackmailing Teresa. When in shame she leapt to her death from a fourth-story window, Goodis's protagonist lapsed into "a time of no direction," prowling the city's five boroughs as a "wild man" intent on spilling blood wherever he encountered opposition by muggers and cops alike (82). That spree of violence ended when, after a reunion with his family at Thanksgiving, Edward recognized the nullity of their lives, including those of "two old hulks who didn't know they were still in there pitching, the dull-eyed, shrugging mother and the easy-smiling, booze-guzzling father." Adopting his parents' escapist responses to the outside world—"the shrug," "the smile," "that nothing look" (87)—their youngest son, buffered from further human involvement, drifted from place to place before getting a job washing dishes and mopping the floor at Harriet's Hut. One night, meekly asking permission from the bartender to try the establishment's battered piano, Eddie was told, "All right, give it a try. But it better be music." Shifting to the second-person pronoun, Goodis then writes in a pair of short paragraphs: "You lifted your hands. You lowered your

hands[,] and your fingers hit the keys. The sound came out[,] and it was music" (88).

If Eddie Lynn's musical talent enables him to escape into oblivion among the Port Richmond mill workers, who readily accept him as one of their own, it also confers on him an identity that causes him to be misconstrued, leading later to lethal trouble. When early in *Down There*, for example, syndicate thugs attempt to seize his brother in Harriet's Hut, Eddie enables Turley to get out a side door by toppling a stack of beer cases in their path, but his adroit timing brings him to the attention of the bar's bouncer. A former professional wrestler known as the "Harleyville Hugger," 43-year-old Wally Plyne knows a thing or two about what he calls a "tagteam play." Realizing that he has given himself away, Eddie in another interpolation of internal dialogue "said to himself, Something is happening here[,] and you better check it before it goes further" (23). He manages to evade Plyne's further questioning by reassuming the persona he knows the suspicious bouncer perceives him as being—namely, "the thirty-a-week musician," a "nobody whose ambitions and goals aimed at exactly zero" (26). That dismissive estimation changes, however, with the introduction of Lena (no last name given) into the story.

Like Goodis's self-distancing protagonist, the bar's waitress is "strictly solo" and marked by aloofness (13), a trait that puts her at a far remove from what Maysaa Husam Jaber describes as the author's "criminal femmes fatales" in his other fiction (113-28). Lena brandishes a five-inch hatpin to ward off unwanted sexual advances by men, although that precaution has not deterred Harriet's common-law husband, Wally Plyne, from fancying himself her protector. Repulsed by Plyne's interest in her, Lena on the night of Turley's escape, having glimpsed in him a quality belied by the piano player's detachment, takes it upon herself to strike up a friendship. The book's original cover reproduced below hints at her interest in Eddie.



Although both studiously avoid betraying any sign of attraction, reciprocity is clearly at work. That bond strengthens a few days later when both are abducted by Feather and Morris, the syndicate's foot soldiers, who are intent on tracking down Turley Lynn and his older brother Clifton for swindling the crime organization. While their captors are wending through traffic en route to the Delaware River Bridge, Lena engineers their escape before revealing that she has deduced his former identity as concert pianist Edward Webster Lynn. After chronicling Eddie's past in Chapters 8-9, as already discussed, Goodis resumes his narrative in the present by recounting their trek on foot amid a gathering snowstorm back to Harriet's Hut where Lena needs to collect wages she is owed. While supporting each other in traversing the slippery pavements, Eddie again succumbs to one of his self-admonitions conveyed in the form of an internal colloquy:

> You better let go, damn it. Because it's there again, it's happening again. You'll hafta stop it, that's all. You can't let it get you like this. [...]
>
> Say, what's the matter with your arms? Why can't you let go of her? Now look, you'll just hafta stop it.
>
> I think the way to stop it is shrug it off. Or take it with your tongue in your cheek. Sure, that's the system. At any rate it's the system that works for you. It's the automatic control board that keeps you way out there where nothing

> matters, where it's only you and the keyboard and nothing else. Because it's gotta be that way. You gotta stay clear of anything serious. (89-90)

So resolved, Eddie finds his arms falling away from Lena while he adopts once more the "soft-easy smile" of nonchalance and detachment (90), but the seed of emotional involvement has been sown, leading to a chain of circumstances that he can neither foresee nor avoid.

The scenario as Goodis constructs it suggests a Sartrean crisis in which the fatality of choice is bearing down on his protagonist.[3] The process begins when Lena and Eddie are collecting their week's salaries. When Wally feigns ignorance about how Feather and Morris discovered Eddie's address in order to abduct him, Lena fearlessly exposes the bouncer's betrayal. As she continues to taunt Plyne for his duplicity, Lynn tries to convince himself that "nothing matters" and is eager to "sit down at the keyboard, to start making music. That'll do it, he thought, That'll drown out the buzzing" (98). This time, however, Eddie's usual recourse for escape fails him. As Wally closes in on Lena to strike her several times in the face, the mild-mannered piano player intervenes by abandoning his usual stance of non-involvement. When Eddie's initial overtures to "Leave her alone" go unheeded (103), he drops into a fighting stance and parries his opponent's blows while urging him to desist. Humiliated by his punishment in front of the bar's local clientele, Plyne seizes the broken leg of a chair and, swinging it as a cudgel, forces Eddie to retreat. As the distance between them lessens, the smaller man vaults over a counter, grabs a sharp bread knife, and bluffingly forces Wally to flee into the rear alley. Cornered in a back yard, the former wrestler sees Eddie toss the knife aside into a snow drift but, unable to forget his humiliation in the bar, another sign of its clientele's desperate need for a communal identity, lunges forward to hoist the piano player in a suffocating bear hug. About to pass out, Eddie recovers the knife and, intending only to wound Plyne in the arm, kills him when Wally shifts position. A court of law would likely rule the death a case of justifiable self-defense, but Goodis relies once more on internal dialogue to expose Eddie's predicament:

> You say accident. What'll they say? They'll say homicide.
>
> They'll add it up and back it up with their own playback of what happened in the Hut. The way you jugged at him with the knife. The way you went after him when he took off. But hold it there, you know you were bluffing.
>
> Sure, friend. You know. But they don't know. And that's just about the size of it, that bluffing business is the canoe without a paddle. (113)

This debacle, however, is only the prelude to what ensues as the unforeseeable consequences of his intervention on Lena's behalf, reinforcing the existentialist premise of the fatality of choice.

Leonard Cassuto maintains that the undercurrent of "anxious foreboding in Goodis's writing" (102), especially pronounced in his third novel *Nightfall* (1947), signifies what O'Brien terms a "sense of the world as an abyss made for falling into" (94), all the more proximate for those confined by economic forces to America's inner cities after World War II. Such doomed inevitability plays itself out in the final third of *Down There*. After finding an exhausted Eddie in the back alley and sequestering him in the cellar of Harriet's Hut, Lena returns six hours later with a car she commandeers from her landlady. Avoiding the police, they make their way across the Delaware River Bridge to South Jersey, Eddie thinking all the while that "we're seeing a certain pattern taking shape. It's sort of in the form of a circle. Like when you take off and move in a certain direction to get you far away, but somehow you're pulled around on that circle, it takes you back to where you started" (128). Like Albert Camus in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942), Goodis emphasizes the circularity of ontological entrapment. Thus it is that, after Lena drops him off at the Lynns' farmhouse, now a hideout for his brothers who have sent their parents away, Eddie tries to establish some rapport, his thoughts all the while "centered on the waitress" and her safe return to Philadelphia (137). When Lena arrives the next day to tell Eddie that all charges against him have been dropped because she persuaded the Hut's owner and patrons, in a telling example of communal solidarity, to avow that Wally's death was an accident, Feather and Morris also reappear, having followed her to the farmhouse. In the ensuing gun battle Lena is killed, while Clifton and Turley Lynn manage to escape. Taking her body to a neighboring town, Eddie is grilled

for thirty-two hours about the victim's identity: "He repeated what he'd told them previously, that she was a waitress and her first name was Lena and he didn't know her last name" (156). So ends *Down There*, but not before Eddie is seated once more at the piano in Harriet's Hut. Feeling that he has nothing left in him to give, Goodis's protagonist nonetheless takes up his usual position.

> His eyes were closed. A whisper came from somewhere, saying, You can try. The least you can do is try.
>
> Then he heard the sound. It was warm and sweet and it came from a piano. That's fine piano, he thought. Who's playing that?
>
> He opened his eyes. He saw his fingers caressing the keyboard. (158)

No words are wasted in this short and stark novel, attesting to its vernacular inscription, rendered in intradiegetic passages, of life on the outer edges of an upwardly mobile mainstream society in 1950s America. In a biographical profile of the author, James Sallis contends that "David Goodis rewrote essentially the same book again and again, ceremonially encoding his own fall from promising writer [with the publication of *Dark Passage* in 1946] to recluse" (7). Goodis's pulp novels set in Philadelphia, he alleges, constitute a "threnody [...] about losers, outcasts, and derelicts, the unchosen, the discarded" (48). Haut proposes that such identification "indicates a class-based separation between writers who have the status of literary *artists* and those who have been relegated to the status of literary *workers*" (3), but this extrapolation tends to delimit Goodis's significance in mid-twentieth-century literature. However narrow his sociological frameworks, Goodis's fiction recurrently addresses issues that lie at the core of America's experiment in egalitarian democracy.

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NOTES

[1]The idea of personal failure in Goodis's work, however, is conditional. One is reminded of Bob Dylan's famous maxim, "There's no success like failure, / And [...] failure's no success at all," in "Love Minus Zero/No Limit" from his album *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965). My article titled "David Goodis's Noir Fiction: The American Dream's Paralysis" begins with this refrain as an epigraph.

[2]Gertzman provides detailed background on Philadelphia's blighted working-class neighborhoods, including Port Richmond, and their neglect by City Hall politicians during the time when Goodis was writing (see 59-82).

[3]Because Goodis's novels share fully in the existential cast of Sartre's fiction and Georges Simenon's *romans durs*, his reputation in France was greater than in his native country, as attested by the fact that, when his books went out of print in the United States, they were reissued regularly under Gallimard's Serie Noire imprint.

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The Faerie Queene as Satirical Intertext for *The Alchemist*

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If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de

Abstract

Building on Rachel Hile's important study *Spenserian Satire: A Tradition of Indirection*, which largely focuses on Spenser's shorter poems in *The Complaints*, this essay calls attention to the satirical dimension of his longest poem *The Faerie Queene*. Intertextual connections between *The Faerie Queene* and *The Alchemist* reveal how Jonson read Spenser as inspiration for satire, parody, and comedy. In *The Alchemist* Jonson appropriates Spenser's Gloriana, the Faerie Queene; the Wandering Wood in Book I; and Braggadocchio, Mammon, and the Castle of Alma in Book II of *The Faerie Queene* for satirical ends. In his city comedy Jonson borrows these figures and episodes from *The Faerie Queene* to satirize the aristocracy, greed for wealth, hedonism, environmental pollution, social mobility, and the misuse of language. Jonson's extensive annotations in his copy of the 1617 Folio of *The Faerie Queene and Complaints*, which denote how he responded to Spenser around 1617 and afterwards, further illuminate how he imitated him in writing by 1610 when *The Alchemist* was first performed. Like Jonson, Spenser's early readers through to 1660 appropriated *The Faerie Queene* to satirize political leaders and existing religious institutions in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. Reader reception of Spenser's works in the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline eras contributes to his afterlife as biting satirist not only for *Mother Hubberds Tale* in *The Complaints* but also for *The Faerie Queene*.

Building on Rachel Hile's important study *Spenserian Satire: A Tradition of Indirection*, which largely focuses on Spenser's shorter poems in *The Complaints*, this essay calls attention to the satirical dimension of his longest poem *The Faerie Queene*.[1] Intertextual connections between *The Faerie Queene* and *The Alchemist* reveal how Jonson read Spenser as inspiration for satire, parody, and comedy.[2] In *The Alchemist* Jonson appropriates Spenser's Gloriana, the Faerie Queene; the Wandering Wood in Book I; and Braggadocchio, Mammon, and the Castle of Alma in Book II of *The Faerie Queene* for satirical ends. Several critics have noted that, when the prostitute Doll Common in *The Alchemist* disguises herself as the Fairy Queen to dupe the clerk Dapper into believing she is his wealthy aunt, she parodies Spenser's Gloriana.[3] Less widely observed links between *The Faerie Queene* and *The Alchemist* include the fact that Spenser's covetous Mammon in *The Faerie Queene* and Jonson's greedy Sir Epicure Mammon in *The Alchemist* have a similar name. In addition, the windbags Braggadocchio in *The Faerie Queene* and Sir Epicure Mammon in *The Alchemist* are inflated with self-importance and satirize those who seek high-ranking positions or hedonistic pleasures through illicit means.[4] Both Spenser's Mammon episode and Jonson's *The Alchemist* satirize polluting fires, mining, and alchemy. In *The Alchemist* Jonson reconstructs Spenser's Castle of Alma besieged by the figure Maleger, whose name means badly sick or diseased, into Master Lovewit's townhouse in London during an outbreak of the plague. The sickness of Mammonism, which threatens the health of the body politic, is a satirical target in *The Alchemist*.

In his city comedy Jonson appropriates *The Faerie Queene* to satirize aristocrats, delusions of godlike power, greed for wealth, hedonism, environmental pollution, social mobility, and the misuse of language. Jonson uses the dark labyrinth of Error in the Wandering Wood in Book I of *The Faerie Queene* to satirize Puritans and pseudoscientists for their pompous, obfuscating rhetoric and maddening jargon. Jonson's extensive annotations in his copy of the 1617 Folio of *The Faerie Queene and Complaints*, which denote how he responded to the Braggadocchio, Mammon, and the Castle of Alma episodes in Book II around 1617 and

afterwards, further illuminate how he imitated Spenser in writing by 1610 when *The Alchemist* was first performed.[5] Like Jonson, Spenser's early readers through to 1660 appropriated *The Faerie Queene* to satirize political leaders and existing religious institutions in seventeenth-century England. Reader reception of *The Faerie Queene* during the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline eras ultimately reveals how Spenser's longest work was interpreted and appropriated as biting satire.

1. Braggadoccio

Spenser's Braggadocchio in Book II of *The Faerie Queene* satirizes vainglorious social climbers and inspires features of Jonson's satirical figures Sir Epicure Mammon, Surly, Dapper, and Kastril in *The Alchemist*. Spenser's opening description of Braggadocchio in Book II, canto iii of *The Faerie Queene*—an episode that Jonson annotated in great detail in his copy of the 1617 Folio of *The Faerie Queene and Complaints*—provides an intertextual basis for these multiple characters in *The Alchemist*:

> The whyles a losell wandring by the way,
> One that to bountie neuer cast his mynd,
> Ne thought of honour euer did assay
> His baser brest, but in his *kestrell kind*
> A *pleasing vaine of glory* he did fynd,
> To which his flowing toung, and troublous spright
> Gaue him great ayd, and made him more inclynd:
> He that braue steed there finding ready dight,
> Purloynd both steed and speare, and ran away full light.
>
> Now gan his hart all swell in iollity,
> And of him selfe great hope and help conceiu'd
> That *puffed vp with smoke of vanity,* [...]
> (II.iii.4, 5.1-3; my emphases)

In the 1617 Folio of *The Faerie Queene* Jonson wrote in the margins of this first stanza introducing Braggadocchio: "<Descr.> of a base and <vai>ne glorious man" (Riddell and Stewart 167). Similar to Spenser's

Braggadocchio, who is "puffed vp with smoke of vanity" (II.iii.5.3), Jonson's Sir Epicure Mammon is a braggart, a windbag, and vain. In keeping with Braggadocchio, who struts like a "Peacocke" with "painted plumes" (II.iii.6.4), Sir Epicure Mammon imagines acquiring the godlike powers of the alchemical stone so that eunuchs at court will fan him with plumes of ostrich tails:

> […] they shall fan me with ten ostrich tails
> Apiece, made in *a plume to gather wind*.
> We will be brave, *Puff*, now we ha' the med'cine.
> (II.ii.69-71; my emphases)

Further intertextual connections between Spenser's description of Braggadocchio as "puffed vp with smoke of vanity" and Jonson's *The Alchemist* include when Sir Epicure Mammon refers to Surly as "Puff" in a city comedy pervaded by alchemical smoke, and when Face calls Dapper a "puffin," meaning he is "puffed up with vanity or pride" (II.ii.71; III.v.55; *OED* "puffin, *n*.[2]", †4.; Jonson 649n15). Spenser tags Braggadocchio as one of "kestrell kynd," a small hawk widely noted for its ability to sustain its "same place in the air with its head to the wind" (*OED* "kestrel" *n*.," 1.a.). The "kestrell" figuration in the Braggadocchio episode of *The Faerie Queene* parallels the character Kastril in *The Alchemist*. Jonson's Kastril plays an angry boy who ultimately peddles his sister, the widow Dame Pliant, to the master of the house, Lovewit.

Spenser's Braggadocchio episodes involving themes of alchemy, counterfeiting, and deception in Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene* shape Jonson's common thieves Face, Subtle, and Doll Common in a satirical plot aimed at greedy and gullible aristocrats in *The Alchemist*. In Book III of *The Faerie Queene* a Witch creates a false Florimel "with fine Mercury," an alchemical ingredient, and fashions her "yellow lockes" from "golden wyre" (III.viii.6.6, 7.5-7; see Schuler 13). In Books III and IV Braggadocchio, a "counterfeit" knight, competes for the hand of "counterfet" false Florimel (III.viii.5.5, V.iii.39.1). When the thief and counterfeiter Face addresses the alchemist Subtle, he advertises their

gullible client Dapper as "No cheating Clim-o'the-Cloughs or Claribels" (I.ii.46). Jonson's choice of the name Claribel is an intertextual connection with Spenser's "lewd" knight "Claribell" from whom Spenser's Braggadocchio defends false Florimel in Book IV of *The Faerie Queene* (IV.ix.20.8). Like Spenser's Sir Claribell, one of six knights who fight for false Florimel, Dapper is among many customers at Lovewit's townhouse who compete for the prostitute Doll Common.[6] Parallel to Spenser's false Florimel in Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene*, Doll Common deceives onlookers by impersonating the Fairy Queen.

2. Mammon

Intertextual connections between Spenser's Mammon episode in Book II, canto vii of *The Faerie Queene* and Jonson's *Alchemist* satirize greed for wealth.[7] In Book II of *The Faerie Queene* the poet refers to Spanish voyages to "th'Indian *Peru*" for plundering gold mines there (II.Proem 2.6). When Jonson's Sir Epicure Mammon first enters the alchemist's house, he exclaims to Surly,

> Come on, sir. Now you set your foot on shore
> In *novo orbe*. Here's the rich Peru,
> And there within, sir, are the golden mines,
> Great Solomon's Ophir! (II.i.1-4)

Spenser imagines the Cave of Mammon as a mine where the greedy fiend is surrounded by "Great heapes of gold, that neuer could be spent," some of which has been beaten and smelt "into great *Ingowes*, and to *wedges square*" (II.vii. 5.2, 6; my emphasis). Spenser's "*Ingowes*" is a variant form of the word '*ingot*,' which is suggestive of the Elizabethan term 'Incas' well-known for their city of gold, El Dorado (see Hamilton's note on line 6, Spenser 213). Sir Epicure Mammon brags to Surly about the wealth Subtle's alchemy will bring, "This day thou shalt have *ingots*" (II.ii.7; my emphasis). Later, Surly says to Sir Epicure Mammon, when the three thieves disappear with his fine metals, "where be your

andirons now? And your brass pots, / That should ha'been golden flagons and *great wedges*?" (V.iii.6-7). Jonson's phrase golden "*great wedges*" is strikingly similar not only to Spenser's "*wedges square*" made of gold in the Mammon episode but also to Marlowe's "wedge of gold," which refers to Barabas's riches in *The Jew of Malta* (1.1.9), and Shakespeare's "wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl" in Clarence's dream of the classical underworld in *Richard III* (I.iv.26).[8] However, Jonson's use of the word "*ingots*," which is found only in Spenser's Mammon episode as the linguistic variation "*Ingowes*" and is missing in both *The Jew of Malta* and *Richard III*, highly suggests that *The Faerie Queene* is an intertext for *The Alchemist*.[9] Both Spenser's "Ingowes" and Jonson's "ingots" are set in satirical contexts satirizing Mammonism.

Spenser in the Mammon episode and Jonson in *The Alchemist* satirize the environmental hazards of mining, burning coal, and alchemy.[10] These two works similarly refer to exploited, dark-skinned natives who labored in gold mines in the New World.[11] Spenser's Mammon has a smoke-tanned face, sooty head and beard, and "cole-blacke hands" (II.vii.3.6-8). Spenser's "black fiendes" smelting gold in the Mammon episode parallel Jonson's soot-covered alchemist Subtle, whom Face calls "black boy" (II.vii.41.9).[12] Face also calls Subtle a "collier," meaning a coal miner, and a "sooty, smoky-bearded compeer" (I.i.90; IV.vi.41). In keeping with medieval and Renaissance actors, who blackened their faces with soot, Subtle's face is coated with coal dust (IV.vi.41; see Deák 222). Subtle's blackface serves as one of his many profitable disguises as a thief and conman. Conversing with Spenser's Mammon, Guyon criticizes mining during the Iron Age as a violation of Nature: "Then gan a cursed hand the quiet wombe / Of his great Grandmother with steele to wound, / And the hid treasures in her sacred tombe, / With Sacriledge to dig" (II.vii.17.1-4). Guyon's comment about mining wounding Mother Earth is indirectly satirical. By contrast to Guyon, Sir Epicure Mammon could not care less about the environmental damage his rich mines will cause when he plans to "purchase Devonshire and Cornwall / And make them perfect Indies!" (II.i.35-36). This hedonist envisions using the alchemical stone to transform tin

and copper extracted from these mines into gold (see Jonson 590n36). Like Spenser and his implied critique of the ecological destructiveness of mining in the Mammon episode, Jonson in *The Alchemist* exhibits environmental awareness of the damage caused by alchemy when Face says to Subtle, "Why, now, you smoky persecutor of nature! / Now do you see that something's to be done / Beside your beech-coal and your cor'sive waters," referring to the polluting charcoal and acids used in alchemy (I.iii.101-03).

Parallel figuration related to a mythical garden and tempting fruit in Mammon's cave in Book II of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Alchemist* satirizes the unsatisfying desire for gold. Spenser's Mammon tempts Guyon with "golden apples," which "feede his eye" but not his body, from his infernal garden of Hesperides (II.vii.54.1; 4.8). Similarly, Sir Epicure Mammon imagines how he will use the environmentally toxic, alchemical stone to attain golden apples from "th'Hesperian garden" (II.i.101). Jonson most likely read the Mammon episode of *The Faerie Queene* with prior knowledge of the widely circulated *Mythologiae* of Conti, who interprets Mammon's golden apples as symbols of wealth that tempt the soul without nourishing the body (see Spenser 222n54). In reply to Sir Epicure Mammon's flattery of Doll, "Methinks you do resemble / One o'the Austriac princes," Face's aside, "Her father was an Irish costermonger" links Doll's father with a street peddler of apples (IV.i.55-57). In keeping with Spenser's Mammon, who tempts Guyon with his gold hoard, golden apples, and his daughter Philotime, Subtle and Face hoard Sir Epicure Mammon's fine metals in the basement of Lovewit's townhouse and use the prostitute Doll Common, whose father sold apples, to seduce their gullible customers. Both Spenser's Philotime, who is sitting with "soueraine maiestye" on her "throne," and Jonson's Doll Common disguised as the Fairy Queen parody Gloriana in *The Faerie Queene* (II.vii.44.5, 48.2; see MacLachlan 542; and Quitslund 336).

In *The Alchemist* Jonson imitates and parodies Spenser's Mammon episode in a comic vein to satirize lust for money and ambitions for social

mobility. Mammon's gold hoard, which Guyon knows he has accumulated "from rightfull owner by vnrighteous lott," resembles Subtle and Face's accumulation of "brass and pewter" conned from Sir Epicure Mammon (*The Faerie Queene* II.vii.19.4). Like Spenser's Mammon, who hides his stolen treasure in the underworld, Jonson's thieves stash their booty "under ground" in a "cellar" (*The Alchemist* I.i.84; IV.vii.127). Acting as Guyon's tour guide through the infernal labyrinth, Mammon

> Thence forward he him ledd, and shortly brought
> Vnto another rowme, whose dore forthright,
> To him did open, as it had beene taught:
> Therein an *hundred raunges* weren pight
> And *hundred fournaces* all burning bright;
> By euery fournace many feendes did byde,
> *Deformed creatures*, horrible in sight,
> And euery feend his busie paines applyde,
> *To melt the golden metall, ready to be tryde*.
>
> *One with great bellowes gathered filling ayre,*
> *And with forst wind the fewell did inflame*;
> Another did the dying bronds repayre
> With yron tongs, and sprinckled ofte the same
> With liquid waues, fiers *Vulcans* rage to tame,
> Who maystring them, renewd his former heat;
> Some scumd the drosse, that from the metall came.
> Some stird the molten owre with ladles great;
> And euery one did swincke, and euery one did sweat.
>
> (35-36; my emphases)

Jonson's Subtle and his alchemical "furnace" parody Spenser's Mammon and his smelting of gold (IV.v.59).[13] As the assistant to the alchemist Subtle, Face bears the comic nickname "Lungs" that associates him with the "great bellowes" Mammon's laborers use to inflame his "hundred fournaces […] To melt the golden metall." In contrast to Spenser's unnamed miners or slaves that he calls "deformed creatures" in Mammon's underworld, Jonson gives his alchemist and his assistant multiple names: Subtle, Face, Lungs, Ulen Spiegel, and Jeremy the Butler.[14] Unlike Spenser's mythological cave of Mammon set in faraway Hades,

Jonson's realistic portrayal of common thieves and their base of operations in Master's Lovewit's house in London adds immediacy to his biting satire of greedy aristocrats and social mobility among all ranks.

3. Castle of Alma

Jonson appropriates Spenser's Castle of Alma under attack by Maleger to satirize the disease of Mammonism afflicting the body politic in *The Alchemist*. Like Spenser and his naming of the Castle of Alma, Jonson designates Subtle's alchemical equipment as "*turris circulatorius*," meaning "a castle or fort" (III.ii.3; see Jonson 630n3). In addition, Surly refers to Lovewit's townhouse as a "citadel," and Kastril describes it as a "castle" (IV.vi.9; V.iii.36). Face's phrase "our Doll, our castle, our Cinque Port," or five ports of entry, recalls Alma with her five senses as castle fortifications besieged by Maleger (III.iii.18). Doll, whom Subtle summons "to the window" and who a neighbor reports to Lovewit upon his return was "seen / In a velvet gown at the window," acts as sentry for his castle-like house by watching with her two eyes for approaching customers (I.i.180; V.ii.23-24). Similarly, Alma's Castle is guarded by "two goodly Beacons, set in watches stead" (II.ix.46.3). In Jonson's 1617 copy of *The Faerie Queene and Complaints* he glosses these two "Beacons" as "the Eyes" (Riddell and Stewart 178). In keeping with Spenser's Maleger, whose assault upon the Castle of Alma exposes the vulnerability of the physical body to illness, Surly's attempted battery upon Doll Common represented as a fortress uncovers Face and Subtle's fraudulent, alchemical plot and satirizes the plague of Mammonism.

Jonson transforms Spenser's Castle of Alma into Lovewit's pleasure palace to satirize the self-deluding potential of the imagination in the comic pursuit of godlike power and wealth. Spenser's body allegory of the Castle of Alma provides a rich intertext for *The Alchemist*. In Alma's kitchen analogous to the stomach a "huge great payre of bellowes" is cooling the "caudron" upon "a mightie furnace" (II.ix.30.4-6). In the

1617 Folio of *The Faerie Queene and Complaints* Jonson annotates this huge bellows in the Castle of Alma episode as "The Lunges" (Riddell and Stewart 178). The bellows for the furnace in the Castle of Alma provides Jonson with further inspiration for Face's nickname "Lungs." In Alma's watchtower analogous to the mind "idle thoughtes and fantasies" make one appear "mad or foolish" (II.ix.51.6, 52.7). In *The Alchemist* Sir Epicure Mammon similarly exhibits self-deluding flights of fancy. In the 1617 Folio of *The Faerie Queene* Jonson annotates "Phantesey" as "the several imaginati<ons> which flott in our phanse<y>" (Riddell and Stewart 179). A cultural distrust of the imagination links the Castle of Alma and *The Alchemist*.[15] In the Castle of Alma waste is removed through "the backgate" where it is "auoided quite, and throwne out *priuily*" (II.ix.32.7, 9; my emphasis). Parallel to Spenser's comic pun on a privy in the Castle of Alma episode, Master Lovewit's urban house turned brothel includes a "privy" where Dapper is stashed with gingerbread as a gag in his mouth (III.v.79).[16] Gingerbread melting in Dapper's mouth in this privy is particularly comic and scatological (V.iii.66). Later, Doll as "Madam Suppository" is pushed out "the back side" of Lovewit's townhouse, using a "sheet to save" her "velvet gown" (V.v.13; V.iv.133-34).[17] Likewise, Jonson annotates Alma's "backgate" as "fundam" in his copy of the 1617 Folio of *The Faerie Queene* (Riddell and Stewart 177). Jonson appropriates the Castle of Alma episode as inspiration for comedy as well as satire in *The Alchemist*.

