Connotations

A Journal for Critical Debate

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Abstract

In this esssy, David V. Urban challenges John K. Hale's assertion that scholars of Milton ought to confidently address the relationship between *De Doctrina Christiana* and Milton's poetry without being concerned by "lingering doubts" regarding Milton's authorship of the theological treatise. The article also responds to Hale's charge that Urban's earlier suggestion that scholars feel free to investigate theological matters in Milton's later poems without deferring to *DDC* is an "extreme" position. It recounts various statements by proponents of Milton's authorship of *DDC* who are cautious regarding the relationship between the treatise and Milton's later poetry and who advise against using the treatise as a theological gloss for that poetry, paying particular attention to the recent work of Jason Kerr. The essay also discusses recent challenges to Milton's authorship of *DDC*, including stylometric challenges offered by James Clawson and Hugh Wilson, that, Urban contends, should both unsettle the dominant Milton scholarly industry's comfortable acceptance of Miltonic provenance and also merit, and indeed demand, that industry's response.

I deeply appreciate John Hale's gracious response to my 2020 *Connotations* essay, including both his kind words regarding my narration of the history of the *De Doctrina Christiana* authorship controversy since 1991 as well as the exception he takes to my suggestion "that *DDC* can rightly be understood as being sufficiently removed from Milton's later poems as to investigate theological matters in the poems themselves without deference to the treatise" ("Revisting" 180). In his penultimate paragraph, Hale affirms that "the relationship of treatise to poem [...] deserves full attention from the community of scholarship, undeflected by lingering doubts of authorship or imputations of motive," concluding that *DDC* "belongs in the DNA of *Paradise Lost*" ("Authorship" 34). In my present answer, I will first offer a brief direct response to Hale's claims that I offer an extreme position in my essay. Next, I will challenge Hale's assertions regarding the relationship between *DDC* and Milton's poetry from two bases: First, by recounting earlier as well as more recent statements by proponents of Milton's authorship of *DDC* who are cautious regarding the relationship between the treatise and Milton's later poetry and who advise against using the treatise as a theological gloss for that poetry. Second, by addressing recent challenges to *DDC*'s authorship that have appeared both previous to and subsequent to Hale's response, challenges that Hale has yet to address but which both unsettle the dominant Milton industry's comfortable acceptance of Miltonic provenance and also merit, and indeed demand, that industry's response.

Hale's Charges of Extremism

Despite Hale's overall graciousness, I will admit that I was rather surprised to see the vehement language with which he describes my belief that scholars should be able to analyze Milton's later poems' theology "without deference to" *DDC*. Hale writes: "Urban's position is extreme rather than moderate!" (33). This response seems to me overstated. For my part, I respect Hale's belief that a proper use of *DDC* with relation to Milton's later poems is not to expect "a simple straight-line development" but rather to examine the "cancellations and redefinitions" between treatise and poems, changes that "show us how Milton thinks and went on thinking" (33).[1] But I should clarify that my own position does not negate the possibility of engaging *DDC* while discussing the theology of the later poems. Rather, when I write of "the opportunity to investigate Milton's theology independent from *DDC*" (179), I do so in the context of not deferring to the assumption that the theology of the later poems should be read through the prism of *DDC*'s assertions. Most specifically, I assert my "desire to investigate the Christology of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* apart from the hegemonic influence of the [famously antitrinitarian] book I, chapter 5 ("[On the Son of God]") of *DDC* and its presentation of a created Son of God" (180). And this is what I did at the June 2022 Conference on John Milton in a paper entitled "Heresy and Orthodoxy in *Paradise Lost*, Book 8: Identifying the 'Presence Divine' as the Son, and the Pitfalls of Using *De Doctrina Christiana* as a Theological Gloss for God's First Conversation with Adam," in which I argue, over and against the received view of Michael Bauman,[2] that the "Presence Divine" who tells Adam he has been "alone / From all eternity" (8.405-06) is in fact the eternal Son of God.[3]

The Longstanding Caution Against Using *DDC* as a Key to Understanding Milton's Poetry

Moreover, contrary to Hale's above statement, my current scholarship with the later poems ought not be deemed extreme because, as I note in my 2020 *Connotations* article, a large sweep of Milton scholars, including those who affirm Miltonic authorship of *DDC*, have urged caution regarding using *DDC* as a guide to understanding Milton's poetry. These scholars include Michael Lieb, who in his 2006 book *Theological Milton*, despite calling himself "a firm believer in Miltonic authorship" (4), nonetheless emphasizes that *DDC* should not "in any sense be construed as a 'gloss' on [Milton's] poetry" (2). Similarly, the landmark 2007 study *Milton and the Manuscript of* De Doctrina Christiana, written by Gordon Campbell, Thomas Corns, Hale, and Fiona Tweedie, despite arguing for Miltonic authorship, adds that *DDC*'s "value as guide to the interpretation of [*Paradise Lost*] is limited" (161). More recently, Jason Kerr, whose approach to *DDC* and its relation to the rest of Milton's canon Hale specifically commends (Hale, "Authorship" 33),[4] asserts in his 2019 *Connotations* response to Falcone that *DDC*—a treatise which Kerr maintains has various internal discontinuities—"has a life of its own independent of *Paradise Lost*," cautioning against "hold[ing] *Paradise Lost* firmly to [*DDC*