4. The Wandering Wood

In *The Alchemist* Jonson emphasizes the importance of plain and clear diction by appropriating Spenser's Wandering Wood of Error in *The Faerie Queene* to satirize the misuse of language by pleasure-seeking aristocrats, Puritans, and pseudoscientists (I.i.11.4).[18] Surly, who is skeptical of alchemy, exclaims in response to Subtle's alchemical jargon, "What a brave language here is! Next to canting!" (II.iii.42). As an

aside to Subtle's "And the philosopher's vinegar?", he pronounces, "We shall have a salad" (II.iii.100-01). Alchemists did in fact compare the mixing of alchemical elements to a salad (Jonson 606n101). Jonson satirizes tracts by the Puritan Hugh Broughton when Subtle and Face claim that Doll has "gone mad with studying Broughton's works"; he also mocks pseudoscientific treatises on quarrelling that treated dueling as a mathematical science (II.iii.238; III.iv.25-41). Vowing to expose that Subtle's alchemy is based on pseudoscience, Surly ventures

> […] to find
> The subtleties of this *dark labyrinth*.
> Which, if I do discover, dear Sir Mammon,
> You'll give your poor friend leave, though no philosopher,
> To laugh. (II.iii.307-11; my emphasis)

Though alchemists commonly used the metaphor of a labyrinth to represent the search for the alchemical stone, Surly's emphasis upon its darkness is suggestive of Jonson's careful reading of Spenser's episode of the Wandering Wood. Spenser describes this place as a "labyrinth […] that heauens light did hide" (I.i.7.5, 11.4). Jonson labels this opening episode in Spenser's epic romance as "Errour" in his 1617 Folio of *The Faerie Queene and Complaints* (Jonson 615n308; Riddell and Stewart 164). In *The Alchemist* Jonson appropriates Spenser's Wandering Wood to satirize alchemical language that leads to self-delusions of grandeur rather than wealth.

5. The Fairy Queen

In *The Alchemist* Doll Common's impersonation of the Fairy Queen parodies Spenser's Gloriana, mocks Spain, and satirizes the aristocracy. Spenser's use of fairy caught the attention of two of his earliest readers—Gabriel Harvey, who refers to Spenser's "elvish Queen" and "hobgoblin," and Nashe, whose persona Pierce Penniless describes Spenser as a "Fairy Singer" in *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Diuell* (1592;

see Woodcock 1; Harvey 628; Nashe 1: 244). The analogy Jonson establishes between the prostitute Doll's plan to gull Surly, who disguises himself as a Spanish Don, and Elizabeth I's defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 makes a mockery of aristocrats in Spain and England. Jonson invokes this famous military battle when Doll asks Face in jest, "Say, Lord General, how fares our camp?," the opening line of Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (III.iii.33; see Kyd I.i.2). Dame Pliant's remark, "never sin' eighty-eight could I abide" a Spaniard reminds audiences of Elizabeth I's defeat of the Spanish Armada and vilifies Spain (IV.iv.29). Jonson further satirizes the aristocracy when Sir Epicure Mammon says to quean Doll, "when thy name is mentioned, / Queens may look pale" (IV.i.143-44). Audiences at a performance of *The Alchemist* most likely heard Jonson's pun on "quean" in keeping with Chaucer's "queynte" and much later Marvell's "quaint honour" (Chaucer, "The Miller's Tale" 3276; Marvell "To His Coy Mistress" 29). Subtle's command to Dapper that he "kiss" Doll's "departing part" in hopes of gaining "twelve thousand acres of Fairyland" provides another satirical intertext between *The Faerie Queene* and *The Alchemist* (V.iv.55, 57). In keeping with Spenser's satirical figure Braggadocchio through which the poet mocks ambitious Elizabethan courtiers, Jonson's Dapper and his zealous desire for social advancement satirize those who aspire to rise in rank through the acquisition of titles, land, and new money.[19]

6. Satirical Appropriations of *The Faerie Queene*

Not only Gloriana, the Wandering Wood, Braggadocchio, Mammon, and the Castle of Alma but also Duessa, the Blatant Beast, and the Giant with the Scales in *The Faerie Queene* inspired the creation of satires, parodies, and comedies among Spenser's seventeenth-century readers. A Catholic loyalist, poet Anthony Copley wrote the satirical *A Fig for Fortune* (1596), a parody of *The Faerie Queene* that satirizes the Anglican Church by depicting it as Duessa (see Heffner 46-47). Thomas Dekker

refers to "*Braggadochio-vices*" in his masque *A Strange Horse-Race* (1613) and thereby parodies Spenser's Braggadocchio and his vice of horse thievery in *The Faerie Queene* (Heffner 130).[20] Jonson and his contemporaries appropriated figures throughout *The Faerie Queene* as inspiration for satirizing contemporary political and religious personages. In *Conversations with William Drummond* (1619) Jonson writes, "by the Blating Beast the Puritans were understood, by the false Duessa the Q. of Scotts" (Heffner 154). In the anonymous allegory *The Faerie Leveller* (1648), a work subtitled "*A lively representation of our times*," "*Arthegall Prince of justice*" is "King Charles," "*Talus his Executioner with his yron flayle*" represents "the Kings forces," and "*The Gyant Leveller*" is "Oliver Cromwell" (Heffner 223-24). In *A Short Discourse on the English Stage* (1664) Richard Flecknoe says, "Beaumont and Fletcher […] err'd against Decorum, seldom representing a valiant man without somewhat of the Braggadoccio, nor an honorable woman without somewhat of Doll Common in her" (Heffner 255). Here Flecknoe remembers comedies by Beaumont and Fletcher in intertextual dialogue with Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Jonson's *The Alchemist*. Flecknoe satirizes bragging soldiers and apparently chaste women by associating them with Braggadocchio and Doll Common. Beyond Jonson in *The Alchemist*, reader reception of Spenser's works throughout the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline eras contributes to his afterlife as biting satirist not only for *Mother Hubberds Tale* in *The Complaints* but also for *The Faerie Queene*.

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NOTES

[1]This essay emerged out of a seminar on "Pleasure and Interpretation in Shakespeare and Spenser" directed by Joe Moshenska and Leah J. Whittington at the Shakespeare Association of America in 2019. I am grateful to Judith Anderson for her encouragement, and to Jacob Brewer at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and Jennifer Urbanek at Tulane University for their thoughtful commentary on earlier versions of this project and their assistance preparing this essay for publication.

Hile asserts that "Spenser's epic did not influence satirical poetry of the time period as clearly and as significantly as did others of his works" (64). She devotes her attention to Spenser's shorter poems in *The Complaints* like *Mother Hubberds Tale*. Unlike Hile, I argue that Jonson drew extensively upon *The Faerie Queene* for his satirical play *The Alchemist*. A voracious reader, Jonson must have encountered *The Faerie Queene*, which circulated widely in print in 1590, 1596, and 1609, before *The Alchemist* was first performed in 1610. Although the 1591 volume of Spenser's *Complaints* was withdrawn from sale, Dutton says that, "[g]iven its notoriety, it seems inconceivable that Jonson did not know of *Mother Hubberds Tale*, at least in general terms" (350-51).

[2]My broad use of the term *intertext* spans influence, imitation, parody, and allusion. Such intertextual connections can be thematic, linguistic, historical, or cultural. Though some intertextual relationships are intentional, others are unintentional (see Anderson 1-4). Anderson says that, "while authorial agency and linguistic free play are opposing binaries in the abstract, in practice they coexist interestingly, elusively, and indefinitely" (2). Rose, who defines parody as "comic quotation, imitation, or transformation," discusses Bakhtin's conception of parody as "'a double-voice' form" in which intertextual voices are "separated by a distance" (Rose 6, 126-27; Bakhtin 166).

My definition of satire is in keeping with that of Jones, who says that "satire is distinctive for its overt engagement […] with its historical context" and "criticizes the contemporary world" (1255).

[3]Those who note Jonson's invoking of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* when Doll Common impersonates the Fairy Queen are Mebane (122); McManus (203); Buccola (118); and Bull (219). Bull says that *The Alchemist* illustrates Jonson's "familiarity with (and even affection for) romance, that has, in the past been obscured by an emphasis on his knowledge of Classical literature" (208). He examines how Jonson "is actively parodying" medieval faerie romance in *The Alchemist* (222). His consideration of *The Faerie Queene* in relation to *The Alchemist*, however, is limited to episodes involving Dapper and Doll Common disguised as the Fairy Queen.

[4]Blissett briefly mentions Spenser's Mammon in relation to Jonson's Sir Epicure Mammon (330). McCabe, who calls Jonson "one of Spenser's acutest readers," observes that both Spenser in *The Faerie Queene* and Jonson in *The Alchemist* comment on the distorting power of mirrors (16). Spenser the poet remarks that a "glasse […] can blynd / The wisest sight, to thinke gold that is bras" (VI.Proem 5.6-7), whereas Sir Epicure Mammon boasts that he will have his "glasses, / Cut in more subtill angles, to disperse, / And multiply the figures, as I walke" (II.ii.45-47).

[5]See Riddell and Stewart's Appendix A entitled "Jonson's Annotations and Representative Marks to the 1617 Spenser Folio" for his marginalia in response to the Braggadocchio, Mammon, and Castle of Alma episodes (167, 172-79). Jonson's 1617 Folio of *The Faerie Queene and Complaints* exists today in the private collection of Mr. Getty KBE in London (Riddell and Stewart xii). In Robert Evans's analysis of Jonson's reading habits he says that Jonson's copy of Spenser's 1617 Folio of *The Faerie Queene and Complaints* enriches "our understanding of Jonson's attitudes toward

Spenser, especially in the latter stage of Jonson's career, when he was himself reportedly at work on a heroic poem" (255). Like Evans, Nicholson discusses Jonson as a reader of Spenser in terms of his annotations of the 1617 Folio of *The Faerie Queene and Complaints* (126-28). My examination of *The Faerie Queene* as an intertext for *The Alchemist*, by contrast, illustrates how Jonson was reading Spenser by 1610 and most likely by 1596 or earlier.

[6]Holland and Sherman remark that the figure "Claribel" to whom Face compares Dapper in I.ii.45 "is in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, 4.9 (and the poem's title might just anticipate the plot of duping Dapper with the Queen of the Fairies)" (Jonson 576n). This is Holland and Sherman's only reference to the impact of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* on *The Alchemist*.

[7]Watson notes that in *The Alchemist* "Lovewit's house is full of popular literature," including "Spenser's adult fairy tales" (123, 114); he implicitly compares Sir Epicure Mammon, "alluding to Broughton's *Concent of Scripture*," to Redcrosse Knight when he says that "Doll spits back at him her own mad concoction of that and other literature, as if she were Spenser's Dragon of Error vomiting theological tracts on a similarly erroneous knight" (125). Donaldson associates the Puritan Ananias's phrase "this cave of cos'nage" in *The Alchemist* with "a Spenserian 'cave of cos'nage'" (78).

[8]In *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession* Cheney examines extensive parallels between Spenser's Mammon episode and Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (see 78). He then compares *The Jew of Malta* and *The Alchemist* in terms of character, situation, imagery, and Jonson's borrowings of specific words and phrases from Marlowe. His argument implies that Spenser's Mammon episode influences Jonson's *Alchemist*, but he does not explore intertextual connections between these two works explicitly. In *English Authorship and the Early Modern Sublime* Cheney briefly discusses "the Spenserian matrix of *The Alchemist*" as central to "the working of the plot" with respect to Doll Common's impersonation of the Fairy Queen and Sir Epicure Mammon's parodic quest for the sublime (247). For intertextual connections between Spenser's Mammon episode and Shakespeare's *Richard III*, see Brooks (149-50).

[9]Zurcher illustrates how Nashe in his satire *Pierce Penilesse*, published in 1592, drew the attention of early modern readers to Spenser's Mammon episode in Book II of the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene* (137-39). Jonson's professional connection with Nashe as collaborator on *The Isle of Dogs* first performed in 1597 suggests that he, too, was familiar with Spenser's Mammon episode before the first performance of *The Alchemist* in 1610.

[10]Boehrer credits Jonson with "a mode of proto-ecological awareness" for recognizing that urban progress in London has a "backside" and has made it "a city rich in shit" (165, 170). Ross says that "Subtle acts like a colonist: he invades a foreign culture—middle-class, mainstream London—enlists a native informant—Face—and proceeds to mine the new land for its treasures" (449).

[11]Read says that Spenser's Mammon episode parodies Spanish acquisition of gold in the New World (211-12). Racial markings of Mammon's laborers as "blacke

fiendes" (II.vii.41.9) lead Kasey Evans to offer a New World reading of the Mammon episode (55).

[12]Holland and Sherman note that the phrase "black boy" most likely refers to Subtle with his sooty appearance as an alchemist but could also refer to Surly impersonating a Spaniard in III.iii.8 (Jonson 637n).

[13]A few critics have connected Spenser's Mammon with alchemy. Quitslund describes Mammon as "a charlatan, a confidence man, something like an alchemist" (349). Landreth admits, "Mammon is not an alchemist—the operations depicted in his furnace are worked on ore, not on dung or lead—but he shares this understanding, so flattering to himself, of gold as a worldly perfection whose substance transcends any form" (72). Schuler says in relation to Spenser's Mammon that counterfeiters who pretended to transform base metals into gold were "a common target of satire and ridicule, as in Jonson's *Alchemist*" (12).

[14]Leo remarks that "Spenser refuses to tell us more about the inner life of Mammon's laborers" (219).

[15]See Clark for a discussion of early modern perceptions of the unreliability of the imagination (45).

[16]Robert Evans, who says that Spenser's "writings were not notoriously funny," overlooks Spenser's penchant for comedy (138). Hill, by contrast, observes that Spenser has "a credible sense of inane, unregenerate comedy—a sense of comedy which brings Braggadocchio to life" (319).

[17]On the scatological structure of Jonson's play, see Moran (8). On the excretion of Dapper as "a piece of shit," see Paster (159-60).

[18]Dessen says that in *The Alchemist* Jonson, like Spenser, "has explored the same theme, man's vulnerability to error and self-deception" (129-30). For Jonson's annotations of Spenser's episode of Error, see Riddell and Stewart (164).

[19]Nohrnberg identifies the fox and ape in *Mother Hubberds Tale* as Lord William Cecil Burghley; Jehan de Simier, who was the Duke of Alençon's confidant and envoy for his proposed marriage to Queen Elizabeth I; and Robert Cecil, Burghley's hunchbacked son. He parallels Spenser's fox and ape with the upstarts Braggadocchio and Trompart in *The Faerie Queene* (see Nohrnberg 83, 92).

[20]In Richard Niccols's *The Beggars Ape* (1627), a court satire in imitation of *Mother Hubberds Tale* (1591), "boasting Bragadochioes" seeks "to clime / To places of such high credit" (Heffner 92).

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C. S. Lewis and His Later Respondents: Letting in Fresh Air, Preventing Questions, and Reimagining *A Preface to* Paradise Lost[1]

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This article is a contribution of the debate on the reception history of C. S. Lewis's *A Preface to* Paradise Lost http://www.connotations.de/debate/reception-history-of-lewis-preface-to-paradise-lost/. If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de

This essay chronicles significant responses to C. S. Lewis's *A Preface to* Paradise Lost (1942) that occurred from the 1960s into the twenty-first century. Important responses include those of William Empson, Stanley Fish, Stuart Curran, John Rumrich, Peter C. Herman, Michael Bryson, and Joseph Wittreich. All of these scholars challenged Lewis on various points—most commonly concerning matters of Lewis's analysis of Milton's Satan, his alleged oversimplification of Milton's theologically complex epic, the supposed similarities between *A Preface* and Fish's *Surprised by Sin*, and his assumed hegemonic prevention of new avenues of critical inquiry into Milton's epic. This essay contends that certain of these critics have misread or misinterpreted Lewis, and it suggests that such portrayals of *A Preface* obfuscate the insights that it continues to offer readers of *Paradise Lost*.

In my previous essay on the critical response to C. S. Lewis's *A Preface to* Paradise Lost (1942), I focused on the torrent of scholarship between 1943 and 1952 that challenged or, less frequently, supported Lewis's analysis of Milton's Satan (see Urban, "C. S. Lewis and Satan"). Common critiques from Lewis's respondents were that Lewis's brief chapter on Satan was overly simplistic, stuffily moralistic, limited by Lewis's Christian scruples, and heartlessly sarcastic regarding Milton's greatest

character. But regardless of *A Preface*'s perceived shortcomings, it certainly inspired numerous spirited responses that themselves became enduring voices in the history of *Paradise Lost* criticism. The frequency of sustained responses to *A Preface* abated after 1952, but two works published in the years that followed, both of which extensively address Milton criticism of previous decades, use remarkably similar phraseology to belittle *A Preface*'s larger critical accomplishment. In 1955, while mocking Lewis's notion that Milton's describing Paradise is "'drawing out the Paradisal Stop in us' [*Preface* 47], as if readers were so many Hammond Electric Organs" (38), Robert Martin Adams snidely suggests that elsewhere in *A Preface* Lewis functions better "in his capacity of public moralist" (38). And five years later, Bernard Bergonzi writes lukewarmly of Lewis, arguing that, because *A Preface* "does not […] meet [Milton's detractors, the "anti-Miltonists"] on their own ground," it does not succeed in "providing the positive and detailed answer to their criticisms that they have demanded" (172). Rather, states Bergonzi, reiterating the views of earlier respondents, "Lewis was not able to resist the temptation to play the public moralist" in *A Preface*, even as he offers some "excessively simplified" critical "assumptions" (171).

From reading Adams and Bergonzi, one might think that *A Preface* was destined to lay in the dustbins of critical mediocrity. But, perhaps unexpectedly, *A Preface* was soon to take on new relevance through appreciative engagement by an unlikely source. For if Lewis's own criticism insufficiently answered the anti-Miltonists, it did, ironically enough, pave the way for one of the most dynamic responses to the anti-Miltonists, William Empson's *Milton's God*. It is not the intent of this essay to debate Empson's ingenious defense of Milton's epic. Rather, I shall discuss herein how the engagement with *A Preface* offered by the 1960s' two most important works on *Paradise Lost*—*Milton's God* and Stanley Fish's *Surprised by Sin*—solidified Lewis's book's enduring place within Milton criticism. I shall also address how much subsequent, and largely hostile, engagement with *A Preface* has followed in the tradition of Empson and Fish, although these later interlocutors have portrayed Lewis—particularly in his role as a Christian critic

whose *Preface* argues that *Paradise Lost* exhibits "the great central tradition" of Christianity (91)—as one who has stifled complex critical engagement with *Paradise Lost*. Ironically, however, discussion of these later, more hostile voices suggests the opposite: that Lewis's assertions in *A Preface* have inspired various sustained engagements with Milton's epic that use Lewis's orthodoxy and apparent stuffiness—albeit sometimes in misrepresented form—as a platform to react against forcefully as they offer their own visions of an unorthodox Milton whose larger message is characterized by contradiction rather than consistency.

Fresh Air and Satan as God's Victim: William Empson's *Milton's God*

Empson's *Milton's God* (1961, rev. ed. 1965) displays the 1960s' most important explicit critical engagement with *A Preface*. Memorably, in his Preface to *Milton's God*'s revised edition, Empson expresses his great "regret" regarding the death of Lewis, whom Empson calls one of his "two chief opponents" in *Milton's God* and who "received the first edition in a very generous-minded way" (7). Throughout *Milton's God*, Empson eagerly engages with Lewis and contrasts their respective views of Christianity. In a manner that sets the tone of his book's interaction with Lewis's *Preface*, Empson cites Lewis in a manner both respectful toward Lewis as a critic and hostile toward his theological beliefs. Writing of the God of *Paradise Lost*, Empson expresses dissatisfaction with the tentative manner in which previous critics have discussed the epic's deity. He writes that, as "Milton himself" would recognize, the matter of Milton's God "cannot be viewed in a purely aesthetic manner" (9). Critics have suggested that "[h]is God is somehow 'embarrassing' [...] with [that word's] comforting suggestion of a merely social blunder" (9). But Empson considers such critical pussyfooting both tedious and disingenuous, and he portrays Lewis as an ally in his effort to cast aside such critical niceties. Empson writes: "Professor C. S. Lewis let in some needed fresh air […] by saying, 'Many of those who say they dislike Milton's God only mean that they dislike God'"

(9; quoting *Preface* 126). And Empson promptly sets up the dichotomy between Lewis's beliefs and his own: "[s]peaking as an Anglican, he decided that the beliefs used by the poem are those central to any Christian theology, except for some minor and doubtful points; but even he was ready to grant that Milton might sometimes describe God 'imprudently'" (9; quoting *Preface* 93). Admitting his surprise at what he calls the recent "revival of Christianity among literary critics" (9), Empson writes, in a manner that recalls Lewis's frank proclamation of his Christianity in *A Preface*[1]: "I am anxious to make my beliefs clear at the outset, […]. 'Dislike' is a question-begging term here. I think the traditional God of Christianity very wicked, and have done since I was at school" (9-10). Empson then suggests that, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton is thoughtful enough "to question whether his God is wicked. Such an approach," Empson writes, "does at least make Milton himself appear in a better light. He is struggling to make his God appear less wicked, as he tells us he will at the start (I.25), and does succeed in making him noticeably less wicked than the traditional Christian one" (11). From this, Empson enters into his own particular approach to *Paradise Lost*, an approach that dislikes Milton's God but praises Milton the poet (see Leonard, *Faithful* 510). It is indeed remarkable that Empson, the most influential pro-Satan critic of the second half of the twentieth century and beyond, does in the opening pages of *Milton's God* carve his own critical approach to *Paradise Lost* from an entryway that Lewis's *Preface* opened to him. Moreover, even as Lewis frankly postulates that his Christianity makes him a more effective reader of *Paradise Lost*, so too does Empson suggest that his own hatred for the Christian God makes him a more sensitive reader of the poem, particularly, as we shall see, of Milton's Satan, the prime victim, in Empson's estimation, of the wicked God who oppresses his fallen former servant.

As was the case with Lewis's earlier respondents, much of the remainder of Empson's most engaging response to Lewis's *Preface* concerns the character of Satan, with Empson focusing on Satan in book 4. Empson first addresses how the solitary Satan, approaching Eden, re-

fuses to repent before God because of both his "disdain" of "submission" and his "dread of shame" before the fallen angels whom he "seduc'd" with the "promise" that he "could subdue Th'Omnipotent" (4.81-86)—and then proceeds to lament his inward "torments" and "supreme / […] misery" (4.88, 91-92). Empson acknowledges that Satan's words here are "theatrical," but he takes issue with Lewis's criticizing Satan "for always talking about himself" (65-66; cf. *Preface* 99-100). After all, contends Empson, "it is fair to remember that is what his readers always want him to talk about" (66). And Empson emphasizes that Lewis not only misunderstands Milton's readers, but also Satan and Milton himself. Having offered a fairly detailed and complex analysis of Satan's monologue, Empson writes, "I do not deny that my opponent's [Lewis's] interpretation is the easier; it seems likely that Milton was ready to avoid disturbing the simple-minded reader, though he would aim more at the fit one, who could appreciate his sustained analysis of Satan's character" (66). Recalling various earlier respondents to Lewis, Empson here charges that Lewis's analysis of Satan's character is too simplistic; moreover, Empson also implicitly contends that, over and against Lewis's suggestion in *A Preface* that his Christianity makes him the kind of "fit" reader Milton sought, his Christian bias against Satan actually makes Lewis less fit to appreciate Milton's Satan. A bit later, as he discusses Satan's soliloquy while first viewing, unseen, Adam and Eve, Empson again faults Lewis for a simplistically dismissive and insulting remark concerning Satan's character. Amid his extended textual analysis, Empson interjects, "By the way, C. S. Lewis need not have called Satan 'a thing which peers in through bathroom windows' because he feels jealous here of the sexual pleasures of Adam and Eve" (68, inexactly quoting *Preface* 97[2]). Instead, Empson commends Satan for his emotional honesty and judges his response as entirely appropriate for his situation: "God has recently cut him off from his own corresponding pleasures, and he is straightforward enough about it" (68). Here Empson portrays Lewis's humorous comment as distasteful, inappropriate, and immature—indeed, it is Satan and Emp-

son who are the adults in the room, as it were. Moreover, having dismissed Lewis's comment as childish and insensitive, Empson goes on to take the higher ground of close textual analysis, apart from moralizing bias. He agrees with Lewis—based on Milton's description that Satan eyes the couple "with leer malign" (4.503)—that Satan's "character" now quickly "rots away" (68). Nonetheless, Satan's character remains complex enough for Empson to consider the possibility that Satan's "offer" to Adam and Eve of hospitality in Hell (4.375-85) is actually "sincere" (69). And the complexity of Satan's character is compounded by the fact that Satan is living under the weight of God's perpetual cruelty against him. Empson writes that here Satan "is still partly thinking of himself as a patron of Adam and Eve, who can save them from their wicked master; thus he seems genuinely indignant (520) at hearing the conditions of ignorance which God has imposed upon them" (69). A bit later, Empson writes that Satan, continuing to find God "intolerable," "may probably be sincere when he offers [Adam and Eve] high honour in Hell; but even as he speaks his lips are twisted by the new suspicion that God is only waiting to turn all he does to torture" (69).[3] In sum, and over against Lewis, Empson charges that Milton's wicked God and his continuing cruelty toward Satan is the main reason that Satan's character falls into cruelty himself.

Empson again draws on Lewis when he analyzes Satan's preparing to wreak havoc upon the yet-unfallen first couple. He writes, "I fully agree with the disgust felt by C. S. Lewis for Satan's character as it has now become" (70). But even here, Empson equivocates, once again making God significantly culpable for Satan's evil machinations: "But surely one must also feel horror at the God who has deliberately reduced him to such a condition" (70). Reading this mitigating statement, we may recall Empson's earlier expressed gratitude for Lewis's letting in "some needed fresh air" by stating forthrightly that critics' personal dislike for the God of Christianity has animated much analysis of Milton's God. Building on Lewis's critical precedent, Empson cheerfully brandishes his disgust for the Christian God and, by extension, Milton's

God. He skillfully transforms his personal theological disgust into a reliable critical tool, one that legitimizes his continued sympathy for the continually degraded Satan, a degradation that, for Empson, is both inaugurated and continued not, as A. J. A. Waldock contended, by the squeamish Christian scruples of Milton's moralizing narrating comments and narrative choices (see Waldock, *"Paradise Lost"* 78-85) but by Milton's God. In any event, as we conclude the present discussion of *Milton's God*, we must recognize that, from Empson's perspective, Lewis's *Preface* does not stifle critical discussion but rather causes it to flourish. This point will be worth remembering when, later in this essay, we examine more recent critics that continue in Empson's tradition, critics whose posture toward Lewis is considerably less appreciatory.

Incorporating the Christian Tradition, Manipulating the Reader, and Preventing Questions: Stanley Fish's *Surprised by Sin*

The work of a second critic from the 1960s proved seminal to future discussion of Lewis's *Preface*. Unlike *Milton's God*, which engages with Lewis explicitly from its opening paragraph and throughout the book, Stanley Fish in *Surprised by Sin* (1967) offers very little explicit acknowledgement of Lewis's influence. Nonetheless, as I will demonstrate presently, it has become fashionable for later critics to suggest that Fish's book is essentially a methodologically updated version of Lewis's *Preface*. As I have argued elsewhere, such sweeping claims are tremendous overstatements that ignore both Fish's substantive disagreements with Lewis and the fact that Lewis's Christian defense of *Paradise Lost* was part of a larger, older tradition of Milton scholarship that manifested itself regularly at least since Addison's *Spectator* essays on *Paradise Lost* in 1711-12, a tradition with which Fish connects most explicitly in *Surprised* through his extended engagement with the writings of Jonathan Richardson the elder, not Lewis's *Preface*.[4] Nonetheless we may recognize Lewis's significant general influence, or at least the demonstrable influence of the tradition Lewis represents, upon Fish's book.

In *Surprised*'s original preface, Fish makes no mention of Lewis, who is notably absent from those Milton scholars whom Fish states have most influenced him, specifically Waldock and Joseph Summers (lxxii). But for all of Fish's sympathy for these more methodologically sophisticated antagonists of Lewis, his preface reveals a general interpretive sympathy to Lewis's general attitude toward Milton. Quoting the early seventeenth-century Puritan Richard Bernard, Fish writes, "I believe Milton's intention to differ little from that of so many devotional writers, 'to discover to us our miserable and wretched estate through corruption of nature' and to 'shew how a man may come to a holy reformation and so happily recover himself'" (lxxi). Fish then argues that, throughout *Paradise Lost*, "the reader"

> (1) is confronted with evidence of his corruption and becomes aware of his inability to respond adequately to spiritual conceptions, and
> (2) is asked to refine his perceptions so that his understanding will be once more proportionable to truth the object of it. (lxxi)

Although Lewis himself neither mentions Bernard nor (as shall be discussed below) emphasizes the devotional aspect of the poem, one can argue from the above quotations that Fish, like Lewis, asserts that Milton's overall emphasis in *Paradise Lost* appeals to "the great central tradition" of Christianity.

In his Preface to *Surprised*'s second edition (1997), Fish more explicitly articulates Lewis's influence upon him: at the time he originally wrote *Surprised*, Milton criticism needed "a way of breaking out of the impasse created by two interpretive traditions. In one tradition, stretching from [Joseph] Addison to C. S. Lewis and Douglas Bush, the moral of *Paradise Lost*"—and here Fish quotes Lewis's *Preface*—"is 'dazzlingly simple': disobedience of God is the source of all evil and the content of all error; obedience to God brings happiness and the righteous life" (ix; quoting Lewis 70).[5] So certainly Lewis influenced Fish as a major voice in the Christian tradition of interpreting *Paradise Lost*, one of the two major interpretive traditions that Fish explicitly incorporates into his analysis of Milton's epic. Nonetheless, as I note above, the author in the tradition of Christian *Paradise Lost* criticism who influenced Fish most

explicitly in his reader-response, confessional hermeneutic is clearly Jonathan Richardson the elder, whose "description of the poem's demands" on the reader, Fish writes, "accords perfectly with my own" (54). Moreover, it bears specific mention that Lewis himself, very unlike Fish and Richardson, states flatly that *Paradise Lost* is not a poem in which the reader will find "his devotion quickened" (127). That significant caveat aside, Fish recognizes Lewis as his predecessor in the idea of the authoritative Miltonic narrator guiding or even manipulating his readers to a particular response. In the penultimate chapter of *Surprised*, having just twice expressed his disagreement with Lewis's low opinion of *Paradise Lost* books 11 and 12, Fish argues that the comparatively bare style of those books make them "a perfect (i.e. unobtrusive) medium for the conveyance of doctrine," and then unexpectedly cites Lewis approvingly: "Lewis observes of Milton's Paradise: 'We are his organ: when he appears to be describing Paradise he is in fact drawing out the Paradisial stop in us'" (302; quoting Lewis 47). Fish analyzes this phenomenon:

> Presumably the paradisial stop is one we all have because it is rooted in an archetypal myth; there are also local 'stops', tied to patterns of association that do not antedate the artifact, but are established within its confines; and these are particularly numerous in *Paradise Lost* where so much is involved in pattern. In order to draw forth a response rooted in any one pattern, that is, in order to pull out a particular stop, the poet need only provide a link between the text at hand and the sources of energy existing in his reader's mind. The impact of the verbal texture resides not in the arrangement of the words on the page or in the moral commonplaces the words present, but in the reader who responds to them as he responds to old melodies which have become a part of him by having been a part of his experience. (302-03)

Fish's analysis is significant in that he uses a brief quotation by Lewis as a springboard to articulate what amounts to a summary of his larger theory of how the authoritative author can elicit a proper response in a worthy reader—the "fit audience" that Milton envisions and, in Fish's view, aims to educate through a proper understanding of its own sinfulness. Of course, it would be a mistake to make too much of Fish's isolated use of Lewis in this passage to express his larger hermeneutical

strategy throughout *Surprised*. The greater overall hermeneutical influence of Waldock, Summers, and Richardson is evident from the degree of Fish's engagement with them throughout his text, as well as, in the case of Waldock and Summers, Fish's explicit acknowledgment in his original preface. Nonetheless, Fish here makes clear Lewis's explicit influence on his interpretive methodology, no small matter given *Surprised*'s generally recognized position as the most important book in Milton studies since its publication.

But if Lewis's influence on Fish is evident in both interpretive substance and method, we should note also in what way Fish's depiction of *A Preface* has strongly influenced how Lewis's book has been perceived and portrayed by subsequent generations of readers and critics. Of particular import is what Fish writes in his opening paragraph of chapter 5, "The Interpretive Choice," where he notes, with both sympathy and disappointment, how Lewis

> moves to 'dismiss that question which has so much agitated some great critics, "What is the Fall?"' by answering, 'The Fall is simply and solely Disobedience—doing what you have been told not to do.' Aligning himself with Addison, for whom 'the great moral which reigns in Milton is ... Obedience to the will of God makes men happy', Lewis poses a question of his own: 'How are we to account for the fact that great modern scholars have missed what is so dazzlingly simple?' (208; quoting Lewis 70)

On one level, Fish is sympathetic to Lewis's affirmation of the moral simplicity of *Paradise Lost*. He writes: "The 'dazzling simplicity' of the poem's great moral is the counterpart of the dazzlingly simple prohibition, and the obligation of the parties in the two situations is to defend the starkness of the moral choice against sophistications which seem to make disobedience attractive […] or necessary" (208). On this level, Fish agrees with Lewis: The moral of *Paradise Lost* is indeed straightforward, and to believe otherwise is to fall prey to the strategy of the enemy.

But as Fish continues, he adjusts course: "The opportunities to yield to such sophistications are provided by God and Milton, respectively, who wish to try the faith and integrity of their charges" (208): Adam

and Eve, and the reader, respectively. Fish then cites Lewis again in a manner that will eventually yield dubious repercussions. He writes:

> Lewis hopes to 'prevent the reader from ever raising certain questions', but Milton insists that the reader raise them, and then that he answer them, either by recalling the simplicity of the revealed word or by turning inward where there are waiting a ready supply of self-serving rationalizations. These rationalizations become screens behind which the reader may hide from himself facts he finds unpleasant, notably the fact of man's culpability for what happened in Paradise and since. But he is free, on the other hand, to decline the gambit and accept instead the desolating clarity of 'For still they knew, and ought to have still remember'd / The high Injunction not to taste that Fruit' (X.12-13). Whatever he decides, it is his responsibility, as it was theirs. (208; quoting *Preface* 69-70)

Remarkably, even as Fish reaffirms the "dazzlingly simple" *moral* of *Paradise Lost*—and we must recognize, although Fish does not offer clear reference, that the phrase "desolating clarity" is Lewis's, not Milton's (*Preface* 70)—he chides Lewis for falling into *methodological* simplicity by trying to "prevent the reader from ever raising certain questions." In doing this, Fish simultaneously embraces Lewis while throwing him under the critical bus, a rhetorical move that allows Fish both to champion the orthodox substance of his catechismal portrayal of *Paradise Lost* even as he breaks with Lewis by essentially dismissing him as one who avoids the complexities of Milton's poem[6] and, as particularly concerns Fish, avoids the complexities of the reader's experience while reading *Paradise Lost*.

The problem with Fish's presentation, however, is that Fish in the above passage quotes Lewis incompletely and largely out of context. Although the portion of *A Preface* that Fish cites is in fact part of Lewis's discussion of the Fall, Fish's selective quotation of Lewis's words gives a faulty impression of his intention for Milton's readers. Significantly, Lewis's aforementioned quotation is immediately preceded by Lewis's brief outline of eleven points in which, he argues, "Milton's version of the Fall story is substantially that of St. Augustine, which is that of the Church as a whole" (65; see 65-69). Lewis then writes:

> It is my hope that this short analysis will *prevent the reader from ever raising certain questions* which have, in my opinion, led critics into blind alleys. We need not ask "What is the Apple?" It is an apple. It is not an allegory. It is an apple, just as Desdemona's handkerchief is a handkerchief. Everything hangs on it, but in itself it is of no importance. We can also dismiss that question which has so much agitated some great critics. "What is the Fall?" The Fall is simply and solely Disobedience—doing what you have been told not to do: and it results from Pride—from being too big for your boots, forgetting your place, thinking that you are God. This is what St. Augustine thinks and what (to the best of my knowledge) the Church has always taught; this Milton states in the very first line of the first Book, this all his characters reiterate and vary from every possible point of view throughout the poem as if it were the subject of a fugue. Eve's arguments in favour of eating the Apple are, in themselves, reasonable enough; the answer to them consists simply in the reminder "You mustn't. You were told not to." (69-70; italics added)

From the above, Lewis immediately transitions into his agreement with Addison regarding the "great moral" of *Paradise Lost* being "'that Obedience to the will of God makes men happy and that Disobedience makes them miserable,'" a point that, as Fish notes with approval, Lewis calls "dazzlingly simple" (70).

We do well at this point to recognize that Fish's dubious choice to quote Lewis so selectively serves both to obfuscate Lewis's specific meaning and to overstate the interpretive differences between the two critics. As the above long quotation demonstrates, the "certain questions" that Lewis hopes "to prevent the reader from ever raising" are only two, and they are questions of a rather technical nature that, in Lewis's estimation, have distracted critics from addressing matters more substantive and germane to the poem itself. Curiously, although Fish states that, contra Lewis, "Milton insists that the reader raise them" (208), nowhere in the more than 360 pages of *Surprised* does Fish pursue the questions of "What is the Apple?" or "What is the Fall?" He disregards the first and, as we have seen, agrees with Lewis completely on the second; he does not even ponder alternatives.[7] We should also note that Lewis does not dissuade readers from asking other questions. His statement that "Eve's arguments in favour of eating the Apple are, in themselves, reasonable enough"—and that her arguments are answered by a recognition of the need to obey God's command—actually

coincides quite closely with Fish's aforementioned statement that the reader faced with the "'life situation'" of the temptation can (like Eve) either choose to hide behind "self-serving rationalizations" or, alternatively, remember and obey "the simplicity of the revealed word" of God's prohibition (208, 209). Obviously Fish addresses these alternatives and the "questions" that precede them in far more detail than Lewis does. But it is inaccurate for Fish to insinuate that he and Lewis oppose each other regarding the need to raise questions. Rather, we may fairly say that, overall, Lewis and Fish raise many of the same questions and come to many of the same conclusions, but Fish ruminates on matters of close textual analysis far more thoroughly and with far more complexity than does Lewis.

Whatever his and Lewis's ultimate points of agreement, Fish's above misrepresentation of Lewis serves to further the critical narrative of Lewis's dismissive interpretative dogmatism that was prominent from Waldock's first challenge in 1943. It must be nonetheless recognized that Fish's misrepresentation is not committed with a tone of hostility but rather with a comparatively friendly posture toward Lewis. In this sense, Fish's attitude toward Lewis resembles somewhat that of the even more respectful and even affectionate Empson who, as we have seen, seems to welcome Lewis's critical and religious dogmatism as a segue by which to express openly his own doctrinal and interpretive opposition to Lewis and Milton's Christian God.

Following Empson, Disdaining Lewis: Stuart Curran's "Siege of Hateful Contraries"

But Empson's comparatively irenic posture toward Lewis has not generally prevailed among those critics who have followed Empson's and opposed Lewis's perspective. Rather, hostility toward *A Preface*—largely grounded in hostility toward Lewis's open and well-publicized Christianity—has continued to manifest itself. Such hostility is particu-

larly evident in Stuart Curran's 1975 essay "The Siege of Hateful Contraries: Shelley, Mary Shelley, Byron, and *Paradise Lost*." Like Empson, Curran reveals himself as one whose posture toward *Paradise Lost* and Milton's Satan reflects the influence of Percy Bysshe Shelley. On the one hand, Curran offers some perhaps grudging appreciation for Lewis by imitating Empson in stating that Shelley "would have welcomed the clarity of Lewis's memorable utterance: 'Many of those who say they dislike Milton's God only mean that they dislike God,'" a view to which Shelley (like Empson) "would have assented without feeling any need to follow Lewis into apologetics" (214). On the other hand, unlike Empson, Curran's overall disposition toward Lewis is one of resentment and even disdain. Curran begins his essay as follows: "Few can pretend to the cheek of C. S. Lewis, who first told Milton's readers that none of them knew what *Paradise Lost* was about and then, with the primness of a Tory vicar confident of taking tea with royalty in heaven, informed his auditors that the lesson for the day was obedience" (209). In his second sentence, Curran writes of Lewis's "*hauteur*" (emphasis Curran's) even as he dismisses Lewis's thesis as "erroneous" (209), and two pages later Curran laments that "readers of Milton have at times followed C. S. Lewis into the […] simplistic pieties of Anglo-Catholicism" (211). Curran's disdain toward Lewis and his religion are palatable, and perhaps I may be permitted to "let in some needed fresh air" of my own by suggesting that, to paraphrase Lewis's *Preface*, "Many of those who say they dislike Lewis's explicitly Christian Milton criticism only mean that they dislike Christianity."[8] In any event, as I shall soon discuss, Curran's hostility toward Lewis anticipates similar sentiments among scholars holding similar views roughly thirty years later.

Lewis the Apologist's Oversimplification of Milton: John Peter Rumrich's *Matter of Glory*

In the ensuing two decades, the Milton scholar offering the most notable engagement with Lewis is John Peter Rumrich, whose interaction with *A Preface* forms a significant framework within two influential

books and a major article. The first of these is Rumrich's 1987 monograph *Matter of Glory: A New Preface to* Paradise Lost. As Rumrich confirms in his Introduction, his book's subtitle is a clear allusion to Lewis's book. After paying deference to Lewis's stature ("I wish here to disown any implication that I consider myself Lewis' equal in style, lucidity, or general literary expertise" [5]), Rumrich notes that he, "like Lewis," addresses the meaning of *Paradise Lost* as a "whole poem"; and that he, in his book's organization and coverage of topics and "interpretive issues," "follow[s] roughly the same course as Lewis" (6). But Rumrich also self-consciously differs from Lewis, offering "an alternative understanding to *Paradise Lost* in two respects: (1) the epic's relation to its precursors, and (2) the theology of the poem and its relation to Milton's intended meaning" (6). It is this second category to which Rumrich pays the most attention, as will I here. Rumrich, particularly in his Introduction, largely follows Empson's tactic of politely highlighting certain of Lewis's critical strategies, even as Rumrich, like Empson, uses such highlighting to distinguish himself from Lewis and open the way to present his own interpretive assertions in explicit contrast to those of Lewis's *Preface*.

As have many critics before him, Rumrich takes issue with what he considers Lewis's oversimplification of Milton's text for the sake of fitting *Paradise Lost* into the categories of Lewis's "'mere' Christianity" (7). Although Lewis acknowledged some of Milton's doctrinal eccentricities, "Lewis claimed" that Milton the poet "'laid aside most of his private theological whimsies' (92)" in order "to produce a particular effect 'on the ordinary educated and Christian audience of his time' (91)" (7). Rumrich continues:

> Significantly, Lewis' own evangelical method was to emphasize the common essence of Christian beliefs—"mere" Christianity as he called it—and he saw Milton as a predecessor on this eminently brotherly path. But as opposed to Lewis', Milton's ecumenism was most strikingly one of dissimilitudes, brotherly or not, and his heresies are neither so arbitrary as the word *whimsies* suggests nor are they expurgated from his epic for reasons of the decorum or the anticipated satisfaction of a mainstream audience. (7)

In overt contrast to Lewis, Rumrich in his book seeks "to reveal how integral, how precisely unwhimsical, Milton's heresies are to the fictional cosmos of *Paradise Lost*" (7).

Rumrich suggests that Lewis's role as a Christian apologist is foundational to his attempt to tame Milton's poem into the strictures of orthodoxy. (Although Rumrich does not note this, it is curious indeed that Lewis published the first part of what became the book *Mere Christianity*—his BBC Radio broadcast and pamphlet *The Case for Christianity*—in 1942, the same year *A Preface* appeared in print.) And along with Lewis's apologetic agenda comes an attendant inability to analyze Milton's text for what it really is. Rumrich writes:

> That Lewis sees Milton as performing much the same role in the epic genre as Lewis played in the genre of Christian apologetics underscores the great danger besetting anyone who attempts to reconstruct Milton's meaning, that of falling into a circular argument. One defines the general horizon of a given work in the way that suits one's sense of the particulars of that work—and then proceeds to find evidence to confirm the horizon so defined. (7)

Rumrich goes on to argue that such is Lewis's hermeneutical method when Lewis

> determines that Milton sacrifices his theological eccentricities for the greater good of Christianity and so misconstrues, for example, Milton's heretical materialism as a "fugitive colour on the poem which we detect only by the aid of external evidence" (p. 90). (7)

Contra Curran, Rumrich displays no hostility in his tone. But his message is clear: Lewis's Christian commitment elides into a hermeneutical commitment, and it prevents him from accurately analyzing *Paradise Lost* for what it really is. Rather, Lewis, amid his melding of apologetics and literary criticism, transforms Milton's epic into a monument of the great tradition of orthodox Christianity at the expense of a truly honest and accurate reading of the poem itself.

For Rumrich, then, *Paradise Lost* is rather a poem in which Milton's divergences from orthodoxy were integral to his epic. According to Rumrich, Milton's depictions of "the Anarch Chaos and his Consort Night" (see *PL* 2.959-1009) actually "represent the material dimension

of God's own being" (7). Significantly, "Lewis almost entirely neglects to mention chaos" (7), and no scholar before Rumrich has recognized the degree to which Chaos and Night participate in the being of the complex Miltonic deity that Lewis has attempted to present as a depiction of the orthodox Christian God (7-8). While discussing this matter, Rumrich suggests that Lewis himself—and, again, his Christian presuppositions—is largely responsible for the overall critical failure to recognize Chaos and Night's participation in the Miltonic godhead. Rumrich attributes "[t]he slowness of Milton studies to apprehend accurately and in detail the interpretive significance of Milton's unique theology" to "the same orthodox horizon for *Paradise Lost* that Lewis explicitly proposes" (8). Asserting that "Lewis' basic argument has become dominant in Milton scholarship" (9), Rumrich suggests that Lewis and his Christian orthodoxy have served as a vehicle not, as Lewis himself claimed, to recover the lost proper understanding of Milton's poem, but actually to obscure its more central, vital heretical elements. Indeed, while Rumrich emphasizes the heretical in Milton to the interpretive diminishment of what Lewis taught is *Paradise Lost*'s overall orthodoxy, he effectively seeks to undo Lewis's largely successful effort to restore *Paradise Lost* to the greater orthodox Christian tradition. And Rumrich does this in a way that represents the orthodox Christian tradition—exemplified by Lewis himself—as one that relegates itself to the unfortunate circular interpretive framework Rumrich describes above.

Rumrich's book also initiates the highly influential and thus far enduring association between Lewis's *Preface* and Fish's *Surprised by Sin*, an association that, to the best of my knowledge, had never been made before Rumrich, and certainly was not made by any of the many scholarly reviews of Fish's book.[9] Rumrich asserts that Lewis's argument "[f]ind[s] its most influential expression in Stanley Fish's consensus-building *Surprised by Sin*" (9). Implicitly building on "Lewis' contention that Milton wrote for the ordinary Christian of his time," Fish's book assumes that Milton's audience is "the relatively orthodox, conservative Puritans of mid-seventeenth century England," and it has caused

"Milton's own views" to be "identified with the views of that audience" (9). Moreover, Fish's "catechismal version of *Paradise Lost*" actually "resembles more the work of a Presbyterian didact such as the self-righteous Richard Baxter (seven citations in *Surprised by Sin*) than the work of a politico-religious Independent like Milton" (9).

Although, as we have noted, Rumrich strikes a respectful posture toward Lewis, he does not demonstrate such an attitude toward Fish, whom Rumrich portrays as extending and solidifying the influence of Lewis's argument in an even more conservative Christian incarnation. And Rumrich's gratuitously pejorative description of Richard Baxter—whose writings challenged doctrinaire Calvinism and whom many have celebrated for his pastoral soul care—suggests Rumrich's impatience toward the broader Christian tradition. At the very least, Rumrich is deeply concerned with what he portrays as the far-reaching hegemony of Lewis's and Fish's Christian project, a hegemony that Rumrich argues has brought about the "widespread problem in Milton studies" of ignoring Milton's heretical depiction of Chaos and Night (7). In any event, Lewis's and Fish's efforts become increasingly elided both in Rumrich's subsequent criticism and, as we shall see, in that of certain other critics whom Rumrich influences.

Eliding Lewis and Fish: Rumrich's "Uninventing Milton" and *Milton Unbound*

This elision becomes increasingly pronounced in Rumrich's 1990 article in *Modern Philology*, "Uninventing Milton," which was awarded the Milton Society of America's Irene Samuel Award for the most distinguished article published in that year. Rumrich begins "Uninventing Milton" by noting with implicit approval Empson's challenge to what Empson called "the growing 'neo-Christian' bias of Milton scholars, holding this responsible for tendentious overstatement of the orthodoxy of *Paradise Lost* and understatement of the sincerity and difficulty of its attempted theodicy" (249). The foremost of such "neo-Christian"

Milton critics was, of course, Lewis, whose efforts to claim *Paradise Lost* "for Christianity's 'great central tradition'" (249) made Lewis's theologically orthodox reading of Milton's poem "increasingly dominant," with "[t]his consolidation of the 'neo-Christian' position" being largely the result of "the crystallizing impact of Stanley Fish's *Surprised by Sin*" (249). Rumrich goes on to pronounce *Surprised by Sin* "Fish's theoretically sophisticated update of Lewis's orthodox model," averring that, because Fish "accomplished the theoretical liberation of Milton studies by placing a destabilizing hermeneutics in the service of conservative ideology," he was able to bring about an ironic consolidation of opinion within Milton scholarship, for *Surprised* pleased both "freethinkers appreciative of innovative critical methods" and "conservative scholars who saw Milton as a champion of traditional Christianity" (249). The result of this far-reaching embrace of Fish's work, even among scholars considered each other's "natural opponents" (249), was, according to Rumrich, to bring about an inertia in Milton studies that resulted in relatively few efforts to move beyond the "neo-Christian" model.[10]

Rumrich further associates Lewis with Fish by retrospectively attributing to Lewis a kind of primitive version of the reader-based approach of *Surprised by Sin*. Rumrich writes: "In *A Preface to* Paradise Lost, Lewis too rested his interpretation on Milton's supposed intentions toward his audience. According to Lewis, Milton wished to produce a particular effect 'on the ordinary educated and Christian audience of his time'" (251). To do this, Rumrich claims, echoing his statements in *Matter of Glory*, Lewis had to artificially emphasize Milton's seeming orthodoxy by incorrectly claiming that, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton "'laid aside'" his "'private theological whimsies'" (251; quoting *Preface* 92). Lewis's one-sided presentation of Milton's complex theological beliefs (and, by implication, those of Milton's audience), served to "denigrate" the seriousness of the "painstaking […]" process by which Milton "arrived at beliefs"—dismissing Milton's carefully articulated heresies as "the amateurish musings" of a theological "dilettante" (251).[11] Lewis's inaccurate presentation also manipulated his own audience into accepting a chimerical version of Milton the Christian, with Lewis's "tactic" of

making Milton "appear more orthodox than he was" being a critical blight "that has continued to plague the arguments of certain Miltonists" (251). Although Rumrich only quotes the aforementioned clause as evidence for Lewis's reader-focused interpretation of *Paradise Lost*, Rumrich's claim here serves to elide Lewis and Fish a bit more, with their alleged theoretical similarities serving to complement their more substantial agreement regarding *Paradise Lost*'s being indicative of Christianity's "great central tradition."

Rumrich reaffirms his belief in Lewis and Fish's problematic "neo-Christian" alliance even more strongly within his 1996 book *Milton Unbound*, a volume that confirmed Rumrich's position as both a major Miltonist and the intellectual forbear of subsequent critics who have attacked both Lewis and Fish. In his opening chapter, Rumrich revises his argument from "Uninventing Milton," calling *Surprised by Sin* "a methodologically radical update of Lewis's reading of *Paradise Lost* as a literary monument to mainstream Christianity" (4). According to this phraseology, Lewis and Fish are not merely drinking from the same "neo-Christian" waters; rather, Fish's superlatively influential book is merely an "update" of Lewis, although Rumrich offers no precise evidence of Lewis's specific influence on Fish, whose book, as I have discussed, demonstrates the influence of various Christian Miltonists, most extensively not Lewis but Jonathan Richardson the elder.[12]

In *Milton Unbound*, Rumrich restates his aforementioned argument that Lewis obfuscates the importance of Milton's heresy in order to present an orthodox reading of *Paradise Lost*. In his book, Rumrich also argues that Lewis oversimplifies not merely Milton's theological beliefs, but also those of Milton's seventeenth century audience: "Lewis's word 'ordinary,' though qualified by 'educated and Christian,' is problematic" because "[t]he conventional politico-religious categories that apply to mid-seventeenth-century (say, 1635-65) are slippery and invite caution and qualification" (34). The sweep of such Christians included, Rumrich notes, Arminians of the absolute right and republican left, pro-toleration Independents and pro-toleration Catholic sympathizers, pro- and anti-monarchical Presbyterians, and numerous smaller sects

that Rumrich lists, representing various religious eccentricities and heresies (see 34-35). Moreover, in much of Milton scholarship, Lewis's "ordinary" Christian audience has been stereotypically reduced to being a "composite sketch" that amounts to "Low Church Anglican and Presbyterian, more or less convinced of the bondage of the will, and imbued with attitudes and values appropriate to what has with some distortion been called the emergent bourgeoisie" (35).[13] This "composite sketch" hardly fits with the fiercely independent, extreme champion of free will, and indefatigable polemic champion for divorce who authored *Paradise Lost*. Simply put, to follow Lewis's interpretive model is to perpetuate faulty and simplistic historical stereotypes and to remain lazily innocent of the complexities of Milton the man, Milton's great epic, and Milton's religious and political milieu. If Lewis can claim that he follows Charles Williams's footsteps in championing "the recovery of a true critical tradition after more than a hundred years of laborious misunderstanding" (*Preface* v), then Rumrich is accusing Lewis of perpetuating misunderstandings of his own—a hegemonic interpretation of *Paradise Lost*, founded on a reductionistic and doctrinaire championing of "mere" Christian orthodoxy, and perpetuated by Fish and sundry other scholars. By contrast, Rumrich and a few allies are laboring to correct the faulty image he calls "the invented Milton" (*Milton Unbound* 1), shining forth the light of truth to use the fullness of *Paradise Lost* and Milton's canon to free readers from such hermeneutical obfuscations.

Lewis as Preventor of Inquiry: The New Milton Criticism and Subsequent Controversy

Rumrich's 1990 article was, some fifteen years later, hailed as an early iteration of what Peter C. Herman in 2005 would call "The New Milton Criticism," a critical movement that counted *Milton Unbound* as one of its foundational interpretive texts. This movement, according to Herman, is one that "embraces indeterminacy and incertitude" in Milton's

writings generally and *Paradise Lost* specifically ("Paradigms" 1). Significantly, the group of scholars that Herman discusses in his article includes a number who, like Rumrich, express strong critical agreement with Empson—often accompanied by an attendant sympathy for Milton's Satan and dislike of Milton's God; pronounce distaste for what they consider Lewis's reductionistic, stifling, and hegemonistic orthodoxies; and, in some cases, associate closely Stanley Fish with Lewis, even going so far as to portray Fish's *Surprised by Sin* as being supremely influenced by or even an extension of Lewis's *Preface*.

One example of scholarship that offers sweeping attempts to associate Lewis and Fish is Michael Bryson's *The Tyranny of Heaven* (2004), which, in addition to quoting approvingly Rumrich's aforementioned 1996 statement about *Surprised by Sin*'s being "a methodologically radical update" of Lewis's *Preface*, calls Fish's book "a combination of C. S. Lewis and cognitive psychology" (22). But the attempted association between Lewis and Fish is demonstrated even more strongly by Herman himself, who, having just asserted that "Milton's traditional critics" refuse to acknowledge "that Milton would ever be skeptical, or even mildly critical, of the Christian deity," goes on to state the following: "C. S. Lewis wrote in 1942 that 'many of those who say they dislike Milton's God only mean that they dislike God,' and Fish, in *Surprised by Sin*, turns Lewis's observation into a deliberate, pedagogical strategy for instructing the reader as to his or her genuine state" ("Paradigms" 12). And yet, as I have noted previously,[14] the extreme connection Herman makes here between Lewis and Fish simply isn't supported by Fish's actual text—a matter that should be of crucial import to a critical movement that, according to Herman, is characterized by "close-reading" (15). Rather, the statement by Lewis that Herman writes is the very foundation for *Surprised by Sin* is in fact nowhere mentioned in Fish's book, and none of the few places where Fish cites Lewis approvingly address anything connected to Milton's God. Like Rumrich, Herman greatly overstates the influence of Lewis's *Preface* on Fish, and, as I will discuss shortly, I suspect there is a specific polemic reason for doing so. Indeed, one may speculate that Herman, whose 2005 book, *Destabilizing*

Milton, is largely dedicated to undercutting Fish's arguments in *Surprised by Sin* and *How Milton Works* (2001), chooses, like Rumrich, to attack Fish via his alleged supreme influence, Lewis, because the dead, old-fashioned, and orthodox Christian Lewis is an easier target than Fish. While Fish is probably "the ultimate target of the New Milton Criticism's iconoclastic scholarly reformation" (Urban, "Speaking" 102), he remains, in his seemingly perpetual relevancy to academic and popular culture, more difficult than Lewis to discredit within academic circles. But if, as Rumrich states in 2021, "the value of Lewis's work tends to be discounted among academic readers (and that may be understating the case)" ("William Empson" 62),[15] then associating Fish's Milton scholarship so closely with Lewis's seems an expedient strategy for portraying Fish's writings as similarly passé and stifling.

Also like Rumrich, Bryson and Herman portray Lewis as one who, amid his Christian orthodoxy, has curtailed substantive inquiry regarding *Paradise Lost*. Ironically enough, doing so, Bryson and Rumrich actually follow Fish—without acknowledgement—in making sweeping, out of context claims that Lewis's larger goal is to "prevent the reader from ever raising certain questions" (*Preface* 69; cf. Fish 208). This phenomenon is first evident within Bryson's book: he contends that "Lewis's argument, dedicated as it is to assimilating Milton's epic to an orthodoxy comprised of equal parts Augustinianism and Anglicanism, is made with the express intent of, as he puts it, 'prevent[ing] the reader from ever raising certain questions.' Thus is the goal of nearly all orthodoxies summed up" (21). Bryson's above statement manifests, among other things, his participation in the tradition—dating back to Lewis's earliest respondents—of eliding distaste for Lewis's Christianity and distaste for his commentary on Milton's poem.[16] But, most seriously, Bryson here badly takes Lewis out of context, even more egregiously than Fish did nearly four decades earlier. Whereas Fish's misrepresentation of Lewis at least implicitly limited itself to matters related to Eve's Fall, Bryson portrays Lewis's point about preventing "certain questions" as the very *raison d'être* of Lewis's book. In any event, it is indeed ironic that the uncredited origin of the erroneous idea that

Lewis aimed to prevent wider scholarly discussion is *Surprised by Sin* itself, the very text New Milton Critics claim fortified Lewis's "neo-Christian" critical agenda and extended its hegemonic influence.

For his part, Herman, whom Bryson credits in his acknowledgements "for his interest in and encouragement of this project" (6), restates Bryson's misrepresentation no fewer than three times. First, in his 2004 review of Bryson's book, Herman quotes Bryson's aforementioned quotation of Lewis and then affirms Bryson's dismissal of Lewis by writing: "While Lewis published those words in 1942, they continue to guide Milton criticism" (2). For Herman, Bryson's egregiously out-of-context quote was an opportunity to assert Lewis's supposed continued dominance over Milton studies,[17] a dominance that squelched critical inquiry for the sake of "neo-Christian" orthodoxy, an idea emphasized by Bryson when he writes that Lewis and Fish are the leaders of what he derisively calls "Milton *ministries*" (23; italics in Bryson).

Herman restates Bryson's misrepresentation of Lewis twice more in 2005. First, in *Destabilizing Milton*, he laments the "limits of acceptable inquiry" in Milton studies, exemplified with "breathtaking candor" when Lewis allegedly writes that "the whole point of his Augustinian approach to Milton's epic is to 'prevent the reader from ever raising certain questions'" (7). Once again, Lewis's very limited agenda of "prevention" becomes, in Herman's words, the driving motivation behind the whole of *A Preface*, with the "certain questions" he means to "prevent" encompassing any daring form of critical inquiry that might challenge accepted orthodoxies in Milton studies. Herman expresses this sentiment again in the concluding sentence of his 2005 essay, "Paradigms Lost, Paradigms Found: The New Milton Criticism," when, having once more lamented how various writers have "labored […] to suppress" free thought in Milton studies, he writes: "If C. S. Lewis wrote *A Preface to* Paradise Lost with the intention of preventing 'the reader from ever raising certain questions,' the New Milton Criticism encourages all questions, regardless of where the answer will take the reader" (19). Here, once again, Lewis is used as a convenient scapegoat

who merits his punishment by dint of his insidious role in the tyrannical oppression of new ideas.[18]

In their respective responses to my 2011 calling out their misrepresentations of Lewis, both Herman and Bryson remain intractable, with Herman affirming that the motivation behind *A Preface* is "to stop discussion, not encourage it" ("C. S. Lewis" 259).[19] And Bryson responds to my concerns in the Introduction to his 2012 book, *The Atheist Milton*, by digging in his heels, "stating […] outright" that "in *A Preface to 'Paradise Lost*,' Lewis works to prevent certain thoughts and certain questions, not just from being thought or asked, but from being available to be thought or asked in the first place" (10). Moreover, Bryson in 2017 repeats his previous portrayal of Lewis. Again setting up Lewis as a critical strawman, Bryson and Movsesian call Lewis "the great orthodox critic, whose stated ambition about *Paradise Lost* is to 'prevent the reader from ever raising certain questions'" (Bryson and Movsesian 472). The out-of-context sweeping generalization continues.[20]

Two other misrepresentations about Lewis were put forth by New Milton Critics in the first decade of the new millennium. The first is Bryson's 2004 portrayal of Lewis's having essentially single-handedly overturned what Bryson calls the "dominant" pro-Satan critical opinion that flourished in Romantic, late nineteenth-century, and earlier twentieth century Milton criticism until the appearance of Lewis's 1942 volume (see *Tyranny* 20-21). But, in fact, the debate regarding Satan had been brewing throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with anti-Satan arguments being offered consistently throughout the many decades preceding Lewis's slim volume, and the pro-Satan position was already on the decline before Lewis's book appeared (Urban, "Speaking" 96-97).[21] I postulate that Bryson's attempt to link the academically "discounted" Lewis so singularly with the quelling of the noble pro-Satan position seeks both to increase the aura of Lewis's oppressive scholarly hegemony and to more closely associate the anti-Satan position with someone considered passé in scholarly circles, a combination that makes the dislodging of Lewis from his alleged place of critical dominance paradoxically both easier and more glorious.

But if Bryson was suggesting that Lewis was solely responsible for the upending of the Satanist position, then perhaps the most prominent New Milton Critic, Joseph Wittreich, in his 2006 book *Why Milton Matters*—provocatively subtitled *A New Preface to His Writings*—was restating Rumrich's earlier charge that Lewis's *Preface* had squelched subsequent critical inquiry. Offering no connection between Lewis and Fish, Wittreich charged that Lewis's book, which "announced 'the recovery of a true critical tradition' for Milton," served to "inaugurate a modern—fundamentally conservative—phase of criticism by reinstating the gag rule lifted from Milton criticism during the Romantic era," effectively prohibiting not merely expressions of the pro-Satan position, but also discussions of "inconsistencies and contradictions" in *Paradise Lost* (xxi). Wittreich's word choice is particularly telling. A "gag rule," as defined by Wikipedia, "is a rule that limits or forbids the raising, consideration, or discussion of a particular topic by members of a legislative or decision-making body." And, as Wikipedia's various examples across different countries, throughout history demonstrate, a "gag rule" is something that is decreed and enforced by government entities that can use the threat of violence and imprisonment to enforce the "gag rule" in question. We must reasonably ask ourselves: Did Lewis have any such power or authority to silence dissenters from his position? Did he attempt to silence anyone? Did he succeed in silencing anyone? We should consider soberly the numerous critics who rose up to oppose Lewis in the first decade after *A Preface*'s publication and who championed the kind of interpretive framework Wittreich says Lewis squelched. We should also consider the subsequent books by John Peter, J. B. Broadbent, and especially Empson that similarly championed the Satanist position and, that, especially in the case of Empson, used Lewis's alleged dogmatism to inspire and empower their own statements, many of which were every bit as forcefully articulated as Lewis's. And we also do well to consider if the hyperbolic condemnations of Lewis and the so-called "neo-Christian" critical perspective might themselves serve as rhetorical instruments to silence dissent

from the current incarnation of the rebel Miltonist party, whose sustained attacks against the "neo-Christian" position and its adherents can amount to the establishment of a new orthodoxy of accepted opinion.[22]

In any case, there can be little question that *A Preface to* Paradise Lost has, from the time of its publication up through the present, consistently been used as an antagonistic point of reference against which more radical approaches to Milton criticism have set themselves, a matter recently demonstrated yet once more in a particularly complex manner in queer Milton criticism, a movement whose response to Lewis I discuss in a subsequent article appearing in this volume of *Connotations*.[23] And although I think there is some fairness in the charge that *A Preface* oversimplifies certain interpretive matters, I also believe that much of the critical response to *A Preface* has been to oversimplify Lewis's arguments and indeed Lewis himself, a convenient temptation for those who would like to set Lewis's moral, religious, and critical orthodoxy over and against their own comparatively daring new interpretations. To offer a reductionistic engagement with Lewis is to risk not only misrepresenting *A Preface* but also to deprive oneself and one's audience of what remains an enduringly valuable reading of *Paradise Lost* in the Christian interpretive tradition Fish so notably engages in *Surprised by Sin*. Lewis's orthodox reading effectively addresses, in memorable and engaging prose, not only Milton's Satan but also his Adam and Eve, and, less effectively, Milton's God. And we who seek to convince the rising generations of readers of the continuing value of *Paradise Lost* do well to recognize that the very fact that the perpetually popular Lewis authored an important yet readable book on Milton's epic can serve as an effective inducement for new audiences to read the poem itself. If Lewis's assertions are sometimes simplistic, let us remember that such assertions are made within a conveniently short and reader-friendly volume whose chapters can stand alone as effective introductions to an important strand of *Paradise Lost* criticism. Lewis's assertions may invite disagreement, and the ease with which such dissent may be offered speaks to the readability of Lewis's prose. But let such

disagreement be offered fairly and in its proper context. To do so allows *A Preface*—and *Paradise Lost* itself—to teach and delight on its own terms and to be engaged fairly and profitably.

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NOTES

[1]Lewis writes: "In order to take no unfair advantage I should warn the reader that I myself am a Christian, and that some (by no means all) of the things which the atheist reader must 'try to feel as if he believed' I actually, in cold prose, do believe. But for the student of Milton my Christianity is an advantage. What would you not give to have a real, live Epicurean at your elbow while reading Lucretius?" (*Preface* 64).

[2]Lewis actually calls Satan "a thing that peers in at bedroom or bathroom windows" (*Preface* 97).

[3]For a response to Empson's suggestion that Satan is being "sincere" in this offer, see Urban, "Falls" 96-97.

[4]See Urban, "Surprised by Richardson"; and Urban, "The Acolyte's Rejoinder," 176-77.

[5]Fish continues: "In the other tradition, strongly announced by Blake's declaration that Milton was 'of the Devil's party without knowing it' and Shelley's judgment that 'Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of Satan' and continued in our century by A. J. A. Waldock and William Empson among others, disobedience of God is a positive act that rescues mankind from an unvarying routine of mindless genuflection and makes possible the glorious and distinctively human search for self-knowledge and knowledge of the Truth. For one party God and his only begotten son are the obvious co-heroes of the epic; for the other, the poem's true energy resides in the figures of Satan and the Eve who 'Bold deed … has presum'd' (IX. 921), figures whose actions would seem to exemplify Milton's declared preference in his *Areopagitica* for a virtue that is active rather than 'fugitive and cloister'd'" (ix-x).

Fish goes on to assert that *Surprised* succeeded in demonstrating the poem's "coherence" in terms of "the experience [that it] provoked." He writes: "I was able to reconcile the two camps under the aegis of a single thesis: *Paradise Lost* is a poem about how its readers came to be the way they are; its method, 'not so much a teaching as an intangling' is to provoke in its readers wayward, fallen responses which are then corrected by one of several authoritative voices (the narrator, God, Raphael, Michael, the Son). In this way, I argued, the reader is brought to a better understanding of his sinful nature and is encouraged to participate in his own reformation" (x). Fish emphasizes that his approach offered some rapprochement amid

"the 'Milton Controversy,'" for "it achieved the full enfranchisement of all combatants; everyone is partly right and everyone's perspective is necessary to the poem's larger strategy" (x-xi).

[6]In this sense, Fish's posture toward Lewis's *Preface* is in keeping with the sophisticated critical response to *A Preface* inaugurated by Waldock in 1943 (see Urban, "C. S. Lewis and Satan" 205-07).

[7]Fish does, of course, address matters of why and how Adam and Eve fell—see 208-16—but that is a different matter altogether from what Lewis was addressing.

[8]Here one may remember Allan H. Gilbert's question regarding Elmer Edgar Stoll's hostility toward Lewis's *Preface*: "Is [Lewis's] religion—and Milton's—what Stoll objects to?" (223).

[9]The silence among reviewers concerning Lewis's influence on Fish include Earl Miner, who calls *Surprised* "unquestionably the liveliest book on Milton since C. S. Lewis's little *Preface to* Paradise Lost" (300); and Arthur Turner, who innocently asserts that the Jewish Fish "is surely an orthodox traditional Christian" (422).

[10]Leonard observes the problematic and potentially degrading aspects of the term "neo-Christian" and its continued use in Milton studies (*Faithful* 524).

[11]Rumrich here is particularly concerned with Lewis's dismissive attitude toward *De Doctrina Christiana*, the posthumously discovered heretical theological treatise traditionally attributed to Milton. For a discussion of Rumrich's opposition to challenges to Milton's authorship of *De Doctrina*, see Urban, "Revisiting" 162, 166-67.

[12]Here again, see Urban, "Surprised by Richardson."

[13]It bears mentioning that Lewis's brand of "mere" Christianity hardly fits Rumrich's notion of Christians essentially committed to "the bondage of the will"; indeed, Lewis's *Mere Christianity* (1952), in a section of the book first published in 1942, contains one of the best-known popular twentieth-century defenses of the doctrine of free will (see 47-49).

[14]This and the next three paragraphs borrow from Urban, "Speaking" 99-100.

[15]I must emphasize that Rumrich, who kindly sent me an advance copy of his essay, writes these words in the context of his own "admir[ation]" of Lewis (62).

[16]See Urban, "C. S. Lewis and Satan" 205-28.

[17]Elsewhere Herman avers that the "ruling deities" of the Milton Society of America "are C. S. Lewis et al." (*Destabilizing* 3).

[18]In a brief response to Urban, "Speaking," Richard Strier, while aligning himself with the New Milton Critics, concedes that "Speaking" is "certainly right that the line about preventing questions has been taken out of context and used in a somewhat irresponsible way" (271).

[19]Curiously enough, however, Herman and Elizabeth Sauer omit any mention of Lewis's "prevent the reader" statement in their 2012 rewriting of Herman's "Paradigms Lost" as the Introduction of their co-edited volume *The New Milton Criticism*. For my largely positive review of *The New Milton Criticism*, see Urban, "Reading."

[20]Bryson's and Herman's misrepresentations of Lewis's "prevent […] certain questions" phraseology continues to be disseminated, even by unlikely sources. In a 2020 essay, John Leonard, arguably the most knowledgeable living Milton scholar, quotes without correction Herman's use of the phrase in *Destabilizing Milton* (See Leonard, "'Or' in *Paradise Lost*" 915).

[21]In his response to Urban, "Speaking," Strier affirms my point regarding the continuous scholarly debate regarding Satan both before and after Lewis: "I am sure that you are right that the history of Milton criticism since the eighteenth century has been one of profound disagreement, often centering on the figure of Satan. Anyone who denies this is clearly wrong" (271). Strier's comment applies to my objections both to Bryson in this paragraph and to Wittreich in the next.

[22]In response to Urban, "Speaking," the New Milton Critics resorted to ad hominem attacks against me and misrepresentations regarding my place of employment (see Herman, "C. S. Lewis" 265n6; and Bryson, *Atheist* 12). Herman also uses Christian terminology disparagingly as he accuses me of being Lewis's water-carrier, calling me "his acolyte" ("C. S. Lewis" 262). I address these attacks and misrepresentations more fully in Urban, "The Acolyte's Rejoinder"; and Urban, "Reading" 50-51. For a more extensive critique of Wittreich's "gag rule" accusation with relation to Milton studies, see Urban, "Speaking" 97-99.

[23]See Urban, "C. S. Lewis's Complex Relationship with Queer Milton Studies."

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C. S. Lewis's Complex Relationship with Queer Milton Studies: Indirect Inspiration, Hegemonic Antagonist, and Erased Inconvenient Forerunner[1]

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This article is the first entry in a debate on "C. S. Lewis's Complex Relationship with Queer Milton Studies" http://www.connotations.de/debate/queer-milton/. If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de

Abstract
This essay discusses queer Milton scholarship's various responses to C. S. Lewis's *A Preface to* Paradise Lost, beginning with Gregory Bredbeck's groundbreaking 1991 *PMLA* article through the 2018 volume *Queer Milton* and beyond. Although most of these responses portray Lewis as one whose explicit denial of queer angelic behavior in *Paradise Lost* has served to prevent queer readings of Milton, Lewis can also been seen as one who, by this explicit denial, indirectly brought about queer Milton studies. Attention will be paid to Drew Daniel's unexpected 2014 portrayal of Lewis's offering an especially daring queer vision of *Paradise Lost*, a portrayal that is erased when Daniel's 2014 essay is revised for the 2018 *Queer Milton*.

As I have discussed in previous essays, the reception history of C. S. Lewis's *A Preface to* Paradise Lost has been largely antagonistic, with various critics both taking exception to Lewis's scathing analysis of Milton's Satan[2] and portraying Lewis as one whose hegemonic influence has prevented honest discussion of difficult passages in *Paradise Lost* that challenge Lewis's portrayal of an orthodox Milton whose great epic represents the apex of literature in the received Christian tradition.[3] Within this latter category stands queer Milton studies, a critical approach to Milton now three decades old that has become increasingly

visible within Milton scholarship, reaching heightened prominence when the 2014 *Early Modern Culture* special issue "Queer Milton" was granted the Milton Society of America's Irene Samuel Award as the most distinguished collection of essays on Milton published that year. The stature of queer Milton studies increased further when the comparatively slim "Queer Milton" was expanded into the much larger 2018 book *Queer Milton*, a collection that, according to Will Stockton in his "Afterword," portrays not merely a single queer Milton, but various "queer Miltons, in the plural" (295), with each essay offering its own queer Milton in keeping with the respective queer interpretation of each individual contributor, who in turn might be building off the queer Milton of a critical predecessor.[4]

As we shall see in this essay, the earliest voices in queer Milton studies substantively craft their daring readings of Milton's writings in direct opposition to Lewis's orthodox and self-consciously heteronormative approach to *Paradise Lost*. This practice has very recently prompted at least one major queer Milton scholar to suggest that Lewis's *Preface* and the critical response against him did in fact essentially bring about the enterprise of queer readings of Milton. Melissa Sanchez writes: "At least since C. S. Lewis declared himself embarrassed by the possibility that Milton's angels might lead 'a life of homosexual promiscuity,' readers have suspected that Milton imagines pleasures beyond those of procreative marriage" (309-10). Unsurprisingly, various queer Milton scholars who have invoked Lewis have portrayed him as the most prominent critical voice of a heteronormativity that would obfuscate queer readings to be seen in Milton's texts, a portrayal of Lewis that I will chronicle below. But queer Milton studies' relationship to Lewis is ultimately more complex than that of a revolutionary critical school to a powerful, even hegemonic conservative Christian antagonist. Indeed, as Sanchez's above statement perhaps intimates, Lewis's own reading of *Paradise Lost* arguably invites a queer reading of Milton before dismissing it. Furthermore, one particularly engaging essay within the special issue "Queer Milton" actually portrays Lewis as an inspiring

and ironically daring forerunner to the enterprise of queer Milton studies, a portrayal made all the more curious in that a subsequent rewriting of this same essay that appears within the 2018 edited volume *Queer Milton* excises all reference to Lewis's previously named queer reading of Milton's epic. This erasure of Lewis as queer Milton studies' critical forerunner serves to relegate Lewis to the simple and more palatable role of a mere antagonist against the enterprise of queer Milton studies, a relegation that obfuscates both Lewis's complexities as a critic and his own multifaceted attitudes toward homosexuality.

Queer Milton studies' longstanding response to Lewis stems from his famous/infamous discussion in *A Preface to* Paradise Lost of Raphael's description of angelic sexuality in book 8 of *Paradise Lost*, in which Raphael, responding to Adam's inquiry regarding whether or not angels physically make love, blushingly tells Adam that when angels "embrace" (626), they actually "mix" in a way that is "[t]otal" (627), "enjoy[ing]" a "Union of Pure with Pure" that is hindered by no "obstacle" of flesh and bones (623, 627, 624). Lewis's discussion is actually quite lengthy and almost never engaged within its larger context, but the most commonly referenced portion reads as follows:

> A certain amount of critical prudery, in which I once shared, has been aroused by the account of what [Henry] More has called "the amorous propension" of Milton's angels (*P. L.* VIII, 618-29). The trouble is, I think, that since these exalted creatures are all spoken of by masculine pronouns, we tend, half consciously, to think that Milton is attributing to them a life of homosexual promiscuity. That he was poetically imprudent in raising a matter which invites such misconception I do not deny; but the real meaning is certainly not filthy, and certainly not foolish. (109)

We may note that although Lewis's discussion promptly dismisses the notion of homosexual angelic activity, Lewis first gives explicit voice to what he says readers "half consciously" think regarding what is now called the "queer" nature of Milton's angels. As Sanchez's aforementioned statement suggests, it was Lewis's explicit utterance of a then rather taboo subject that eventually elicited the responses of various queer Milton critics, thus indirectly giving birth to the entire enterprise

of queer Milton studies. Curiously, an analogy may be seen between this critical phenomenon and William Empson's much earlier remark in *Milton's God* that Lewis had "let in some needed fresh air [...] by saying, 'Many of those who say they dislike Milton's God only mean that they dislike God'" (9; quoting *Preface* 126). For Empson, whose analysis of *Paradise Lost* is largely framed in opposition to Lewis's, Lewis's statement enabled him to state his position forthrightly without apology; he writes: "I think the traditional God of Christianity very wicked, and have done since I was at school" (9-10), and uses his agreement with Lewis's somewhat daring remark as a platform to offer his critique of Milton's God. As we shall see below, queer Miltonists have by and large not echoed Empson's appreciation for Lewis,[5] but we may surmise that on some level Lewis's above remarks regarding what appears to be angelic homosexuality "let in some needed fresh air" for queer Miltonists, whose pioneering critics often framed their readings of Milton in opposition to Lewis's denial of what they saw as the evident queerness in *Paradise Lost*.

The first queer Milton scholar to address Lewis's above quotation is Gregory W. Bredbeck in his groundbreaking 1991 *PMLA* article, "Milton's Ganymede: Negotiations of Homoerotic Tradition in *Paradise Regained*." It is noteworthy indeed that this first explicitly queer reading of Milton actually begins with Bredbeck's quoting the above passage by Lewis in its totality. Bredbeck casts his study in relation to "recent feminist inquiries" that challenge "masculine assumptions" in literary criticism and explore "alternative forms of Renaissance gender construction," and he aims to "forcefully extend" Renaissance gender studies through "reading Milton's uses of homoeroticism" (262). Bredbeck highlights "Lewis's condemnation of Milton's 'poetical imprudence'" as a pronouncement that "succinctly displays two divergent ideas that still hinder Milton studies and have yet to be explored fully: the ease with which homoeroticism can be detected in Milton's canon and the urgency with which it is written away" (262). Although, as we shall see below, leaders in queer Milton studies have in recent years presented their movement as connected to the larger critical movement of the

New Milton Criticism,[6] we may see here that Bredbeck anticipates by more than a decade that movement's portrayal of Lewis as a scholar whose pontifications have prevented further questions. Moreover, Bredbeck portrays Lewis as a powerful representative of a long tradition of criticism that has exercised hegemonic authority against new avenues of inquiry. Curiously, Bredbeck's article does not analyze *Paradise Lost*, but *Paradise Regained*. For Bredbeck, the impact of Lewis's sweeping pronouncements affects readers' perceptions of the entire Miltonic canon and indeed the whole of seventeenth-century literature. Bredbeck goes on to write that Lewis's comments

> seem not so much "criticism" as a "common gloss," a logical continuation of the processes of stigmatization, segregation, and isolation that exemplify seventeenth-century interpretations. Lewis—like many other critics before and since—does not explain Milton's construction of gender but rather empowers the tradition that gives it meaning through contradistinction. (273)

To continue to accept Lewis's reading, then, is to ignore the homoeroticism that actually exists in Milton's writings. Bredbeck laments "what has been lost of Milton's canon in the lengthy historical process of explaining it" (273). What is needed, he asserts, is a new tradition that unashamedly embraces the complexities of Milton's portrayals of sexuality.

Bredbeck also complains that

> [t]he excision of homoeroticism from Milton's canon ahistoricizes the texts, removing them from the dynamics of sex and sexuality that typify seventeenth-century England. It becomes less difficult to believe that Milton actively engaged such topics when one realizes that the articulation of sexual deviance was, if not the norm, then certainly not abnormal during the later Renaissance. (262-63)

Bredbeck's criticism that Lewis's representative "excision of homoeroticism" inaccurately depicts Milton's social milieu anticipates John Rumrich's 1996 contention that Lewis's sweeping conception of "the ordinary educated and Christian audience in Milton's time" (*Preface* 91) obfuscates the degree of socio-religious diversity within the broader

Christian population of mid-seventeenth-century England (Rumrich, *Milton Unbound* 34-35). And although Bredbeck does not mention Lewis's Christianity, his engagement with Lewis connects to some of the other charges made against Lewis decades earlier: Lewis's sometimes-decried role as a "public moralist" (Adams 38; Bergonzi 171) and his tendency to gloss over or explain away difficult passages that might interfere with Lewis's artificial presentation of *Paradise Lost* as a monument to orthodox "mere" Christianity. From Bredbeck's perspective, Lewis oversimplifies both Milton's writings and Milton's England, and Bredbeck calls for fresh reengagements with each.

Bredbeck's engagement with Lewis was eventually followed by Bruce Boehrer's 2002 *PMLA* article, "'Lycidas': The Pastoral Elegy as Same-Sex Epithalamium." Like Bredbeck, Boehrer focuses on a text other than *Paradise Lost*, similarly noting Lewis's discussion of angelic sexuality. Stating that "Lewis frets over a perceived excessive of sexual potential in the Milton canon," Boehrer portrays Lewis as a "strong reader" representative of those who

> have been notoriously disturbed by the apparent "homosexual promiscuity" of Milton's heaven ([109]): a place [...] that seems to admit free amorous intercourse among all its inhabitants, a place that Adam understands to be peopled entirely with "Spirits Masculine," a place where copulation is not essential to reproductivity, a place presided over by a God in whose "Hyacinthin" image Adam has been made (*Paradise Lost* 10.890, 4.301). (232)

For Boehrer, the implicit homosexual overtones of heaven are plentiful, including even parallels between God and Adam, and Apollo and his beloved Spartan Prince Hyacinth. But Lewis would seek to elide such matters. In contrast to "Lewis's fear" of Milton's heavenly homoeroticism, Boehrer argues that "Lycidas" "fram[es] its mystical marriage in terms that escape conventional Christian heteronormativity" (233). Indeed, Lewis's brand of Christianity has presented an overly simplistic understanding of Milton's complex depictions of sexuality.

Another queer reading of Milton is offered by Jonathan Goldberg in his chapter "Milton's Angels" within his book *The Seeds of Things* (2009). Goldberg chides Lewis because he at first recognizes, "not incorrectly,"

that Milton's angels appear to enjoy "'a life of homosexual promiscuity'" [109] but then "proceeds to deny" what Raphael's words to Adam rather obviously suggest (198). Lewis makes this critical decision because he is, "of course, certain that homosexuality is," to use Lewis's word, "'filthy'" (198). Indeed, "Lewis chose to believe that whatever form of sex life the angels have, it is not human sex." Consequently, Lewis, influenced by the Cambridge Platonist Henry More, solved the "problem" regarding "angelic sex" by ascribing to Milton's angels a kind of "sexlessness" (198). For Goldberg, Lewis's moral squeamishness causes him to quash a straightforward, albeit uncomfortable, understanding of Raphael's words.

Similarly, five years later, Will Stockton in his Introduction to the special issue "Queer Milton" argues that Lewis's presentation avoids "the erotic possibilities" of Raphael's account, stating that Lewis's reading "forecloses the queer (filthy, foolish)" interpretation of that account ("An Introduction" 8). In doing so, Stockton, who specifically connects the "Queer Milton" project to the New Milton Criticism[7]—a critical movement within Milton studies that "embraces indeterminacy and incertitude" as of central import to Milton's writings (Herman 1)—restates the charge of various New Milton Critics that Lewis's *Preface* aims to forestall critical discussion of unorthodox or uncomfortable topics in *Paradise Lost*.

But although Stockton's statement continues the received queer Milton studies portrayal of Lewis as one whose sexual squeamishness stifles queer readings of Milton, Drew Daniel, in his contribution to "Queer Milton" entitled "Dagon as Queer Assemblage: Effeminacy and Terror in *Samson Agonistes*," explicitly and unexpectedly champions the pursuit and development of *Lewis's* queer Milton. In his essay, after restating the basic objections to Lewis offered by his queer Milton studies predecessors, Daniel writes: "Yet, in a chapter forbiddingly titled 'The Mistake About Milton's Angels,' Lewis evades the specter of male homosexual angels by recourse to an *even queerer formulation* of a *celestial hermaphroditic free-for-all*" (70; italics added). Daniel then quotes Lewis:

> […] there exists among these creatures, according to Milton, something that might be called transsexuality. The impulse of mutual love is expressed by the total interpenetration of two aereal bodies; "total they mix" because they are ductile and homogeneous—they mix like wine and water, or rather like two wines. (Daniel 70, quoting Lewis 109-10; brackets in Daniel)

Significantly, none of the aforementioned queer Milton scholars before Daniel quotes Lewis's above discussion of "transsexuality," but Daniel is clearly excited by its interpretive potential. He then goes on, surprisingly enough, to actually critique what he considers the too modest assertions of the groundbreaking queer Milton scholar Bredbeck in favor of the daring queer possibilities postulated by, of all people, Lewis. Lamenting that Bredbeck, "frustratingly," "generally sticks to the script of simply discovering or uncovering traces of male homosexuality in the Miltonic text," Daniel credits Bredbeck only for offering a cautionary (albeit valuable) "first step" in queer readings of Milton (70). Daniel then calls for a larger "response which reconsiders the volatility of the a-gendered zones that both Milton's work *and Lewis' text* potentially make available to the queer critic" (70; italics added). Remarkably, Daniel here presents Lewis, in spite of himself, as one who opens up the horizons of queer Milton studies in ways that transcend Bredbeck's modest aims. Indeed, it is the imaginative queer vision of Lewis's radical presentation, not Bredbeck's subdued one, that Daniel calls queer critics to pursue.

And Daniel does himself pursue Lewis's queer Milton in the remainder of his essay, writing of "Dagon's underlayer of hermaphroditic meanings" which "partakes of the material ambiguity" characteristic of "all spirits, both angelic and demonic" (77)—a presentation that recalls Daniel's celebration of Lewis's "hermaphroditic" angels. Moreover, Dagon's hermaphroditic qualities are reflected in both Samson and Dalila, each of whom exhibit an ambiguous mixture of male and female (78-79). In a very real sense, Daniel's 2014 queer Milton is his development of Lewis's queer Milton.

But in 2018, the visions of the different queer Miltons appear to reach an impasse. Indeed, the version of "Dagon as Queer Assemblage" that

appears in *Queer Milton* erases Daniel's "Queer Milton" discussion of Lewis's queer Milton. Strikingly, although the rest of Daniel's essay is revised only slightly, the section containing his discussion of Lewis and Bredbeck is removed entirely. Of course, Lewis's queer Milton silently remains in Daniel's 2018 presentation of the hermaphroditic Dagon and his queer assemblage. But Daniel no longer acknowledges his own queer Milton's inconvenient parentage. There could be various motivations for Lewis's erasure, but its effect is both to obfuscate Daniel's appropriation of Lewis's queer Milton into Daniel's own queer Milton and to eliminate Daniel's attendant frustration with Bredbeck's more modestly presented queer Milton.

This latter erasure coincides with Erin Murphy's lead essay in *Queer Milton*, which was not part of the 2014 special issue "Queer Milton." Murphy's essay begins with a developed discussion of not only Bredbeck's pathbreaking work in queer Milton scholarship but also Murphy's heartfelt account of having discovered Bredbeck's scholarship and seeking to contact him, only to learn of his youthful death. Comparing her feelings to what Milton expresses in *Lycidas*, Murphy writes, "I found myself in the very peculiar state of mourning a young man I had never met five years after he died" (2). Regarding Bredbeck's seminal article, she writes: "By revisiting and refusing C. S. Lewis's homophobic reading of the angels in *Paradise Lost* as anachronistic [...] Bredbeck moves beyond identifying moments of male homoeroticism to embark on a queerer analysis that undermines any simple sense of [*Paradise Regained*'s] heteronormativity" (2). Here, Murphy credits Bredbeck's article with a further reaching queer vision than Daniel did in 2014. Murphy's affectionate and laudatory portrayal of Bredbeck and his daring, pioneering work in queer Milton studies—over and against Lewis's "homophobic reading"—does not fit neatly with Daniel's 2014 calling on queer critics to move past Bredbeck's comparatively timid "first step" and instead develop Lewis's more audacious queer Milton. And perhaps *Queer Milton* has no place for Daniel's possibly discomfiting revelation that his own queer Milton appropriated and developed Lewis's queer Milton.

Notably, *Queer Milton*'s only other mention of Lewis is by Lara Dodds, who decries Lewis's "homophobic commentary on" Raphael's description (158), asserting that, despite Lewis's aforementioned warning "against the assumption that Milton imagined the angels living 'a life of homosexual promiscuity,' most readers now presume that the erotic lives of the angels are queer" (153-54). Dodds offers no statistical evidence to support her claim regarding "most readers," but she here presents Lewis not only as bigoted but also as one whose commentary on Milton's angels has been superseded by a queer hermeneutic—a stark contrast to Daniel's 2014 reading of Lewis's larger text's being, paradoxically, a visionary springboard from which daring queer readings can be launched.

Tellingly, both Murphy and Dodds describe Lewis's critical stance as "homophobic." But Lewis's life and writings destabilize portraying Lewis as practicing or fomenting homophobia, a phenomenon Oxford Reference defines as "[n]egative attitudes towards homosexual people and homosexuality which may be manifested in discrimination, hostile behaviour, or hate crimes." Indeed, Lewis is not easily accused of such behavior or attitudes. Significantly, the man who, besides Lewis's brother, is generally considered Lewis's best friend, Arthur Greeves, was homosexually inclined, something Greeves revealed to Lewis in 1918 (McGrath 72).[8] The depth and importance of Lewis and Greeves's friendship, which spanned from their adolescence through Lewis's death, was profound. Lewis credited Greeves with being instrumental in his own 1931 Christian conversion, for demonstrating to Lewis how to feel deeply, and for teaching him "charity" while resisting Lewis's "arrogance" (Brown 89-90).[9] Lewis dedicated his first Christian book, *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1933), to Greeves; his discussion of friendship in *The Four Loves* (1960) is highly influenced by his friendship with Greeves; and his 296 letters to Greeves from 1914 to 1963 make up the volume *They Stand Together: The Letters of C.S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves* (1979) (Brown 88-89). Moreover, though maintaining that homosexual physical acts were sinful, Lewis in 1958 and 1959 wrote against the criminalization of homosexual acts (*Letters* 473; *Collected Letters* 3:

1154)—which were illegal in the UK until four years after his death—and in 1959 expressed compassion for "persecuted" homosexuals for whom such criminalization created "a blackmailers' paradise" (*Collected Letters* 3: 1154). This information arguably complicates describing his commentary on *Paradise Lost* as "homophobic," for Lewis's complex attitude regarding homosexuality suggests that his words resist easy pigeonholing, something that Daniel's paradoxical 2014 use of Lewis evidences.

But Lewis's complexities aside, and although Lewis's now-unacknowledged influence still manifests itself in Daniel's 2018 version, the fact remains that *Queer Milton* omits explicit reference to Lewis's queer Milton—and the tensions attendant to invoking Lewis in this manner—in favor of a different, dare we say a more palatable and seamless, queer narrative. We may ask if Lewis's erasure is in keeping with the collection's stated celebration of multiple queer Miltons, or, for that matter, with the larger New Milton Criticism's emphases on tensions and contradictions. And given that *Queer Milton* stands in the line of a larger critical tradition encompassing Lewis's various scholarly opponents, including A. J. A. Walcott, Elmer Edgar Stoll, G. Rostrevor Hamilton, R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, John Peter, William Empson, John Rumrich, the New Milton Criticism, and queer Milton criticism, another question bears asking: Has Lewis's *Preface* served to stifle critical discussion or to elicit more of it? And if the longstanding critical response to *A Preface* suggests the latter,[10] whence comes the impulse to erase Lewis?

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NOTES

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and anonymous readers at Connotations for their insights and suggestions for improving this essay.

[2]See, most prominently, discussions of Waldock, Stoll, Hamilton, and Werblowsky in Urban, "C. S. Lewis and Satan"; and the discussion of Empson in Urban, "C. S. Lewis and His Later Respondents."

[3]See the above endnote and also discussions of Curran, Rumrich, the New Milton Criticism, and, indirectly, Fish in "C. S. Lewis and His Later Respondents"; as well as the discussion of the New Milton Criticism in Urban, "Speaking for the Dead," 97-100.

[4]To avoid confusion regarding similar terminology, let me be clear that, throughout this essay, "Queer Milton" refers to the 2014 special issue of *Early Modern Culture*; *Queer Milton* refers to the 2018 book / collection of essays; and "queer Milton" (with no quotation marks in this essay's text proper) refers to any given critic's queer interpretation of Milton. For example, later in this essay I refer to "Lewis's queer Milton" and "Daniel's own queer Milton."

[5]See Empson 7 and 9.

[6]See Stockton, "An Introduction" 11-12n12; Orvis, "Preface" v; and Stockton, "Afterword" 294.

[7]See Stockton, "An Introduction" 11-12n12.

[8]For discussion of Greeves's sexual orientation, see especially Christopher.

[9]Brown quotes the unpublished *Lewis Papers*. Greeves's role in Lewis's spiritual development has very recently been noted by the prominent Milton scholar John Rumrich in "William Empson and C. S. Lewis" 73-74.

[10]In addition to Urban's aforementioned articles, see also McBride and the more general coverage of the critical response to *A Preface* offered by Keena.

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"New Alchimie":
Reading John Donne's "Nocturnall" Through Poems by Kimberly Johnson and Alice Fulton

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This article is the first entry in a debate on "'New Alchimie': Reading John Donne's 'Nocturnall' Through Poems by Kimberly Johnson and Alice Fulton" http://www.connotations.de/debate/reading-donnes-nocturnall-through-poems-by-johnson-and-fulton/. If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de

Abstract

The study of pre-Enlightenment literature is too often separated from the study of contemporary literature; literary scholars are too often out of touch with their colleagues in creative writing; and mutual disdain divides literary folk from STEM folk. Who better to bridge such gaps than John Donne and those twenty-first-century poets who are, like Donne, inspired by both the humanities and the sciences, analytic dissection and linguistic play? In "A Nocturnall Upon *S. Lucies* Day," Donne blends alchemical terms and liturgical language, moving readers but also puzzling them. Those most fruitfully puzzled and moved by Donne's "Nocturnall" are poets who have taken it as a point of departure for new poems of their own. Kimberly Johnson's "A Nocturnall Upon Saint Chuck Yeager's Day" and Alice Fulton's "A Lightenment On New Year's Eve" are startlingly original poems and, at the same time, scholarly interpretations of Donne's piece. In selecting Donne's "A Nocturnall Upon *S. Lucies* Day" as the *prima materia* for their creations, Kimberly Johnson and Alice Fulton reveal the radical ductility of Donne's poem, its openness to the diverse needs, desires, traumas, and dreams of twenty-first-century readers.

In *John Donne and Contemporary Poetry: Essays and Poems*, edited by Judith Scherer Herz, Heather Dubrow traces "The History of the Donne and Contemporary Poetry Project" and notes that the "project" might better be referred to in the plural as a range of projects—publications, discussions, poetry readings, and other communal events—undertaken by poets, by critics, and by writers who are both poets and critics (Dubrow, "History" 9). She stresses that such projects work, implicitly and explicitly, to bridge a number of painful divides in the academy: "These issues assume distinctive forms in different institutions" and in different parts of the English-speaking world, Dubrow notes, "but recurrent patterns do emerge":

> First, witness the separation between those engaged with more contemporary texts and those studying the centuries tellingly coagulated into "early literature" by our students. Increasing specialization in graduate programs, impelled in part by a partly justified distrust of the "coverage" model and in part by an understandable agenda of limiting time to degree, means that those studying twentieth- and twenty-first-century texts are less likely than in earlier decades to know or care about what was written earlier. Symmetrically, students of the medieval and early modern periods may well be less informed about and less interested in modernist, postmodernist, and contemporary literature, perhaps partly from resentment of the increasingly central role of the later periods in many departments. (Dubrow, "History" 12)

Even more intense, Dubrow notes, is the disjunction that too often separates literary studies from creative writing: "mutual distrust and disdain are still common in the cultures of many departments" ("History" 13). Poets and literary scholars can and must, she stresses, challenge "*either/or* schemas (studying and teaching earlier or contemporary literature, publishing scholarly articles or poems, adopting models of periodization or undermining them, etc.)" by replacing the "*either/or*" approach with methodologies, teaching practices, and professional agendas that acknowledge and include "*both/and*" ("History" 13).

To the list of divides Dubrow mentions, one might add the rift dividing what C. P. Snow called "the two cultures": the culture of what we now call the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) is still, despite efforts toward cross-disciplinary thinking at many colleges and universities, divided from that of the humanities

and arts. Indeed, a lamentable tendency Snow pointed out over half a century ago endures: while not a few engineers, mathematicians, and lab scientists do take a lively interest in the arts and humanities, humanist scholars and poets are too often math- and science-illiterate. Who better to prod us out of each of these prejudicial, limiting silos than John Donne and those twenty-first-century poets who are, like Donne, inspired by both the humanities and the sciences, who enjoy both analytic dissection and linguistic play?

In the early seventeenth-century the dividing lines between these competing discourses had begun to form, but they were still blurred and indistinct. The science of alchemy as metallurgic proto-chemistry and the religio-philosophical discipline of spiritual alchemy had yet to go entirely their separate ways. In "A Nocturnall Upon *S. Lucies* Day, Being the Shortest Day" (*Complete Poetry* 155-57) Donne blends alchemical terms and liturgical language, and he does so in ways that, paradoxically, both move readers and puzzle them deeply. Most readers require footnotes and marginal glosses to appreciate the technical and religious apparatus of the poem; yet I have seldom encountered one who does not respond with sympathy to the devastating alchemical transformation that love has worked upon the bereaved persona, a man who declares himself to be "every dead thing, / In whom love wrought new Alchimie" (ll. 12-13).

The readers most fruitfully puzzled and moved by Donne's "Nocturnall" are the poets who have taken it as a point of departure for new poems of their own. Among these, I have found particularly illuminating the work of two American poets known for their sensitivity to language, their investment in the natural world, and their use of images and forms drawn from sacred ritual, from mathematics, and from the physical sciences. Taking seriously Dubrow's call for a "*both/and*" approach to Donne as an early modern poet and to contemporary poets' Donnean investments, I read Kimberly Johnson's "A Nocturnall Upon Saint Chuck Yeager's Day" and Alice Fulton's "A Lightenment On New Year's Eve" not only as startlingly original poems, but also as scholarly

interpretations of Donne's "Nocturnall" that open up new ways of understanding the earlier poem.

1. "an ordinary nothing": Indefinite Poetics in Donne and Johnson

Kimberly Johnson's "A Nocturnall Upon Saint Chuck Yeager's Day," from her 2014 collection *Uncommon Prayer*, sensitizes the reader to minute details of Donne's language.[1] The speaker of Johnson's poem—first published in *Plume* in 2011 under a slightly different title—is "trying to work out" not only "the ever-aftermath" of a "life" that "hurtles heartbreak to heartbreak," but also "the ever-aftermath" of Donne's poem, its afterlife in the language of post-modern poetry.[2] In doing so, Johnson's speaker renders audible in Donne's "Nocturnall" words that usually speed by too quickly to be acknowledged by the ear, including one of the shortest and most common English words, the indefinite article "a." Johnson and Donne both use the indefinite article (and its definite partner, "the") in order to define their poems' personae, to establish them as epitomes of the human condition who are, nevertheless, individualized. Donne's speaker sees himself as "A quintessence," "the grave," and "the Elixer"; Johnson's persona is concerned to explore what happens in "the chest" when it is bombarded "like a kickdrum" and plays "a tune" that leaves "the sense" struggling to define its own experience.

According to the *OED*, articles are adjectives; they modify nouns in subtle ways relating to degrees of specificity, definiteness, and indefiniteness. The definite article, linguist John Lyons explains, is diachronically related to "the adjectivalized deictic adverbial 'there.'" It "invit[es] the addressee to find the referent in the environment, without […] directing his attention to any particular region of it" (Lyons 655-56). "The" is thus less *pointy*, one might say, than the deictic terms Heather Dubrow calls "*Unsettling Spatial Anchors*," but it retains a residual hint of deixis (Dubrow, *Deixis*). Indeed, as the linguist James Pe-

ter Thorne suggests, "the basic meaning" of the definite article may perhaps be captured in the expression "*which is there*" (Thorne 565). But the indefinite article marks a noun as singular while at the same time steering clear of specificity. As the *OED* explains, "a" (along with its inflection "an") was "[o]riginally a variant of" the adjective "one." It modifies "a singular countable noun head," and its primary application is in reference "to something not specifically identified (and, frequently, mentioned for the first time) but treated as one of a class: one, some, any" (*OED*, "a, *adj*." 1.).

Since Johnson's poem is called "A Nocturnall," one might expect that it belongs to the class of things specified in the most obviously relevant *OED* definition of "nocturnal": that it is a "night-piece," which is "[a] poem or literary composition associated with qualities of the night" ("nocturnal, *adj*. and *n*." B.2.; "night-piece, *n*." 1.c.). But though "A Nocturnall Upon Saint Chuck Yeager's Day" certainly deals with dark emotions, the body of the poem neither evokes nor mentions night. Indeed, once a Donne-savvy reader notices the idiosyncratic spelling of "Nocturnall" with two Ls, and parses that spelling in relation to the rest of Johnson's title, she realizes that the indefinite article with which that title begins is meant to introduce, not so much "one of a class" of poems associated with qualities of night, as "one of a class" of poems inspired by Donne's "A Nocturnall Upon *S. Lucies* Day, Being the Shortest Day."

Reflecting upon Johnson's title as allusive and intertextual rather than literal raises the question of what—exactly—Donne meant when he called his poem "A Nocturnall." Scholars have rightly argued that the title and the poem as a whole evoke the liturgy of the hours, in which the three divisions of Matins, also called the "night office," are called "nocturns."[3] But the *OED* cites Donne's title as an example of the usage "night-piece" (meaning "[a] poem or literary composition associated with qualities of the night"). After much sleuthing, I've concluded that this example of usage is not reliable. Before Donne's poem, the literary meaning of the English word "nocturnal" was, as William J. Lawrence explains, a farcical drama or dramatic scene featuring night-time mischief: the chaotic final scene of Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*,

for example, in which the citizens of Windsor take to the forest to torment and punish the horn-bedecked Falstaff (Lawrence 133).[4] I've come to doubt, then, that "nocturnal" was, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, an established sub-genre of serious lyric poetry such that, in calling his poem "A Nocturnall," Donne (or whoever supplied the header used in the posthumous 1633 poems), was literally labeling his St. Lucy's eve lyric as a kind of poem in addition to labeling it analogically as a kind of prayer. That is, while the poem is not literally a prayer to St. Lucy (and never explicitly addresses her), it quite clearly draws upon and parodies the liturgical nocturnes assigned for the office of Matins on St. Lucy's Day, so the title "A Nocturnall Upon *S. Lucies* Day" should be taken to mean "a liturgy-like poem poured forth at midnight on the feast of St. Lucy and inspired by the midnight prayers assigned to that feast in the breviary." Conversely, since the word "nocturne" did not yet mean "a meditative nighttime poem" when Donne was writing the poem, it is anachronistic to read the words "A Nocturnall Upon *S. Lucies* Day" as labeling what follows "a meditative nighttime poem written on and about St. Lucy's day."

The title by which Donne's poem is known in our time may or may not be authorial. But it is useful, regardless, to consider the different ways in which that title will signify if one reads it analogically and with an eye to early seventeenth-century usage of the word "nocturnal," versus literally and anachronistically as referring to a poetic subgenre not yet established when Donne wrote the piece. For pondering the distinction leads the reader to discover a distinct but important point: that the indefinite article often sets up an opportunity for interpretation based in figurative definitions of the noun that follows it. This is the case, for example, in the usage of "a" covered by *OED* definition 1.f., where the article precedes "a proper name, used connotatively with reference to the qualities of the individual, or figuratively as the type of a class: someone or something like; a person or thing of the same kind as." A familiar example, cited by the *OED,* is Shakespeare's "A Daniel come to judgment" (*The Merchant of Venice* 4.1.218). Johnson's use of "A Nocturnall" in her title (especially as spelled with two Ls and accompanied

by the words "Upon," "Saint," "Day," and a proper name in the possessive case) works along these lines to identify her poem as a "thing of the same kind as" Donne's poem.

This distinction between "the" as indicating a definitive thing and "a" as pointing to things that are merely one of a class or that are a given kind of thing only figuratively lies just under the surface of many lines in Donne's poem. For the speaker wishes to convey to others that he is not simply a nothing—that is, as he puts it in line 35, "an ordinary nothing"—one among many things in the class of nothings, but that he is (or has become) literally nothingness itself, *the* very essence of nothingness, "Of the first nothing, *the* Elixer grown" (l. 29; my emphasis). If he succeeds, how can we respond? What emotional investment can readers make in the words of non-being personified? Johnson helps answer these questions through her deployment of the indefinite article.

"A Nocturnall Upon Saint Chuck Yeager's Day" is about indefiniteness, about the frustrating indeterminacy of human experience in the quantum universe of post-modernity. Johnson manages the paradoxical task of making indefiniteness concrete partly by using the indefinite article no fewer than seven times in 26 lines (that is, considerably more frequently than Donne's five times in 45 lines). Three of the seven are included in a single sentence at the end of Johnson's second stanza: "There should be **a** bombblast /bellknocking bonejar of noise, **a** jolt / to all wavelengths, **a** tremor through the pavement / tripping car-alarms and dog-howls to the proof / that something happened." In order to appreciate the third "a," in this sentence, one must proceed from *OED* definition 1. to 2.b., which explains that "a," when used "[w]ith infinitive clause as complement," means "such as (to do, undergo, etc., what is expressed by the complement)." The seventeenth-century example provided is directly relevant; for it—like Johnson's poem—describes a very loud noise: "O, 'twas a din to fright a monster's ear; / To make an earthquake" (Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 2.1.308-09). In Shakespeare's lines, "a din to fright" means "a din such as to frighten," a din capable of frightening. An obsolete version of the same usage, the *OED* adds, can also be constructed using the word "*for* and verbal noun," as

in Edmund Burke's "I am not a man for construing with too much rigour the expressions of men under a sense of ill-usage" (Burke 4: 312).[5] But poets invite such rigor, and critics are happy to supply it. Johnson—who is a scholar, a critic, and a poet—is creatively rigorous in deploying arcane details mined from the *OED*. It is not surprising, then, to discover that she not only uses "a" to mean "such a," but links it to a verbal noun rather than to an infinitive clause: "There should be […] a tremor," the speaker says, "to the proof / that something happened." Here, "a tremor" means "such a tremor as to"; and what follows is a version of the allegedly obsolete usage involving a verbal noun rather than an infinitive: not "a tremor to prove that" but "a tremor to the proof that."

Johnson's *OED*-inspired word magic prompts reexamination of a sentence that lies at the center of Donne's poem: "Oft a flood / Have wee two wept, and so / Drownd the whole world, us two" (ll. 22-24). The "a" of "a flood" is not, strictly speaking, used here to mean "such a." Donne's speaker does not say that the lovers wept "such a flood such as to drown the whole world"; he says that "a flood" wept by them did drown it. He may thus seem to be employing the word in the sense of *OED* definition 5.a.: "flood" ("A profuse and violent outpouring of water […] threatening an inundation") in its "transferred" sense, 5.b. (which includes "a profuse burst of tears"). But "threatening an inundation" doesn't quite work in Donne's poem if we read the "a" of "a flood" in its usual, definition 1.a. sense; for "a flood" that drowns the whole world is not just "a flood"—any flood, some flood. Rather, it is (even if figuratively rather than literally) "the flood" of *OED* definition 4.b.: "the great deluge recorded in the book of Genesis as occurring in the time of Noah" ("flood, *n.*"). The flood sent by God in Noah's time was not only "such a" flood "as" might hypothetically drown "the whole world" (as the noise in *The Tempest* was such "a din" as could, hypothetically "fright a monster's ear," or as Johnson's "a tremor through the pavement" is something that "should" follow upon the breaking of hearts as upon the breaking of the sound barrier "to the proof that / something happened"). No, it was, according to Scripture,

the flood that literally did drown the whole world. But because the flood that drowns the microcosm of "us two" in Donne's poem is *not* literally Noah's flood, the word "a" in the construction "a flood" does have the force of "such a": the couple wept "a flood" such as did to their microcosm what "the flood" did to the earth. As in Genesis, moreover, sorrow—figured in the poem as weeping and in Scripture as God's "being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart" (Genesis 6:6; Douay-Rheims translation)—is the motive force behind the deluge. My larger point is that, by using the construction "a thing, X" in a context that invites comparison between "a thing, X" and "*the* thing X," Donne is no longer simply classifying "an X" as "one of a class" of things called "X." He is figuratively tying "a thing, X" to *the* exemplary, quintessential X, the X that defines X-ness.

Donne explores the limits of this technique in line 15 of "A Nocturnall" when the speaker uses a problematic construction: "A quintessence even from nothingnesse." The general point of the paradox is clear enough: nothingness is the absence of any thing or substance, and this bereaved man feels himself to be the very substance of nothingness. But the indefinite article seems off. The fifth essence is, by its very nature, not a thing belonging to a class of things, but something unique. *OED* definition 1.a. of the term explains that, "[i]n classical and medieval philosophy," the word "quintessence" is specifically "[a] *fifth* essence existing in addition to the four elements, supposed to be *the* substance of which the celestial bodies were composed" ("quintessence, *n*."; emphases mine). Later in "A Nocturnall," using the word "Elixer" as a synonym for this definition of "quintessence" by combining it with the definite article and linking it to the primordial chaos from which God created the universe, the speaker of Donne's poem says, "I am […] / Of *the* first nothing, *the* Elixer grown" (emphases mine). The *OED* further specifies that, in alchemical discourse—which Donne taps throughout the poem—"quintessence" is "this" same essence, the ineffable super-substance that cannot be classified as belonging to any of the ordinary four classes of matter (definition 1.a.). All of the *OED*'s examples of usage for this definition from texts written prior to the mid-

seventeenth century deploy it either without an article or with "the." Of course, one might well object that, in the construction "a quintessence even from nothingness," the relevant *OED* definition of "quintessence" is number 2.: "The essence which characterizes, and can be extracted from, any substance." But the examples of usage for this definition reveal that, while the word is often used without an article or in the plural to refer to such essences as a group, whenever the essence of a particular thing is being discussed, the default usage is either "quintessence of x" or "the quintessence of x," not "a quintessence" from or of x.[6] So why does Donne's persona put it that way?

Once again, Johnson's poem provides a clue. In line 3, the speaker describes the emotional "boom" that has thumped at her heart as "the first and final beat of a tune." But isn't "a tune" one of a class of things that has many beats? How can there be "a tune" in which the first beat is also the final one? The most familiar definition of the noun "tune" is "a rhythmical succession of musical tones" ("tune, *n.*" 2.a.), which implies a plurality of beats that allow for a rhythm. But as the *OED* junkie Johnson knows, two other now obsolete definitions included in the *OED* entry for the noun "tune" are "a […] sound or tone, esp. the sound of the voice," and "[s]tyle, manner, or 'tone' (of discourse or writing)"; it can also be used figuratively to mean "Frame of mind, temper, mood" ("tune, *n.*" 1.a., 5.).

Immediately after using the indefinite article to introduce an unspecified "tune" belonging to the general category of such monometric sounds or moods, however, Johnson's speaker proceeds—through a wittily enjambed and italicized act of nomination that also works as an internal rhyme—to specify that this "tune" is not just, to quote once again from the first and most obvious *OED* definition of "a," "some" tune or "any" tune, but rather, very specifically, "a tune called"—line break! wait for it!—"*Too Late.*" The title "Too Late," italicized in Johnson's text, may mean past saving, or it may evoke the sleepless vigil of a man still awake at midnight on the longest night of the year. It might even mean "Excessively Dead"—an incongruous superlative reminiscent of the hyperbolic grief Donne's poem expresses.

But why does Johnson's persona speak of "a tune" at all when she is about to specify that it is *the* particular "tune called / *Too Late*"? A similar enjambment in Donne's opening lines does not say "Tis the yeares midnight, and it is a dayes, / *Lucies*," but rather "Tis the yeares midnight, and it is the dayes, / *Lucies*." Perhaps in Johnson's construction, "the" would be too deictic; it would imply, before "the tune" is named, that "the tune" in question is already "there" (as "the [day]" called "S. Lucies Day" was there every December 13th in the Julian calendar). It would imply that *Too Late* is "*the* tune"—you know, the one we all hear in the wake of an emotional "sonic boom"—as opposed to *a* tune not previously known to readers, one not already "there" for us, not the one Donne or any other poet heard; rather, one Johnson's speaker is uniquely qualified to hear, recognize, entitle, and introduce to us.

In choosing "a tune" over "the tune," in short, Johnson grapples with a question central to readers' experience of Donne's poem: how can a lyric persona establish his/her/its/their own uniqueness while, at the same time, tapping into readers' sympathy, encouraging them to identify with that persona's pain, joy, or frustration? This question is particularly urgent for the post-modern lyricist who wants to project her own voice and to discover fresh means of tapping into human emotion even as she practices the kinds of quotation and appropriation so characteristic of our era and often rendered deliberately, ironically, and—to my ear—despairingly voiceless in the practices of the so-called "conceptual poets." But it is also important to Donne. Which takes me back to "a quintessence" versus "the quintessence."

Constructions in which "quintessence" is used with "a" rather than "the" seem, according to the *OED*'s examples of usage, to appear most consistently in illustrating two figurative definitions of the term "quintessence": "The most essential part or feature *of* some non-material thing; the purest or most perfect form or manifestation *of* some quality, idea, etc.", and "[t]he most typical example of a category or class; the most perfect embodiment of a certain type of person or thing" ("quintessence, *n*." 3.a., 3.b.). These are the definitions most immediately applicable to Donne's use of "A quintessence" in his "Nocturnall," and

the *OED* illustrates them with two examples of usage, each dated 1590, in which "*a* quintessence" is used figuratively. Another early modern example comes from a dedicatory epistle by Thomas Nashe, in which he calls his 1593 *Christs Teares Ouer Jerusalem* "a quintessence of holy complaint extracted out of my true cause of condolement" (Nashe sig. *2v). But most relevant of all is an example from a 1622 sermon preached by John Donne himself, in which he uses the indefinite article to signal figurative meaning when he asks his auditory, "Dost thou love learning, as it is contracted, brought to a quintessence, wrought to a spirit, by *Philosophers*?" (*Sermons* 4: 166).[7] If the combination of the word "quintessence" with the indefinite article in "A Nocturnall Upon *S. Lucies* Day" signals a comparable figurative application of the word, then Donne's speaker, whether intentionally or in a slip of the tongue, speaks of his supposed transformation into "the" literal essence of nothingness in terms usually reserved for talking about a figurative essence.[8] And in doing so, he sings "a tune" that Johnson also sings and hears, a sound that is in fact the quintessence of humanness: an "Elixer" distilled through the quintessentially human act of versification, the fettering of grief in tropes and numbered syllables so as "to work out the ever-aftermath" of heartbreak.

The pun on "math" in Johnson's coinage "ever-aftermath," and the scientific and technological lexicon of her "Nocturnall"—which includes such terms as "mach-cone," "molecule," and "wavelengths"—reflects Johnson's engagement with what early modern thinkers called "natural philosophy." Her poem is more than superficially invested in Yeager's breaking of the sound barrier; it is conscious of its status as something written not only "after" Donne's "Nocturnall" in the attributive sense so often applied in the subtitles of contemporary poems that adapt or rewrite other poems, but chronologically later than Yeager's 1947 achievement. The poem is about belatedness: "Here comes that sonic boom," the speaker cries, "thumping at the chest like a kickdrum / the first and final beat of a tune called / *Too Late*." The speaker's sense of belatedness, these lines reveal, is not only artistic and emotional, but sensory: "Ever too late the event / reveals its narrative to the sense, /

ever too slow on the uptake." If, in our age of broken sound, the "sense" is too slow to catch even the "narrative" revealed by a lived "event," how can it possibly respond to the lyric sounds of a poet long dead? How, in the mad onrush of post-modern experience, can one *hear* a poem of the past?

For Johnson, the answer involves revisiting one of the central images of Donne's poem, that of "loves limbecke," which she treats not as arcane and mystical, but rather as highly technical, not as evoking the occult realm of spiritual alchemy often explored by Donne scholars, but rather as a reference to the most cutting-edge metallurgical technology of Donne's time.[9] Johnson prompts us to reorient our understanding of "loves limbecke" in this way when her persona laments, "ever life hurtles heartbreak to heartbreak / while I rattle around in its mach-cone." A mach-cone is a pattern of sound waves formed by an object travelling at super-sonic speeds. And as one comes to realize after seeking out images of conical early modern alembics and comparing them to diagrams explaining the physics of a sonic boom, a mach-cone is limbecke-shaped. Both are funnels, wide at one end and narrow at the other.[10] Johnson's image thus revitalizes Donne's. It shocks us into realizing that the alchemical transformation of Donne's persona is at least as much a technological process as it is an involuntary and spontaneous spiritual experience. It reminds us that our response to Donne's poem is not just a matter of its silent but striking visible apparatus, the stanza on the page, but also of the auditory punch that apparatus delivers, a sonic boom produced four hundred years ago when "Something wider than the sky / got broken, something faster than a word / arrowed into it."

In blending terms drawn from physics, plant biology, human anatomy, bio-chemistry, and astronomy with the structures and intonations of Christian ritual, Johnson's poetry insists—as does Donne's—upon the fundamental oneness of what have in our time become warring clans: the tribe of religion and the tribe of science. Johnson's deeply Donnean 2008 collection *A Metaphorical God* traces the seasons of the liturgical year from Advent through Easter and includes a trio of poems

on the Triduum inspired, in part, by Donne's "Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward" in which the light toward which the speaker ultimately turns is both the shining of the divine Sun/Son and the bioluminescence of marine dinoflagellates.[11] Johnson's yoking of science and faith continues in *Uncommon Prayer*, the collection in which "A Nocturnall Upon Saint Chuck Yeager's Day" appears; the collection as a whole, like the *Book of Common Prayer*, owes much to the Psalter. Its cover art is a gorgeous illuminated detail from a Medieval Book of Hours, and the collection's first part, entitled *Book of Hours,* includes not only Johnson's "Nocturnall," but other poems alluding to the canonical hours—"Matins for the Last Frost," "Three Lauds," "Vigil." These prayer-like poems also teach the reader scientific terms like "hibernacle" and "lyrids."

2. "her vigil and her Eve": Alchemical Ritual in Donne and Fulton

Alice Fulton, too, blends ritual with technology, ceremony with science. Indeed, her 2015 collection *Barely Composed* draws upon every imaginable resource in its struggle to answer the question Magdalena Edwards sums up in her review of the volume: "How do you compose yourself if your mother is dying, dead?" In *Barely Composed*, Edwards observes, Fulton is "doubly" concerned with this question as she "probes both her biological mother's death and Mother Earth's destruction around us, 'the inmates of this late-stage civilization.'"[12] In "A Lightenment On New Year's Eve," Fulton approaches the question from a distinctly gendered perspective, demonstrating that, when a poem responding to Donne's "Nocturnall" is the work of a woman, the text of that poem implicitly activates the potential in Donne's imperative, "[l]et mee prepare towards her," rendering it a gendered prophesy and casting Donne's poem as a harbinger of the lucid woman whose text enlightens his. "A Lightenment" presents its maker, Alice Fulton, as a lightbringer, a Lucy, no less devastated than the Donne persona who keeps vigil on the feast of Saint Lucy. Exploring her own, individual grief,

both as a poet and as a woman, Fulton gives a voice to the silent, unspeaking "her" of Donne's poem, the woman "toward" whom its speaker "prepare[s]": a feminine entity who is at once the anonymous "she" mourned by the speaker and the canonized Lucy, saint of the winter solstice.

Donne's poem itself, however, provides the ground upon which Fulton descants. In a note at the back of her collection, Fulton announces her poem's debt to both Donne and Shakespeare: "'A Lightenment On New Year's Eve' repurposes lines from 'A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day' by John Donne and quotes a phrase from Shakespeare's Sonnet 55" (92).[13] Her recycling of recognizable phrases from Donne's "Nocturnall" is appropriate, one realizes as one reads, in part because the situation in which Fulton's first-person speaker finds herself recalls that of Donne's speaker: she is in mourning for the death of a woman; and the darkness of winter enfolds her (though the occasion is New Year's Eve, the night of December 31st rather than midnight on December 12th, the eve of St. Lucy's Day, as in Donne's poem). Like Donne's speaker, she is engaged in a quasi-religious ritual; while his "Nocturnall" evokes the Roman Catholic liturgy of the hours, Fulton draws upon a rather self-mocking blend of Catholicism, Tibetan Buddhism, and trendy New Age psychobabble to describe a ceremony in which the participants are encouraged first "[t]o write / the year's grievances by hand on scrap" and then immolate the paper in a "burning bowl" (75). But while Donne's persona begins his final stanza insisting that his sun will never "renew" even as he bitterly urges other "lovers" to "Enjoy" their next year's "summer" (lines 37, 38, 41), the third section of Fulton's poem presents the persona as joining others in composing what amount to epistolary New Year's resolutions: "After the offering, we compose letters / of intention for the year ahead" (76).

Fulton's "A Lightenment On New Year's Eve" also resembles Donne's "Nocturnall" in challenging the reader with cryptic and knotty language. In his "Nocturnall," Donne includes such medical, philosophical, and alchemical terms as "hydroptique," "quintessence," "limbecke," and "Elixer," relying upon the reader to know their literal

meanings even as he applies them figuratively to the persona's ceremony of self-aggrandizing self-negation. Fulton uses such abstruse religious and scientific terms as "sodality," "Rinpoche," "control rods," and "recombinant."[14] Indeed, she goes even further than Donne in testing readers' tolerance for obscurity, taunting them with neologisms that remain entirely opaque until—in a sudden onrush of the "lightenment" to which her poem's punning title refers—one "gets" the pun or the allusion and (if one is anything like me) finds oneself both enlightened and amused by the heavy-handed lightness of Fulton's wordplay.[15]

The first explicit quotation from Donne's poem in Fulton's poem appears when, introducing a passage that relies upon images drawn from the world of digital photography, the speaker pleads,

> […] Since she enjoys her long night's
> festival let me. Some use their digital fireworks
> setting to preserve the letting go. (75)

Mourning her mother's passing, the speaker takes Donne's "[s]ince shee enjoyes her long nights festivall" ("Nocturnall" 42) quite literally as evoking a night-time celebration of the dead complete with fireworks displays: displays that are, like grief itself, worth capturing and preserving rather than simply "letting go." By interpreting the festival of Donne's line 42 in this way, Fulton perhaps suggests as well that the "light squibs" of the winter sun in lines 2-4 of Donne's poem are fireworks set off in honor of Saint Lucy and the deceased beloved.[16] This suggestion—if such it is—nudges the reader toward interpreting Donne's poem not as an articulation of despair, but as an intentional and technically advanced snapshot of a hyperbolically bereaved persona, a highly controlled work of pictorial art rather than a confessional outpouring.

In Donne's poem, the speaker's pyrotechnically spectacular grief is mirrored by the diseased state of a planet sick unto death: "[t]he worlds whole sap is sunke," he says (l. 5), and "[t]he generall balme"—the moisture that ought to infuse the atmosphere—has been gulped down

by a sickly, "hydroptique earth" (l. 6). While the world's devastation in midwinter is not so much the result of the Donnean speaker's actions as a glass in which he sees his own deadness reflected, Fulton's poem encourages me to hear in Donne's lines a prophetic presentiment of what we now know as global climate change. In the second section of Fulton's poem, the speaker quotes the advice of "the pyropathologist" (76) who presides over the New Year's Eve burning ceremony, a New Age practitioner who uses fire ceremonies (and dubious bromides) to heal clients. Fulton's grimly funny neologism suggests that this person is something of a pyromaniac and at the same time alludes to the climate-oriented sciences of pyrogeography (which maps the global effects of wildfires) and phytopathology (the study of plant diseases). The precepts mouthed by the "pyropathologist" strike the mourning persona as ironically alarming rather than comforting: "*Change the world,* the pyropathologist / says without a beat. *Fire has a sense of entitlement. / It owns the stage. If you do fire / it does you back more deeply*" (76). Change the world, the speaker winces; do we really want to keep doing that? For us, "drown[ing] the whole world" (Donne, "Nocturnall" 24) is no mere hyperbole, no microcosmic metaphor, but a terrifyingly literal and macrocosmic work-in-progress.

Indeed, Fulton's speaker worries that fire—like the love that has "ruin'd" the speaker of Donne's poem—is a very dangerous thing indeed to "do." It, like love, is all too likely to consume you:

> […] *If you do fire*
> *it does you back more deeply.* If you do love—
> but I was saying. To fire it's all to the tooth.
> It's a felony-friendly entity not a force
> with whom it is advisable to link your fate. (76)

The speaker of Donne's poem was, after all, far too willing to "do love"; and in "A Nocturnall," it has most certainly done[ne] him: he has been burnt to ash in "loves limbecke" (l. 21).

Despite her awareness of such dangers, however, the speaker of Fulton's poem proceeds to carry out the New Year's fire ritual, to seek purgation and transformation through the alchemical incineration of base

elements, which in her case include slips of paper on which she has inscribed all the "fatuous platitudes" people offer the bereaved. The process recalls and updates that undergone by the speaker of Donne's "Nocturnall"; for, though the "festivall" of bereavement in Donne's poem does not involve immolating written words, its speaker has undergone the *nigredo*, the first stage of the four-stage *opus* undertaken by alchemists.[17] "Fire is the fuel of the alchemical work and the main agent of its continuous process of transmutation," alchemy scholar Johannes Fabricius explains, and the *nigredo* is the stage of the alchemical process in which "the glory of the coniunctio"—the conjugal fusion of the male and female principles into a mystically hermaphroditic figure—"suddenly fades into darkness and despair" and "bier and marrage bed are made one" (14, 98).[18] This alchemical descent into blackened residue resembles psychotic depression in that it "subjects the ego to […] feelings of dejection, loneliness and hopelessness and reactions of self-depreciation" that "reach delusional proportions" (Fabricius 99): Donne's persona in a nutshell. In Fulton's poem, the speaker undergoes an alchemical burning ritual in order to emerge from such desolation. But she seems all too aware that the fire she uses to process the death of her mother may also "*Change the world*" for the worse, altering the planet as relentlessly as the lovers of Donne's "Nocturnall" do when their weeping "[drowns] the whole world" in a rising ocean of tears.

The Donnean reverberations set up by "A Lightenment" are not accidental. Alice Fulton was introduced at a 2017 reading by her Cornell University colleague, poet Ishion Hutchinson, as the mysterious "she" of Donne's *First Anniversary:* "In the year 1611," Hutchinson said, "John Donne prophesied Alice Fulton with these words: 'She that should all parts to reunion bow, / She that had all Magnetique force alone, / To draw, and fasten sundred parts in one'" (Hutchinson).[19] In part 3 of Fulton's "Lightenment," this powerful Donnean woman leaves the despair and the anti-futurity of Donne's persona on its own for a moment and joins the rest of her New Year's companions, who turn from burning their "grievances" to "compose letters / of intention for the year

ahead." But her mood remains sardonic; she is as skeptical of resolutions as she is of professorial pretension. Responding to a witticism that sounds like it comes from a satirical academic novel, she positions herself not so much as inspired poet as frustrated party-goer (or party member), a weary academic whose hood and gown could stand some repair:

> *A party without a procedural guide-*
>
> *book's like a faculty club without a tattoo*
> *removal service.* True fool, my twice-turned
> regalia does need to be retooled. (77)

This wryly self-deprecating observation complete, Fulton's "Lightenment" begins its fourth and final part, in which the autobiographical persona mourns her mother's death by explicitly "retool[ing]" lines 17-18 of Donne's poem:

> One gasp and she was rebegot
>
> of nightness nullsense nilthings
> which are not. (77)[20]

Here, it is the deceased "she," not the speaker, whom death transmutes into a quintessence of nothingness. The poet/speaker, the "I" of Fulton's poem remains; she is "the living cell," the organism that has grown from the viable egg once produced by her mother's ovary.

But she is not the dead woman's only monument; the collection *Barely Composed* is a carefully sealed "tome," the poetic tomb a daughter has chosen to "build" around her mother's absence. Text generated in the face of death is, Fulton knows, a blasphemy of sorts, an imposition upon the wordless purity of unspoken grief. Yet, like Donne's speaker, who objects that even the word "death" itself "wrongs" the dead, and who nevertheless chooses to speak that word, Fulton boldly defies "the eraser," death, by writing of writing:

> […] Though the eraser
> grays the paper and silence breaks

> the state it names, I'll call this hour
> her vigil and her Eve. (78)

Reproducing the capitalized "Eve" found in some manuscripts' rendering of Donne's line 44, Fulton detects its equivocal potential: "her Eve" is the second thing that the speaker "call[s] […] this hour," but Donne's persona (and Fulton's) are also saying that, while they will call "this hour her vigil," they will "call" *her*—the dead woman—"Eve." That is, they will call her the mother of all who live. In calling the mother she mourns by that primal name, Fulton recognizes herself, however "molished / with time and old with all / these bratty fire ribbons tucked inside // my head" (78), as a daughter who mourns both the mother who bore her and a more primal Mother: one who is what Donne would call "a quintessence" of mortal motherhood. Performing, with "attentional" precision, a ceremony for this Woman, who is both suffering Mother Earth and a holy *mater misericordiae*, Fulton assumes the duties of "The link girl," the girl bearing "a torch made of cloth / dipped in pitch," who "runs ahead / to light the way" and, in so doing, links the future of earth, humanity, and poetry to their pasts. Such running ahead requires, paradoxically, a sense of oneself as coming after, being the offspring rather than the parent, the flame kindled by, yet consuming, a prior flame. It marks one's silent pain as heir to preexisting grief: "Writing is the fire / that burns fire. Every silence quotes / a greater silence" (78).

Fulton's "link girl" is also her version of St. Lucy, the light bearer. In mourning her biological mother as the now-annihilated "Eve" from whom she sprang, this Lucy highlights for the reader of Donne's "Nocturnall" the radical fruitlessness of the love his poem describes. That love, the radically painful *eros* that Donne's persona once experienced with the woman he mourns, gave birth—even in life—only to turbulent nothingness and dead flesh. The moments in which the couple momentarily withdrew from their fixation upon one another in order to "show / Care to ought else" made them "grow / To be two Chaosses" (ll. 25-26, 24-25)—side-by-side universes of the unformed *prima materia*—

while their times apart, the "absences" they often endured, "[w]ithdrew [their] soules and made [them] carcasses" (ll. 26, 27). Re-reading these lines in the context of Fulton's poem, one is sensitized to the temporal implications of the speaker's repeated use of "grow": "oft did we grow" in life "To be two Chaosses" (ll. 24-25); and now, after her death "I am […] / Of the first nothing, the Elixer grown" (ll. 28, 29). In the first case, any engagement with the world outside their coupledom turned the lovers into nothing but two abysses of the four elements at war with one another. And now that his fellow-chaos is dead, the speaker finds that he has "grown" to be a unique and inimitable essence of the chaos prior to all chaoses: the primordial nothingness. His claim to be "first" reflects a will-to-priority that denies poetry's intertextual nature and thus undermines poesis. He cannot acknowledge the likeness of his grief to any prior grief or of his text to any prior text and thus cannot engage in the re-creation essential to poetic creativity. In rounding out the poem with an echo of its opening lines, the persona quotes only himself.

Of course, his radical originality is a fiction. As I have stressed in exploring the title "A Nocturnall," Donne's poem is not what its persona claims it is. It is not the singular, unprecedented and inimitable expression of matchless grief. It is "A" nocturnal, a liturgy created by John Donne that relies for its resonance upon echoes of Christian prayer, Petrarchan conceits, and an alchemical lexicon; its speaker is "a quintessence," not *the* fifth essence, but something in the class of things to which the fifth essence belongs, something that paradoxically comes both before and after the other four essences. And because Donne's "Nocturnall" is—for all its speaker's claim to unborn nothingness—a fruit sprung from the womb of pre-existing texts, it too has "grown" to be a womb, a fertile recess in which other poems grow, an incubator not of chaos, but of beauty. Donne's poem is admittedly a very different sort of uterus from that of a living woman.[21] It is a dark matrix consciously chosen by its self-declared offspring, a deep well of pain and loss in which new poems gestate, a fertile grave from which they emerge.[22] In selecting it as a *prima materia* for their creations, Kimberly

Johnson and Alice Fulton reveal the radical ductility of Donne's "A Nocturnall Upon *S. Lucies* Day," marking it as a poem open to the diverse needs, desires, traumas, and dreams of twenty-first-century readers.

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NOTES

[1]Kimberly Johnson, "A Nocturnall Upon Saint Chuck Yeager's Day," in *Uncommon Prayer* 12-13. All quotations of Johnson's poem are taken from this edition with the permission of the author. Johnson's "Nocturnall" is reprinted in Herz (48-49).

[2]In the *Plume* version of the poem (https://plumepoetry.com/a-nocturnal-by-kimberly-johnson/), "Nocturnall" is spelled with only one L and Yeager is referred to by his formal given name, Charles, rather than by the more familiar nickname "Chuck."

[3]See Miller; and Frost 156-59.

[4]See also Chapter 5 of Steggle.

[5]The *OED*'s quotation of Burke's sentence extends only through the word "men." Burke's point in this passage is one that would have interested Donne; he attempts to distinguish the legitimate grievances of Irish Catholics "as Catholics" from what he considers the "factious and imaginary" complaints of Ireland "as Ireland" against England.

[6]See Dolan 13-20. She does not explicitly address the issue raised by Donne's use of the indefinite article.

[7]This sermon on Job 36:25, which Donne preached 25 August 1622, will be included in the forthcoming vol. 6 (*Sermons Preached to the Nobility and Gentry*, ed. Philip West) of *The Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne*. It was—as its header indicates—preached "at Hanworth, to my Lord of Carlile, and his company, being the Earls of Northumberland, and Buckingham, &c." The peer whose "company" formed Donne's auditory on this occasion was James Hay, Viscount Doncaster and Earl of Carlisle, whom Donne had accompanied to Germany when Hay traveled there as English ambassador. As West notes on the *Oxford Sermons* website, Hanworth was "the home of Sir Robert Killigrew, one of the knights who had accompanied Doncaster on the German embassy and who, like Donne, had become a client of Buckingham […]. Also in the auditory at Hanworth was Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland, Hay's father-in-law, the so-called 'Wizard' Earl, who in 1602 had broken the news of Donne's marriage to Anne More to her father, Sir George More." Northumberland was well known for his love of learning, including alchemy.

[8]See Dolan: "All declarations of 'nothingness' are qualified and paradoxical, as despair is made to submit to an alchemical metaphysics." Of the speaker's claim to be an epitaph, for example, Dolan says that, "as 'Epitaph' is conventionally an expression of the essence of that which is dead (and as such an intensified, condensed death), it is also that which gives the most concise meaning to that which is dead. Like the alchemical 'quintessence,' it is an extraction from the elements which have dissolved and moved downwards towards incoherence, and as such is, paradoxically, a reconstruction: elements which have decomposed are symbolically resuscitated by the 'Epitaph,' a verbal quintessence, definitive verbal enclosure and monument" (14).

[9]For an image of workers selecting limbecks in an early modern metal-working factory, see a woodcut from Ercker, available online at the Getty Images website: https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/woodcut-illustration-from-beschreibung-aller-furnemisten-news-photo/90778700.

[10]See the engravings of conical limbecks in *De Alchemia* assembled in a flip-book on Adam McLean's *Alchemy Web Site* at https://www.alchemywebsite.com/Equipment_de_Alchemia_1541.html. Also compelling is the image of "Alchymya" that is one of several from Thurneysser, also digitized by McLean https://www.alchemywebsite.com/Emblems_Quinta_Essentia_1570.html. The conical flask held by Alchymya in this image is labeled "Aßentia"—absence. The shape of these apparatuses resembles that of a mach-cone; see "Sonic booms and Mach cones" on the science blog MrReid.org, 15 Dec. 2012: http://wordpress.mrreid.org/2012/12/15/sonic-booms-and-mach-cones/.

[11]The poems are "Goodfriday"; "[ ]."; and "Easter, Looking Westward" (Johnson, *A Metaphorical God* 56-61). The bracketed blank that serves as the title of the second poem corresponds to the liturgical emptiness of Holy Saturday, which ends with the kindling of new fire that begins the solemn celebration of the Easter Vigil.

[12]Fulton's *Barely Composed* is, like Donne's poem with its five stanzas, a five-part composition. Both "You Own It" (82-84), the poem Edwards quotes in her description of Fulton's book, and "A Lightenment On New Year's Eve" (75-78) appear in Part V. All quotations from "A Lightenment On New Year's Eve" are taken from this edition with the permission of the author. The poem is also available at KROnline, the website of the *Kenyon Review*, the journal in which it was first published in Summer 2011: https://kenyonreview.org/kr-online-issue/2011-summer/selections/a-lightenment-on-new-years-eve/.

[13]The allusion to Sonnet 55 appears in the fourth and final section of Fulton's poem with the lines "No / parched marble memorates her" and "Nor war's quick fire shall burn" (77). The piece begins, moreover, with a darkly funny mash-up of Keats and Shakespeare: "Season of no weedwhackers and wind / that moans like a folding choir." Compare the opening of Keats's "To Autumn" ("Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness") and the opening quatrain of Shakespeare's Sonnet 73: "That time of year thou mayst in me behold / When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang / Upon those boughs which shake against the cold, / Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang." Fulton's pun in these lines plays upon the idea

that a "folding choir"—a choral group that is ceasing to operate, giving up and going out of business, may make a moaning sound like that of a rusty old folding chair in an abandoned choir-loft. For a Donne scholar, these equivocal images evoke not only the demolished churches of Shakespeare's sonnet, but also Donne's comparison of copious and hollow verbiage to "winds" that "in our ruin'd Abbeyes rore" ("Satyre 2," l. 60).

[14]A "sodality" is a Roman Catholic confraternity devoted to a particular spirituality; a "Rinpoche" is a Buddhist lama who, after death, reincarnates as an especially enlightened infant, a child who will enlighten others. On sodalities, and their frequent association with the Blessed Virgin Mary as patroness, see Hilgers. On the nature of "tulkus," bodhisattvas who choose reincarnation over nirvana in order to teach others and who are given the title "Rinpoche" in Tibetan Buddhism, see Barzin. On how "control rods" work in a nuclear reactor, see "Nuclear 101"; and on the technology used to produce "recombinant" DNA, see Green.

[15]Examples include "folding choir" (see n13 above), a double warping of the word "nuclear" in the phrase "newclear nukeyouler" (75), and a catalogue of what sound like plant species that would emerge either from a fire-scarred forest or from the scorched mind of a poet obsessed with light and fire: "chandelierium. Kindleweed / ashquill" (78).

[16]According to the *OED,* the word "squib"—referring to a "species of firework, in which the burning of the composition is usually terminated by a slight explosion" ("squib, *n.*" 1.a.)—first appeared in English in a 1535 play by Donne's maternal grandfather John Heywood.

[17]See especially Peter, who characterizes Donne's poem as anticipating Carl Jung's psychoanalytic interpretation of spiritual alchemy.

[18] Like Peter, Fabricius explores spiritual alchemy as the medieval and early modern precursor to Jungian psychology. In discussing the *nigredo*, he quotes Caldwell on the trauma arising when one is forced "to face the bitter knowledge of death"; "the death of a loved one can suddenly […] flood the mind with unbearable horrors" (Caldwell 181; qtd. in Fabricius 99).

[19]Hutchinson quotes *The First Anniuersary,* ll. 220-22; these lines follow, and present an alternative to, Donne's vision of a world in which "all Relation" is lost and "euery man alone thinkes" himself "a Phoenix."

[20]In Donne's "Nocturnall," the lines are "I am rebegot, / Of absence, darknesse, death; things which are not."

[21]An exception, of course, is the womb of the Virgin Mary as Donne himself defined it, which was chosen by the child it bore. See his *La Corona* 2: "Annunciation."

[22]For the idea of a text's "matrix" as "the structure of the given" that "becomes visible only in its variants," see Riffaterre (13). Images, phrases, and sentences from Donne's "Nocturnall" are more visibly (and audibly) present in the five poems I discuss than would be the case for the implicit "matrix" of a poem as Riffaterre defines it; yet Donne's poem functions similarly in relation to the poems I discuss

here: key words and phrases from the "Nocturnall" serve as "generator[s]" (Riffaterre 21), textual energy sources for later poems.

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A Sentimental Journey: Lost in Translation

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This article is the first entry in a debate on a contribution on "*A Sentimental Journey*: Lost in Translation." http://www.connotations.de/debate/a-sentimental-journey-lost-in-translation/. If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de.

Abstract

This essay argues that Sterne's pervasive interests in different forms of translation in *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) result in a text in which fuzzy, occult, and elusive language, calqued translation, wordplay, and suggestion are not merely forms of wit but fundamental to the project. The different resonances that are lent to Sterne's keywords (sentimental, sensibility, soul, conscience, delicacy, grace, translation itself, and others) allow the dramatization of the curious relationships between the three worlds of humanity: spiritual, linguistic, and physical or material. To John Wesley's English ear in 1772, the word *sentimental* is "not English. He may as well say Continental. It is not sense." Frénais, translating the *Journey* in 1769, would agree: he says that he has only kept the word because there is no viable alternative. The text is constructed around the most elusive of words. In practice, translation is often occult to the point of perversity. In Calais, having eaten and drunk well, Parson Yorick tipsily rebuts the materialist philosophy of a "*physical precieuse*," an imagined French bluestocking, by saying that he is confident that he could "overset her creed." *Creed* descends from Latin, through the Italian *credenza*, to the French *crédence*: a sideboard. Immaterialism, spirituality, is translated to materials, through translation of a different kind which is endemic in the *Journey*.

> That excellent use of a metaphor or translation
> Bacon, *Advancement of Learning* (1605)
>
> To TRANSLATE, to turn out of one Language into another; to remove from one Place to another
> Nathan Bailey, *Dictionary* (1726)

Translation is a very translatable word. Historically, the root sense is simply a change of state or condition, and this can include the change from a literal to a figurative meaning of a word, as indicated by Bacon. Bailey gives two of the main senses, and seems to accord them equal status. These are accompanied by many others. To translate a bishop is to remove him from one see to another, or, by association with the sense of translation as apotheosis (a direct elevation to heaven without passing through death), an elevation to a bishopric. A politician may be translated from the Commons to the Lords; a cobbler may translate an old pair of boots into a new pair. If one is enraptured or "transported" (itself a figurative sense, as when Yorick transports himself "instantly [...] to Messina in Sicily" in "THE PASSPORT: VERSAILLES"), one has been translated out of oneself (*A Sentimental Journey* 114; SJ from now on). Translating from one language to another is partly a mechanical process, but it is also an engagement with a field of linguistic play. Similarly, *language* may be either a fixed concept (French, English) or a wider notion, a mode of discourse, for instance *bad language* (for which one may apologize by saying *Pardon my French*). Words, as usual, slip and slide, will not stay still. Sterne joins in with the process of figuration by allowing Yorick to invent yet another category of translation, the reading of body language: "When I walk the streets of London, I go translating all the way" (SJ 77).

The suggestion that "it is not plot but language which is the unifying logic of *A Sentimental Journey*" (Kavanagh 138) is stimulating, but the idea of translation is a crucial clue to this tiny labyrinth, and to the dozens of different critical approaches which already exist. A natural hope of scholarly enquiry is to find a determinate approach which might herald a relevant informing context, an attractive ambiguity, or even that

elusive creature, a *meaning*. The concomitant fear is that *A Sentimental Journey* is "simply indeterminate and hence either to be rejected or indulged as 'unreliable' narrative," or as tonally "insincere" (Dussinger, "Sensorium" 4; Dussinger, *Discourse* 149). But if the *Journey* is built around the figurative process of translation, the practice of indeterminacy may become something akin to a determinate principle. In literary terms one might say simply that "several meanings coexist and endow the text with a certain density" (Viviès 250) but indeterminacy is fundamental to language: "virtually every sentence is ambiguous, often in multiple ways. Our brain is so good at comprehending language that we do not usually notice" (Marcus 63). If it is a principle of language, it must also be an informing principle of literature at large, but this is particularly accented in the *Journey*.

THE PREFACE

Yorick, our narrator and protagonist, was conceived in translation. His origin was York and its environs, and Yorick indicates *of York*: it is one of the regional or dialect pronunciations, close to the earlier Viking or Old East Norse *Jorvik* (see Castro Santana). When Tristram first introduces him to the reader, describing him as a creature who is "heteroclite [...] in all his declensions," he says that Yorick would take "the nature of the deed spoken of" and "usually translate [it] into plain *English* without any periphrasis" (Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* 27, 29). Tristram's adjective "heteroclite," which indicates *maverick* or *eccentric* when used of character, also carries the sense of a word whose roots are in different languages: "Yorick" is poised between two languages, as well as between words and deeds.

His keywords, especially that of his title, *sentimental*, likewise lie between or among languages. *Sentimental* is heard by the English ear in 1772 as "not English: he might as well say *Continental*. It is not sense" (Wesley 207). This indeterminacy stems from the word's operating as "a French sense-loan coined by Sterne," with "a new signification that was current in French *sentiment*" (Erāmetsā 72). It was a new "English formation, which was introduced into French with the translation of *A*

Sentimental Journey" in 1769, so the word was as enigmatic in French as it was in English (Erāmetsa 22). Before this, and indeed after, the word in English would have implied something closer to *a journey of moral reflection expressed in fine sentences*, perhaps more in key with Richardsonian prose, or, in 1773, with that notorious "Man of Sentiment," the sententious "sentimental knave" Joseph Surface (Sheridan 13). Another keyword, *sensibility*, will turn out to be similarly poised between English and French manifestations, as will a third, *soul*, and indeed many others. But the sentimental vocabulary is used very sparingly in the *Journey*. *Sentimental* appears four times, three times in connection with the category of *sentimental traveller*, and once with that of *sentimental commerce*. *Sentiment* and *sentiments* are more frequent, but the sense shifts. *Sensibility* is used just twice, once in a rhapsodic apostrophe near the end and once early on, as part of a description of a glance from Madame de L*** as she bids Yorick *adieu*. *Sensibility* is rare in English before the mid-eighteenth century, and is "usually applied to physical sensation" (Erāmetsā 88), an organism's power to perceive through its senses. Sense is sensibility. One may discuss sentiment and sensibility in the *Journey* as if they were stable constructs, remarking for example "how firmly fixed 'sentiment' was from one end of the century to the other" (New's note in SJ 285-86), but the Journey contains at least four different kinds of sensibility, the boundaries between them unclear. This lack of clarity means that when Yorick utters his rhapsody the word *sensibility* is as open as the first sentence of his narrative. The reader tries for the meaning from the stylistic and emotional context, and from memory.

TRANSLATION upon TRANSLATION

Sterne's approach to translational play in the *Journey* is similarly subtle and fluid throughout the text, seemingly eluding all the concepts designed to investigate or describe semantic indeterminacy. Sometimes the scattershot effects of *fuzzy language*, which, like fuzzy logic, may suggest a fit interpretation or suitable conclusion in pointing towards

an area of consensus, seem relevant.[1] One might suppose that the Chevalier's "little *patès*" are pâtés, but as the section is headed "LE PATISSER," the pastry-seller, and as *petits pâtés* are pasties, one is probably wrong: but one was in the area (SJ 105, 104). The semantic area may, though, be widened again by the appearance of *patisser* in Anglo-Norman dictionaries, and hence in the *OED*, as indicating bargaining or making terms. The Chevalier says that his wife does the "*patisserie*": the Chevalier does the selling (SJ 106). Or is *patisser* a variant of *patissier*? Or has Yorick made a small slip? Any consensus in this simple matter evaporates.

In the case of "sentimental translation" (Fairer 122), the translation of body language and facial expression into "*short hand*" which will describe the turns of mind and feeling that such language indicates, the problem threatens to become more extreme (SJ 77). There are, says Yorick when faced with the beautiful Grisset, "certain combined looks of simple subtlety" which are so "blended, that all the languages of Babel set loose together could not express them" (SJ 74). In *Tristram Shandy* the narrator could give a clear definition of the general problem, the unsteady uses of words (vol. 2, ch. 2), and could give a point-for-point translation of the Widow Wadman's various glances and blushes (vol. 9, ch. 20). Tristram's interests in those unsteady uses are presented in a relatively obtrusive manner. But Yorick's "all the languages of Babel" is a hyperbole which asks readers for imaginative involvement in trying to interpret his striking oxymoron, "simple subtlety." A rhetorical touch allows "sentimental translation" to operate between narrator and reader in a manner which goes beyond that of *Tristram Shandy*: every reader their own interpreter.

In *Tristram Shandy* it is possible to date Yorick's death to 1748. His heyday is in the world of the 1710s, the world of Uncle Toby and Walter, the Shandean time. But Sterne published two collections of his own sermons as *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* (1760, 1766), who thus became Sterne's second literary persona. So here he is in 1768, miraculously translated back to life, traipsing sentimentally around the continent, and clearly starting his journey from London rather than York. After a

few lines of text Yorick has moved from London to Calais, though the journey itself has taken the customary day-and-a-half. York to London, death to life, England to France: Yorick does not travel, so much as find himself translated between different states and places. The usual travel-narrative is replaced by pieces of an internal scene, seventy fragments of experience presented from one location or another like psychologized seaside postcards. But the apparent narrative structure is disarmingly clear and firm. It has a travel-plan which ensures that it begins at the beginning, passes along the itinerary of Yorick's travels with the occasional flash-forward, fragment of memory, or rhetorical side-address, and ends with a very conspicuous END. Its fuzziness of genre, whether travel-book, novel, tale, satire, postcards, fragments, map, or chat, is sidelined.

Yorick himself does not usually feel the need to translate, except when faced with the Fragment in Rabelaisian French in Volume II. His only French phrase in the first section, the "*Droits d'aubaine*," has to be explained in an editorial-style footnote (SJ 3). He does, though, want us to know that Madame de L***'s inflection of "*C'est bien comique*" means that she meant "'tis very droll," rather than *that is hilarious*, and he will translate French speech into English, sometimes leaving traces of the original French word or construction—the form of translation known as calquing, from the French *calquer*, to trace (*papier calque* is tracing paper) (SJ 33). Monsieur Dessein's "figure to yourself" is not quite good English because it is a translation of *figurez-vous*, picture to yourself (SJ 19). The English becomes slightly blurry, and, for the common English reader, so does most of the French. This raises the possibility of further varifocal languages, tailored to different parts of the varying readership: "the text provides material whose meaning depends on the reader's mind, culture, system of reference, sensibility, obsessions, etc." (Viviès 251). There is the *ingénue* female reader, represented in the text by "Eliza"—Eliza Draper, Sterne's most recent and rather public inamorata (SJ 58). There are prudes and moralists, represented by Bishop William Warburton, who apparently gave Sterne money on the implicit understanding that he would tone down subsequent instalments of

Tristram Shandy. This proved to be a poor investment. There are the French *philosophes*, the "large Circle of men of wit and learning" that Sterne met at the Baron d'Holbach's in Paris, represented by "Monsieur D*** and the Abbe M***," Diderot and Morellet, one professing atheist and one nominal Christian (SJ 147). There are other French readers; the common English reader as above; and the Devil—from Coleridge's trenchant phrase about his sense of Sterne "dallying with the Devil" (Coleridge 5: 174). One senses that Coleridge knew that the Devil might see or hear worse things than he himself could. He represents the subversive side of Sterne's nature, an important constituency.

In other words, Sterne's use of language may reflect his sense of the variety of his readership. The reader of *A Sentimental Journey* is always a member of a community of differences which can, for convenience, be addressed as *we* or *us*, and the list above is by no means exhaustive. There will be one translational treat for the Spanish reader. Also the categories overlap: the *philosophes* may be almost as subversive as the Devil, and possibly include a different category of female reader.

THE JOURNEY

"They order, said I, this matter better in France" (SJ 3). An assertion needs context if it is to make sense, but this appears to be there simply for the reaction-line: "You have been in France?" (SJ 3). The "civil triumph" of Yorick's servant seems to become the "matter," evidence of the freedom of the English lower orders to talk back to their masters (SJ 3). The absence of context reduces this first section to a fragment. But it is also plausible to read "this matter"—translated, *this material*—as introducing Yorick's combative relationship with philosophical materialism and mechanism, topics which lurked in *Tristram Shandy* from the original episode of the winding up (or not winding up) of the house-clock, suggesting the imprisonment of the mind within the mechanical reflexes of the Hobby-horse. Here materialism will become a *leitmotif* which seems to be addressed or referred mainly to the *philosophes,* for whom there will be some good jokes, and it will manifest itself as a joke in translation as early as the second section of the story.

Another hidden language materializes in respect to Yorick's coat, which sports inverted commas round its phrase, as if it merited special attention: ""the coat I have on, said I, looking at the sleeve, will do."" (SJ 3). In a novelistic language this is a simple, realistic, gesture and phrase. In another, it is a coded message to the bishops and others that the "frolicksome" quality of the *Journey* might offend them (Sterne, *Letters* 405). Sterne had responded combatively to a criticism of *Tristram Shandy* which implied that the story was "too free [...] for the solemn colour of My coat," the clerical black. "A Very Able Critick [...] who has Read Over tristram—Made Answer Upon My saying I Would consider the colour of My Coat, as I corrected it—That that very Idea in My head would render My Book not worth a groat" (Sterne, *Letters* 76). Yorick's coat is indeed black, like his "black pair of silk breeches" in the first section, though we do not know this until he arrives in Paris (SJ 3). So there are already at least three languages, modes of discourse, present: a French phrase and an editorial footnote add two more. There may well be others: languages tend to hide in the *Journey*, and even, in the case of the fragment of Rabelaisian French concealed under a pat of butter, to play hide-and-seek.

A Franciscan monk, whose name, it will turn out, is Father Lorenzo (Sterne's first name in translation) enters the room. Yorick is concerned to picture him for the reader, to begin his practice of translating phenomena into the terms of visual art. The monk has "one of those heads, which Guido has often painted" (SJ 8). Particular stress is laid on his eyes, on the "sort of fire which was in them," and on the quality of his gaze, which "look'd forwards; but look'd as if it look'd at something beyond this world" (SJ 7, 8). He finishes his request for alms with "a cast upwards with his eyes," and replies to Yorick's niggling phrase about the "*great claims*" made on charity with "a slight glance of his eye downwards," and then a "cordial wave with his head" (SJ 9). He carries "a slender white staff with which he journey'd" (SJ 8). Yorick makes no inference from these details.

The whiteness of the staff is a coincidence, but what pilgrim would carry a slender staff when they might have a strong one? Father Lorenzo lives in a "convent" (SJ 27), which does not imply journeying. Perhaps there is something in the scene that Yorick cannot see, which might then mean that the idea of *not seeing* became translatable between the character and the narrator. Yorick also cannot, of course, see that the monk's name is translatable between character and author. The note to the "*Droits d'Aubaine*," the monk's gaze, Father Lorenzo, the coat: someone else, one or other kind of *third person*, may or may not see what the words indicate. But the fact that Yorick's interpretations may need to be interpreted does nothing to detract from his character. He always wants to think well of his reader and of the people he meets, so he has assumed that his reader knows French, and knows Guido. What may be a physical disability has been translated into an appearance of spirituality.

Yorick was, he says, "predetermined" not to offer the monk charity, but does not seem to know why. "There is no regular reasoning upon the ebbs and flows of our humours; they may depend upon the same causes, for ought I know, which influence the tides themselves" (SJ 7). But *we* may know: Yorick is responding mechanically, by Anglican reflex, to a Catholic figure, and there is a great deal of post-Newtonian regular reasoning on such topics in the eighteenth century. He committed a similar solecism in the previous section, describing his after-dinner physical condition and then drawing a paradoxical corollary from it:

> I felt every vessel in my frame dilate—the arteries beat all chearily together, and every power which sustained life, perform'd it with so little friction, that 'twould have confounded the most *physical precieuse* in France: with all her materialism, she could scarce have called me a machine—
>
> I'm confident, said I to myself, I should have overset her creed (SJ 5)

His word *precieuse* is derogatory and old-fashioned, but Yorick seems to know about the French bluestockings: there were certainly women in the d'Holbach salon, which was "much more mixed than historians

have assumed" (Lilti 21). One subtext here is that Yorick is feeling vigorous enough to imagine an *exchange of views* with the lady in question, whose interests in physics have been caught up in a suggestion of personal corporeality. Another lurks in his idiosyncratic phrase ending with "overset her creed," which is dignified or accented with its own line, rather than the inverted commas round the line about his coat. It contains a fine piece of smudged calquing. "Creed," belief, is from the Latin *credo*, *credere*, which gives the Italian *credenza*, belief, and the French *crédence*: a sideboard (a belief is a *croyance*).[2] In taking up the cudgels on behalf of immateriality Yorick is also violently rearranging the lady's material, her dining-room furniture. Sterne's French is sometimes better than Yorick's, but he has been there longer, almost three years.

Yorick's combative response derives from his sense that France is full of frightful materialist thinkers, but why should an Anglican fear materialist ideas? Sterne will use a phrase such as "the frame and mechanism of human nature" in a sermon as if the idea were unproblematic, and will comment on the "strong sympathy and union between our souls and bodies" (Sterne, *Sermons* 402). Such remarks by no means rule out a belief in an immaterial soul, but the question is left open. Materialists may hold spiritual convictions. It is not entirely clear why Yorick fears materialist philosophy, except that he has fears and is often assailed by negative feelings. Tobias Smollett's downside in his *Travels through France and Italy* (1766) was mostly externalized; rapacious landlords, banditti, bad climate, bad towns, poor architecture. Yorick's downside is internal, the postilion "tearing my nerves to pieces," a fear of materialist philosophy and a concern for the existence of his soul, the mind's terror at "the objects she has magnified herself" (SJ 55, 94). Yorick has as powerful a set of "miserable feelings" as "Smelfungus," but they are a talking point as well as a pathology (SJ 37).

MADAME DE L*** AND THE CARTE DE TENDRE

He meets a lady, who is, we will learn, from Brussels: she wears black silk gloves "open only at the thumb and two fore-fingers," and so accepts Yorick's proffered hand: the physical contact is at fingers'-length; no pressing the flesh (SJ 20). He finds her face "interesting" (SJ 23), which, with Sterne and in the period more widely, is almost synonymous with *sentimental*, courtesy of the verb indicating *to affect* or *to move*. In *English*, the story might have been called *An Interesting Journey*. Her complexion is "a clear transparent brown" (SJ 23), so she is a woman of color. He interprets her facial expression as an "unprotected look of distress," but we suspect his motives in this, not least because he does:

> I felt benevolence for her; and resolved some way or other to throw in my mite of courtesy—if not of service. (SJ 25)

> Such were my temptations— (SJ 23)

Courtesy and service are from the language of courtly love: *service* is also what a bull may do to, or for, a cow. The lady remarks pointedly on Yorick's obvious embarrassment at their being left alone together: "who but an English philosopher" would comment at such length on it (SJ 24)? Yorick, the monk, and the lady rescue themselves from a further tangle of embarrassments, as the monk offers an exchange of snuff-boxes ("a stream of good-nature in his eyes"; SJ 27), and Yorick and the lady then find themselves on their own in a chaise. Surely nothing is to be expected from the English philosopher in such circumstances? But he has a trick up his sleeve: he translates himself into French.

The Englishman and the lady from Flanders find common ground in their amusement at the French male habit of making love (modern English for this might be *chatting up*) at first meeting. Yorick disparages the sentimental French knave's offerings of verbal tit-bits: "—To think of making love by *sentiments!*" and "at first sight by declaration" to an "unheated mind" (SJ 33). The lady waits to hear more:

> Consider then, madam, continued I, laying my hand upon hers—
>
> That grave people hate Love for the name's sake—
>
> That selfish people hate it for their own—
>
> Hypocrites for heaven's—
>
> And that all of us both old and young, being ten times worse frighten'd than hurt by the very report—What a want of knowledge in this branch of commerce a man betrays, whoever lets the word come out of his lips, till an hour or two at least after the time, that his silence upon it becomes tormenting. A course of small, quiet attentions, not so pointed as to alarm—nor so vague as to be misunderstood, —with now and then a look of kindness, and little or nothing said upon it—leaves Nature for your mistress, and she fashions it to her mind.—
>
> Then I solemnly declare, said the lady, blushing—you have been making love to me all this while (SJ 33-34)

In making love while talking about making love, Yorick translates between words and deeds in a manner similar to that of our first introduction to him in *Tristram Shandy*, though far more skillfully. His cadences are hypnotic, his manner that of the most sophisticated of males. No wonder the lady blushes, hard enough to show through her brown complexion. An English philosopher! Who would have thought? And this is not a blush of modesty, because the lady is not modest, as her directness of verbal expression has already hinted. How has he learnt this language?

A Sentimental Journey, with its postcards addressed to us from different locations (England, Calais, Montreuil, Nampont, Amiens, Paris, Versailles, Rennes, Moulines, the Bourbonnois, Savoy), might be described as an exercise in persuasive cartography. The most famous and influential example of French persuasive cartography is the *Carte de Tendre*, produced in the salon of Madame de Rambouillet for Madeleine de Scudéry's historical romance *Clélie* in 1654: the salon of the original *précieuses* or (more respectfully) *salonnières*. *Clélie*, though massively

plotted and extended, belongs to the early phase of the expression of Scudéry's interests in ethics and philosophy.

It is possible to read the episode with Madame de L*** entirely in terms of the villages of the *Carte.* There is *Nouvelle amitié*, new friendship. Then there is *Complaisance,* a willingness to be pleasant (his initial remarks); *Soumission* (from her put-down: it is a feisty lady); *Assiduité*, persistence (she walks away, he reapplies himself); *Empressement*, alacrity ("as I generally act from the first impulse [...] I turn'd instantly about to the lady"; SJ 29). Then there are the *Petits Soins* of Yorick's "small [...] attentions"; *Grand Services* ("my mite of service": the offer of his coach): *Sensibilité*: her final look of "sensibility mixed with a concern" (SJ 35). Afterwards there will be the *Billet doux* or *Billet galant* (La Fleur's letter is hardly *doux,* though it seems that Yorick translates it into a different mode). But the translational relationship is playful, not allegorical. The *Journey* has an endless ability to suggest different texts, as well as different approaches: it is the most *suggestive* of stories. And we will meet Madame de Rambouillet herself a little later, as Yorick, a character who has technically been dead for twenty years, hands a lady who really has been dead for over one hundred years out of a coach so that she may relieve herself. It all seems quite natural, but in Joseph-Pierre Frénais's translation of 1769 this second absurdity is removed for the more *savant* French reader by the lady being translated to "Madame de R." (Frénais 1: 235; the two volumes are paginated separately).

Clélie offers no key to the *Carte*, which as she says conveys its meanings "d'une maniere assez particuliere" (in a rather unusual way). Her *amis* have trouble deciphering it: "aimable Clelie [...] dittes moy où j'en suis" (sweet Clélie [...] tell me where I am).[3] Women do not yield up their meanings easily. Hermenius performs acrostics on Valérie's disdainful letter, hoping to find a more favorable coded message. Eventually she points out that disdain might not necessarily imply rejection. *Works well within his limitations*, it might say on his sentimental report. Merriam-Webster gives 1673 as the date of the first use of *billet-doux*, but these little pilgrims have to puzzle it out in the 1650s. The *Carte* invents and transforms language in much the same way that the *Journey*

does. Yorick responds in key with Clélie's hint, translating *Petits Soins* playfully. The literal translation is *small cares*, but in the tricky language of sentimental commerce they become *little trinkets*, portable property for the lady to keep as her own. Yorick translates them again, so they become verbal trinkets, *sentiments*, small, quiet (knavish, teasing) attentions. Given the implicit stress on this left-hand route on the male's yielding to the female (*Grands Services*, *Obéissance*, *Soumission*), *Sensibilité* may be translated partly as the capacity of the *ami* to attune himself to the emotional and linguistic condition of his lady, and to respond in key. To judge by the lady's blush, Yorick has managed this to perfection. But despite the stress on male submission, the purpose of the *Carte* is to allow the male to display an attractive wit in his reading of it (who wants a *submissive* male?), and this Yorick has also done. The *Carte* is a map, a conversation, and a text, as is the *Journey*. A *précieuse* would be disdainful of the idea of a one-to-one correspondence, an absurd allegory or acrostic, but it is possible that Sterne was given a sentimental test by one or more of the stricter of them: *at least eight villages from the* Carte, AND *Madame de Rambouillet*, AND *sign it with your own name, please, Lorenzo*. It seems that Yorick benefits, on this occasion, from Sterne's skills in translation.

Fig. 1: The original *Carte de Tendre* (1654: attrib. François Cheaveau)[4]

Yorick is about to propose that Madame de L*** accept a place in his chaise. She interrupts him with a hand-gesture which appears identical to his ("laying my hand upon hers"), but which is subtly different:

> —You need not tell me what the proposal was, said she, laying her hand upon both mine, as she interrupted me.—A man, my good Sir, has seldom an offer of kindness to make to a woman, but she has a presentiment of it some moments before— (SJ 35)

"Presentiment" is a remarkable word to find in a sentimental journey, a female form of sentimental feeling which allows the lady to anticipate the future. She is, it seems, familiar with male offers of "kindness." Yorick translates her capacity for presentiment into English, with a twist: "Nature arms her with it, said I, for immediate preservation" (SJ 35). The twist is that in English this self-preserving foresight would be the feminine or feminized virtue of modesty, which is "a Guard to Virtue [...] a kind of quick and delicate *feeling* in the Soul [...] such an exquisite Sensibility, as warns her to shun the first appearance of every thing which is hurtful" (Addison and Steele 2: 399). Addison's pre-emptive co-opting of the potentially dangerous quality of sensibility for a moral discourse is the sole illustration of "Sensibility" in Johnson's 1755 *Dictionary*.

But Madame de L***'s presentiment, her sensibility, proves to be almost the opposite of this. It will allow her to be intrepid rather than modest, and will lead her to say that she would have accepted Yorick's offer of a place in his coach, so that she could have told him her story. She has an intuition that he is a fit companion, which corresponds to Yorick's about her. The offer of her (life-?)story suggests that his initial sense of her body language is right, but the directness of her reply to his embarrassment, the capping of his hand-gesture, and the sardonic curtsey which she drops to the little French captain, have hinted that she will respond positively to sentimental, knavish teasing. Angels, we remember from *Tristram Shandy*, syllogize by intuition (vol. 2, ch. 2), but we mere mortals have to do it through our wayward imagination or our nose, and the nose, whatever else it may be, is the organ by which

we are led. That the intuitions of Yorick and the lady are so perfectly in tune—as long as they are talking together—is evidence that they are, for a few moments, with the angels. Communication becomes more *interesting* when it is surrounded by less successful effects, and this is the tale's only example of intimate, close-up, sentimental communication. It is one of just four or five episodes in which Yorick's perceptions are confirmed as successful intuition rather than as subject to that quixotic "imagination which is eternally misleading me" (SJ 159). Two of the others are communal, the scene with the peasant and his dead ass at Nampont, with Yorick's perceptions confirmed by the presence of other onlookers, and the scene in "THE GRACE" where his vision of "*Religion*" joining in the dance is confirmed by the grandfather's remark about the dance as a thanks to heaven (SJ 159). Finally, there is his revision of Tristram's episode with Maria of Moulines.

"So perfectly" means of course imperfectly, incapable of consummation or fulfilment. Madame de L***'s brother the Count has arrived in his coach, so we will never hear her story. All we are left with is the lady's glance of sensibility and concern. Perhaps this would have been the plot, in the way that uncle Toby's amours proved to be the destination of *Tristram Shandy*. Perhaps we would have heard Madame de L***'s story in Paris or Brussels or Turin in Volume IV: perhaps not. A story heard is sweet, but ...

But: we may perhaps infer that there is something in the episode, a trailing of narrative threads, which Yorick cannot see. A feisty but visibly distressed and *interesting* exotic lady, with a *story*, about twenty-six, no visible servant or luggage, marital status unclear, designer gloves with a hint of lingerie hiding any ring, travelling towards Paris: her *brother* the Count happens to turn up *at the same hotel* at a critical moment. Why was she about to accept the offer of a place in a strange gentleman's chaise, which might have rendered her invisible, if Dessein were kept from knowledge of the arrangement? Clearly this *brother* is proxy to *the pursuit of a father to reclaim an errant child to virtue!* In Amiens she sends Yorick a letter by hand, for delivery to another lady, in Paris; perhaps arranging a rescue. Yorick fails to deliver the letter: so much

for sentimental friendship! But perhaps it contained an impassioned instruction to the other lady's brother to challenge *her* brother to a duel. We know from *The Vicar of Wakefield* where an undelivered letter might lead, if this were, or were to become, narrative as well as sentimental fiction. Two of the episodes of *A Sentimental Journey* will concern themselves directly with imaginative responses by reader or audience to aesthetic verbal stimuli, as a manifestation of sensibility. Our quixotic sentimental imaginations have been set a-vibrating, and we make up Volume IV for ourselves. Madame de L*** is the most *interesting* of Sterne's females.

THE WORD AND THE THING

Yorick's close attention to Madame de L***'s gloves anticipates a pervasive technique whereby objects in the fictional world seem to be about to become fetishes or something beyond themselves, without ever quite getting there. "The sentimental exchange is focused on the *token*, an evidential sign that carries translatable meaning and mediates between thing and idea" (Fairer 141). The material world is always about to become something else. Little trinkets become verbal trinkets. The worn smoothness of a King William's shilling becomes the polish of a Frenchman's *politesse*. The human body dissolves into the pulsing of blood, into blushes seen, felt, or illusory, into fountains of piss or floods of tears or the taste of wine on the palate, into Yorick's "issues" (SJ 124), or into art or body language. Yorick should not need to worry about materialist philosophy, given the endless instability to which material objects are subject. A glove, a *bidet* and a plucked rose pick up the quality of their linguistic contexts and occupy a teasing area between statement, symbol, innuendo, and *objet trouvé*. A *bidet* is something other than a "Post horse" (SJ 50; literally a trotting-horse or pony), but only some Parisian readers and the Devil will know this. The plucked rose is more widely resonant. Hands, which are mentioned more often than hearts, tremble next to meaning. A monogrammed handkerchief

becomes the token of a shared memory. The crown that Yorick gives to the supposedly innocent young lady at the start of Volume II, and the purse which she makes for it, are endlessly suggestive. A band-box becomes the most equivocal of signs: *I have something for sale which is not my body/is my body*.

Fig 2: La Toilette Intime, ou la Rose éfeuillée
(Louis-Léopold Boilly, date and location unknown)[5]

"La Fleur having got one large jack-boot on the far side of a little *bidet*" (SJ 50)

"ye fair mystic nymphs! go each one *pluck your rose*, and scatter them" (SJ 84)

In turn, objects seem to mimic or suggest linguistic processes. Yorick finishes his "address" to the *fille de chambre*, but he has forgotten to address the note to be sent with Madame de L***'s letter, and nothing further is heard of either (SJ 124). For a post-Richardson first-person narrative authority his way with a letter is appallingly bad, but thanks to the processes of sentimental reading, most of us forget the note and the letter too. A road-going vehicle, the *désobligeant*, becomes a social and psychological condition and then a narrative vehicle. The starling in its

cage is at first a voice, echoing Yorick's imagined pictorial metaphor ("Beshrew the somber pencil!") of his fear of being sent to the Bastille: "I can't get out" (SJ 95). Then it is a material bird in an iron cage. The strong wires of the closure lead to the bird's "mechanical" notes, which are chanted "in tune to nature," so a different art (SJ 95). An apostrophe to "LIBERTY" leads to the picture of the captive in his dungeon: "I saw the iron enter into his soul" (SJ 98)—the choice of the Psalter version of the verse from Psalm 105 allowing access to a highly translational phrase. On the road to Versailles, La Fleur seems to have found the "short history" of the starling, a tale-within-a-tale: then a joke about *getting in* and *getting out* (SJ 99). Then it moves back into art as Yorick provides a representation of his coat of arms, or rather Sterne's, as the starling is *sturnus* (the French *étourneau* indicates a noisy scatterbrain, as *piaf*, sparrow, implies chirping or a noisy child). Again the *first person* somehow reveals a *third person*: Sterne has now managed to include both his names, in Italian and then Latin translation. These eight or so pieces of prestidigitation take only some six hundred words.

REVEALED RELIGION?

Sterne as sermonist and author is a presumed authority on the Bible and cognate topics, so there is a natural tendency to credit his *protégé*, parson Yorick, on the topics of Biblical commentary and Christian reading. But mention of Biblical figures is rare, and these figures are ironized by their contexts. The sole function of "Alexander the Coppersmith" was to cause St. Paul "much evil" (SJ 112; 2 Tim. 4:14). Yorick's only spiritual discourse, briefly alluded to in "PARIS," was apparently on the necessity of a first cause, but this would hardly qualify him as a Christian. He may fear materialist philosophy, but he does not seem to assert faith, because he is not assertive. Biblical language, though pervasive, is parenthetical ("hope deferr'd," from Proverbs 13:12), or slightly revised, "it is not good for thee to sit alone" / "it is not good that man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18), or a tag, "from *Dan* to *Beersheba*" (SJ 97, 73, 36): used several times in the Bible. Yorick throws in his "mite" (SJ 23): the widow of Mark 12:42 "threw in two mites". There

are what the introduction and notes to the *Florida* edition of SJ refer to as "echoes" of, "allusion" to and "paraphrases" of Biblical verses, but nothing is quite accurate (SJ li, 338, 280). To *paraphrase* is to translate loosely. Some phrases which have a ring of the Bible are taken instead from the Apocrypha (Yorick mentions Esdras) or are closer to the Psalter: "I saw the iron enter into his soul"—"the iron entered into his soul" (Ps. 105:18)—"*walking in a vain shadow*"—"man walketh in a vain shadow" (Ps. 39:7; SJ 98, 115). It seems that Sterne translates Yorick into a member of his congregation, casually familiar with Biblical tags and phrases but not capable of rendering more than three words in a row accurately.

Sterne's teasing about Yorick's religious identity is best illustrated by a superb joke for the *philosophes* and their female friends in "PARIS." Yorick flatters the ageless Madame de V*** into a belief that it is not yet time for her to give up her empire of love and become a deist (for all practical purposes, an unbeliever), the second "epocha" of the worldly French female. He tells her

> that I had not been five minutes sat upon the sopha besides her, but I had begun to form designs—and what is it, but the sentiments of religion, and the persuasion they had existed in her breast, which could have check'd them as they rose up.
>
> We are not adamant, said I, taking hold of her hand—and there is need of all restraints, till age in her own time steals in and lays them on us—but, my dear lady, said I, kissing her hand—'tis too—too soon—
>
> I declare I had the credit all over Paris of unperverting Madame de V***.—She affirmed to Mons. D*** and the Abbe M***, that in one half hour I had said more for revealed religion, than all their Encyclopedia had said against it—(SJ 147)

Apart from the egregious quality of his persuasion, there is the question of what exactly it was that Yorick *revealed*, and what position the lady was in when she had been *unperverted*. She has, after all, put off the epocha of deism and been restored to her first empire of love, not accelerated into the third, a "*devôte*," someone pious or bigoted (SJ 146). But a bishop, or any of the grave and learned who read only with their

eyes, will be deaf to such Devilish undertones, will allow the affirmation of what Madame de V*** appears to affirm, and will believe that Yorick is as innocent as he seems to be.

THE SPIRITUAL AND THE MATERIAL

Two uses of Biblical language ask for close attention, the first because it concerns translation. In "THE ACT OF CHARITY: PARIS," Yorick comments on the fineness of the sentiments, the expressions, of French plays, saying that "whenever I have a more brilliant affair upon my hands than common, as they suit a preacher just as well as a hero, I generally make my sermon out of 'em—and for the text—'Capadosia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia'—is as good as any one in the Bible" (SJ 141). The idea that Yorick makes his sermons by translating French plays would be as inflammatory to the Anglican bishops as the scene in *Tristram Shandy* where he cuts up one of his sermons and gives it to the assembled dignitaries to light their pipes with. The text which Yorick refers to so casually, Acts 2:9-10, is about supernatural translation, the Pentecostal episode where the Jews from the diaspora or *galut* who have gathered in Jerusalem miraculously hear the Galileans speaking in languages that they can understand. The two episodes perform a similar translational figure of speech, operating between the pious and spiritual, and the profane or physical, though in the *Journey* the figure has also become literal, actual, translation.

The other phrase which asks for exegesis is used in "MARIA": "thou shouldst eat of my own bread, and drink of my own cup" (SJ 152). This is then expanded in "MARIA: MOULINES," after Yorick's approving description of Maria's womanly qualities: "she should *not only eat of my bread and drink of my own cup*, but Maria should lay in my bosom, and be unto me as a daughter" (SJ 154). These are very close to 2 Samuel 12:3, which is part of the story of the only lamb of a poor man, who is naturally rather fond of it. The rich man has flocks. In the next verse, the poor man's lamb is barbecued ("dress'd") by the rich man, who is unwilling to give up one of his own for a travelling visitor. This is Nathan's parable to King David, who has taken Bathsheba, wife of Uriah

the Hittite, and has had Uriah killed by ordering that he be placed in the most exposed position in battle. David, who is as clever at parables as Herminius is at letters, misses the point, and Nathan has to point the finger. How many of Yorick's readers miss the point? The *sentiment*, the feeling, near the end of the episode, is clouded because the *sentiment*, the thought expressed in words, now casts its own shade. It is fully Christian, the pastor caring for the lamb as one of his family, but given Yorick's appreciation of Maria's feminine qualities ("of the first order of fine forms"), his paternal feeling, and the picture of her lying in his bosom, a touch of the predatory or paedophile remains in what he says (SJ 154). But the episode ends with Maria returning to herself and then disappearing in the marketplace at Moulines, no longer the pastoral or juvenile sentimental object. Something in the episode seems to have energized her, made her feel better, whether the sentimental exchange of floods of tears over a totemic handkerchief, or Yorick's gentle reminder that her heart is still warm, or the tune she plays on her pipe, or even, perhaps, that touch of the predatory. In this episode Maria is grieving for the recent death of her father, not deranged by the loss of her betrothed because of the intrigues of a malevolent curate, as in Tristram's episode. Yorick ministers to her grief. Grief is a shapeshifter and can take strange forms, as can the ministry.

The other clouded moment at this point is when a character representing an Anglican feels the need to assert that he is "positive" he has a soul because he *feels* that he has a soul:

> I felt such undescribable emotions within me, as I am sure could not be accounted for from any combinations of matter and motion.
>
> I am positive I have a soul; nor can all the books with which materialists have pester'd the world ever convince me of the contrary. (SJ 151)

This may be carrying sentimentalism too far. We, especially the bishops, may feel that, as the evasive hyperbole of "undescribable emotions" renders them somewhat suspect—are they *unmentionable* emotions?—the parson doth protest too much. If Yorick can see the iron enter the captive's soul, why is he concerned about the existence of his

own? Also one has to remember that some of us will not have known that there was such stuff as materialist philosophy. Students of skeptical argument are taught very early to present both sides of a case, and taught the potential benefits of arguing against the cause that they wish to present for consideration.

It is also, as with Yorick's earlier encounter with the sideboards of the *précieuses*, a form of paradox, conditioned by the different resonances of the words *soul* and *âme,* in the context of the *philosophes'* fascination with the idea of the soul. In English the immaterial soul will, following the example of Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755), be indexed first with any other meaning given thereafter, as if the immaterial soul were the real deal and the others subordinate. A quotation from Isaac Watts under the second meaning, "Vital principle," acknowledges that there are "vegetative, sensitive, and rational souls," but then waves discussion aside by saying that "the word soul" serves "for all these principles" (Johnson n. p.). By contrast, the article "SENSIBILITÉ: SENTIMENT" in the *Encyclopédie* (*Encyclopédie* 15: 38-52) has fourteen pages on physical, medical, definitions of "Sensibilité," and then nine lines on the "disposition tendre et délicate de l'ame" (the soul's tender and delicate character) which is the moral definition. The medical section describes the sensitive soul as a "lumière ou une flame vitale" (a light or a living flame), a language close to the spiritual, but then asserts that man is merely "l'animal qui doit posséder la *sensibilité* au plus haut degré [...] le chef-doeuvre des ames sensitives ou animals" (the animal which possesses sensibility to the highest degree [...] the masterpiece of sensitive or animal souls), such souls being allied to the mechanical movements of the muscles, spasms and irritability, animal tissue's inherent capacity to respond to stimuli (*Encyclopédie* 15: 52, 39, 46). The article on "Ame" in Tome 1 begins by saying that there have been many different opinions on the subject, and then engages in general discussion for sixteen pages before moving on to subordinate definitions. The *Encyclopédie* reflects and tolerates many languages, many ways of speaking; it does not exclude, and tolerance was what the *philosophes* hoped and strove for above all else: "Nous prêchons la *tolérance* pratique, et non point la

speculative" (our doctrine is practical toleration, not the speculative kind (*Encyclopédie* 16: 395)). Speaking to us in English, Yorick projects the first, innocent meaning of "soul" towards his English readers, but his discourse is complicated by those "undescribable emotions" from his calqued animal soul, his tender, delicate, and perhaps partly physical *âme*.

THE APOSTROPHE TO SENSIBILITY

Yorick's querulous sense of his soul leads into his magnificent address to sensibility, the crux of the whole text. The apostrophe functions on several levels, mainly as part of a persuasive narrative context which includes Yorick's character and characteristic responses, but within this as a forceful appeal to a godhead, as something close to a demonstration of materialist philosophy, and as a purging. As with the first section of the story, several languages are in play. It is technically an apostrophe, a rhetorical address, but it is also a rhapsody which verges on Enthusiasm, the Nonconformist belief in direct access to the godhead. Yorick is transported.

He may have provided Maria with a form of therapy, but now he needs one himself, needs to "cast a shade" across his vision of her, to distance himself from "this gate of sorrow"—the memory of her situation—and to feel well once again (SJ 155). Strangely, he seems to be mourning her loss: the daughter has left her sentimental home. He is beside himself, grief-stricken and distraught, and his language reflects this. At the start his phrasing is too fast, the main metaphor, his favored figure from visual art, is skimped. There should be a phrase to explain "shade," about how Maria's sorrows *too fiercely glare*, but this is passed over. "This is thy divinity which stirs within me [...] that I feel some generous joys and generous cares beyond myself" (SJ 155). Within modulates to beyond. "Sensibility" is the "source inexhausted" and the "eternal fountain of our feelings," chaining its martyr down and lifting "him up to HEAVEN" (SJ 155). Sources and fountains lift up and chain down: HEAVEN becomes part of a process which is partly figurative, partly physical. Crucially, the "great SENSORIUM of the world" is both

personal, "Thee" and "Thou," strongly suggestive of an intimate providential godhead, and impersonal, passive, and physical, "which vibrates" (SJ 155), the vibration as of nerves, "le mouvement fibrillaire" which the *philosophes* derived from post-Newtonian thinking (*Encyclopédie* 15: 39). The SENSORIUM vibrates "if a hair of our heads but falls upon the ground in the remotest desert of thy creation" (SJ 155). By definition there can be no people, and hence no hairs, in a desert, though there might be in a purely rhetorical or Biblical one (Luke 12:7, Matt. 10:30). Vibrations might be sentimental (think *good vibrations*), and they might also be supernatural and/or natural. "Thou giv'st a portion of it sometimes"—how big is a *portion* of sensibility? Why the vague "sometimes," and how does this casual phrasing square with the hyperbole of superlatives, the remotest desert, "the roughest peasant," "the bleakest mountains" (SJ 155)? The quixotic sentimental pilgrim battles the words of his language and the windmills of his mind. Maria, sentimental object though she may be or have been, must not be allowed to dictate to Yorick's emotions, to place them beyond the bounds of description. An apostrophe to sensibility proves a purgative cure for the distressed sensibility, better than a starling, and has yielded a fine vibrating translation between spiritual, emotional, and physical worlds.

THE SUPPER: THE GRACE

All passion spent, the narrative reverts to connected discourse, mundane travel-narrative. The "thill-horse" pulling between the shafts loses two shoes, and Yorick is left to walk the road, but, having fought the good fight for a "chearful and contented mind," he does not care (SJ 159). Nor do we object to the transition from one mode to another. Many of us have been a little quizzical about Yorick's apostrophe, because he himself can be skeptical about this aspect of his discourse. When the audience at the theatre, in "THE ROSE," told the Abbé to hold up his hands, Yorick remarked that this "was as unintelligible to

me, as my apostrophe to the monk had been to him" (SJ 83). He paints a verbal picture of the effects of the Bastille for us, but is "interrupted in the hey-day of this soliloquy" (SJ 95). But as Yorick is clearly rapt for a reason here, we may excuse his vagaries of grammar and thought. We too have been cured of sensibility, so we need pity neither Yorick nor Maria. What we have been led through is the apogee, the culmination, and the dismissal of the sentimental mode. Yet our parallel cures are also "sentimental," mutually sympathetic.

Yorick's reward for cheering himself up is his ability to march happily into the peasant family's supper and accept their hospitality, in "THE SUPPER" and then "THE GRACE" (SJ 157, 159). The meal is of bread, wine which, as if by "magic," remains present to Yorick's palate as he writes, and lentil soup: "'twas a feast of love" (SJ 158). Yorick has been sensing the spiritual in the physical since his encounter with Father Lorenzo, so it is natural to read this as "a simple domestic manifestation of the Lord's Supper" (Brissenden 239) and the bread and wine as a manifestation of a sacrament, though the lentil soup may muddy the waters a little. The love-feast or *agape* meal was a communal celebration used by the early Christian churches, but the only eighteenth-century English sect to use the practice was the Methodist, following John Wesley's contacts with the Moravian Brethren in America. The form that Yorick uses, *feast of love*, occurs in the final line of Charles Wesley's 1740 poem "The Love-Feast." It is quite reasonable to foreground the eucharist at this point, but eighteenth-century Anglican bishops would more likely be thinking *these Methodists get everywhere!* Methodists did not use the eucharist because they had few ordained priests, and so celebrated (and still do) with bread and water. Yorick has translated the water of the feast of love into wine.

But we have forgotten our French readers, who may be Catholic or pagan or unbelievers. What would they all hear in "supper"? In French, holy communion, the eucharist, and the Last Supper are all *La Cène*. Supper translates as *soupe*: the French verb *souper* is *to dine*, or *to sup*. So where an English reader may hear *the bread and wine*, a French reader hears *the lentil soup*. *Soupe* and *potage* are partly interchangeable terms.

Just as for the peasant family and Yorick, it is a shared, communal meal for readers. Some of us get the bread and wine, and some get the soup. We have also forgotten the socialist/*philosophe* reader, who has been admiring Yorick's approving description of the pre-Walden economy of this little *paysage*, which is wholly independent of that of the *ancien régime*. Some *philosophe* readers might also hear an echo of the title of a chapter of Voltaire's *Zadig* (1748), "LE SOUPER" or "The supper party," in which Zadig is able to persuade guests who hold a wide variety of different religious beliefs that they all worship the same power (Voltaire 166).

After "THE SUPPER" comes "THE GRACE," the family dance as a thanks for the meal, and "Grace" is a central Christian concept (New 69). It is also one scholarly name for that section, which appropriates it for a Christian reading. But a Buddhist or indeed a materialist will find as much pleasure as a Christian in a meal, and give thanks for it. "What a vast power there is in a repast! Joy revives in a disconsolate heart" (La Mettrie 11). A grace is a thanks: *grace à* is French for *thanks to*. Not that that translation of "THE GRACE" is given *mal à propos*, it is close to something that an English reader in 1768 would have sensed. To Yorick it is a grace to the meal, to the grandfather it is a thanks to heaven. But it is a reading, a translation, which is achieved by responding in a particular way to nuances in individual words and small phrases, a grace and a ewe lamb and a supper and the hairs of one's head. Other readings are available. Perhaps the grace is the gracefulness of the dance, or perhaps it is Thalia, who, when she is not being one of the Muses or a goddess, is one of the three Graces, attendants of Aphrodite, who dance in a circle. She represents festivity and abundance of food. In Frénais's translation, "THE GRACE" is translated to "les graces," though *dire les graces* is to say grace (Frénais 2: 207). So perhaps the "*Religion*" is pagan as well as Christian, female as well as male, like the dancers: *Religion* is personified as female (SJ 159). It depends whether we are hearing English, or English tinged with French or Greek, or all three, or not very much. Our doctrine is practical toleration: readers will hear what they like, or what they must.

THE CASE OF DELICACY

How might one solve the much-explored riddle of which part of the Piedmontese lady's maid Yorick caught hold of, at the end: "when I stretched out my hand, I caught hold of the Fille de Chambre's END OF VOL. II" (SJ 165)? Technically the sentence is complete as it stands, though minus the stop, so he caught hold of her hand. Carry the sentence across to the END, and he grasped some part of her nether regions. The END is also the end of the story, the end of Yorick, and the end of Sterne, who died a few days after publication. It is perhaps also an *enigma*, that ultimate expression of semantic and conceptual uncertainty, as well as a riddle.

"THE CASE OF DELICACY" echoes an earlier section, "THE CASE OF CONSCIENCE. PARIS," where Yorick is reprimanded by the *maître d'hôtel* for entertaining a young woman in his room for two hours (SJ 127). At the start of the chapter this gentleman was "the master of the hotel" (SJ 127), but a few paragraphs later he has been demoted—*maître d'hôtel* means in French more or less what it means in English, a head waiter. The foot of the bed gives "the appearance of an evidence" (SJ 127), so the case appears to have a forensic, external quality. If she had had a band-box with something to sell you, says the master of the hotel, then that would have been different. "O' my conscience, said I, she had one; but I never look'd into it" (SJ 127). Yorick swears by his conscience, which tells him right from wrong. The hotelier proceeds to translate Yorick's conscience, in a joke which doubtless gives him some pleasure. "I could recommend one to you who would use you *en conscience*" (SJ 127-28): that is to say, conscientiously. Whether or not the woman was conscientious about her business would depend on the opinion of the person for whom she worked. Yorick's oath is not comprehensible in French, because *conscience* is more a psychological than a moral category and indicates primarily *consciousness*: Frénais has to omit Yorick's line. The case becomes the case of *conscience*, the word, at first the wide-eyed innocent party but then the seedy accomplice. Yorick may not appreciate the dubious beauty of the hotelier's joke, but by this point he

knows very well that the "master of the hotel will share the profit with her" (SJ 128), and knows the other possible business in hand. He buys a pair of lace ruffles, and, having eased his conscience with respect to this second lady, can produce a gratifying little translation of his own, that "I have only paid as many a poor soul has *paid* before me for an act he *could* not do, or think of" (SJ 128). To some readers this is an admission of impotence. This is certainly an interpretation left dangling, but Yorick is also saying, with a twinge of humor in his final three words, that he has paid, been brought to account, for the errors in his management of the first episode, his relatively virtuous but rumpling entertainment of a young woman who did not work for the hotel. This young woman, who was sentimentally affected by Yorick's initial ascription of innocence at the start of Volume II, leaves the story with her innocence relatively intact, despite her band-box. Yorick's sheepish little quibble on *paid*, which is so delicate as to often go unnoticed, is reminiscent of the "elusive, deniable" (Pollack 85) quality of John Gay's subpunning language in his poems and *The Beggar's Opera*, and is a sign of the post-Scriblerian quality of Sterne's text. This is the limit of Yorick's conscious verbal play. In a slightly rhapsodic address to the "great governor of nature" he will mention "movements which rise" from his feelings, and which belong to him "as a man" and result in "issues" (SJ 124), but here he is protected by a principle akin to that of *no pun where none intended*. Authorial intention is another question.

"THE CASE OF DELICACY" is less clear than the earlier chapter, though it starts from a similar moral or sentimental keyword. But with a riddle (Tristram tells us we live among mysteries and riddles in vol. 4, ch. 17, and the eighteenth century loved riddles) we would expect a clue. Perhaps it is hidden, like the best clues, in full sight, next to something else. What about THE CASE? Again this suggests a courtroom of moral sensibility, but another meaning of *case* is the body: the body is the case for the soul. By extension, the word may stand for the sexual organs of man or woman, and unless the *fille de chambre* has something queer under her skirt, these will be female sexual organs.[6] In this reading we might borrow the three stars of the "Marquesina di F***" and

say that Yorick's final gesture is to catch the *fille de chambre* by her tender and delicate C*** (SJ 77). We now have a range of latent readings in which Yorick comes into contact with either the girl's hand, or her END, or her C***. The possibilities, though, are not endless. He probably did not jog her elbow, and he has missed her soul entirely: "THE CASE OF DELICACY" is, to almost all appearances, relentlessly naturalistic, the delicate case being the problem of how a single man and a single woman are to share one bedroom. The sentimental keyword, delicacy, has been translated from the sentimental (or moral or religious or genteel) lexicon towards the physical, as with words like creed, conscience, movements, case, soul, sensorium, sensibility, vibrations, revealed: as sentimental behavior may turn into words written on material objects, a map, or the paper and ink from which we read the sentimental journey, or fear into a starling. This translational movement towards the physical is as endemic in the text as is the transformational mode in which objects yearn towards becoming something else: for example the "Delicious essence!" (SJ 143) of flattery quite properly becomes a "Parfum délicieux!" in Frénais's French (Frénais 2: 170). And as Spanish readers will know, the Marquesina is not a minor Italian aristocrat. She is a bus shelter, or, less anachronistically, a *marquee*. These readers presumably keep quiet, not wanting to do more than smile at Sterne's little *faux pas* and the credulous English, while Italian readers seem to assume that the word is an exotic English variant of *Marchesa*. In Frénais's translation the lady is translated to a Marquise, Italy is not mentioned, and Yorick is heading back to Rennes at the end. Sterne only set the scene in Milan in order to make use of his pleasant *objet trouvé*. Yorick comments on the pleasure "which arose out of that translation" (SJ 78), his sentimental decoding of the lady's body language, but he is less adept at another kind of translation. We are all *lost in translation*: Frénais indicates that he too is lost, in his preliminary *Avertissement*, when he observes that he could not translate Yorick's word "sentimental" into French "par aucune expression qui pût y répondre" (Frénais 1: v-vi; [by any equivalent expression]) but has decided to let it stand for lack of any alternative.

So the fuzziness of the final section mirrors that of the first: the Fragment (of text or life) must begin and end as fragments. But literary fragments in this period are not *mere* fragments, because hidden behind them is John 6:12, Christ's words after the feeding of the five thousand: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." In the KJV, all four gospels use the word at this point. Gathered fragments imply a retaining of something valuable and a hidden superabundance or wholeness, and this implication is carried in a hidden language. The topics at the end of the narrative mirror those at the start, the relationships between the three enigmatically-woven worlds of humanity, linguistic, spiritual, and physical: the word, the belief, and the sideboard. Only through the divine comedy and secular wit of *translation* can these be fully explored.

Independent Researcher

NOTES

[1]For fuzzy language, which is an approach to semantics recently derived from fuzzy mathematics, fuzzy logic, and fuzzy concepts, see for instance Yang. Pedagogical websites will routinely warn students against the use of *fuzzy language*, but such problems seem to be integral to the concept.

[2]Sideboards are still retailed under the names *credenza* and *credence cabinet*: servants would visibly eat food placed on the sideboard, in order that the aristocratic diners could *believe* they were not about to be poisoned.

[3]Quotations from *Clélie* and their translations are taken from Peters 110. Elsewhere, translations are my own.

[4]At the top lie the *Terres Inconnues*, lands unknown to innocent females. The most favored *ami* may sail directly downstream from *Nouvelle Amitié* to *Tendre sur Inclination*. Sailing upstream is not advised. *Tendre sur Estime*, to the right, sounds uninteresting, and most of the strenuous villages lie to the left, on the way to *Tendre sur Reconnaissance*. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carte_du_tendre_300dpi.jpg

[5]This manifestation of the plucked rose is a debased version of an item in Marian iconography. In English, to "pluck a rose" is a female euphemism for retiring to the necessary house, and may also indicate menstruation. It seems that the bidet was, in the 1760s, only in general use in Parisian brothels. The head, which gives the lady somewhere to rest the sponges, and her posture, allow the name. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Boilly_La_Toilette_intime_ou_la_Rose_effeuillee.jpg

[6]Gordon Williams provides some twenty examples of writers negotiating with this sense of the word, in the period that includes the "Shandean time" (Williams 1: 211-13).

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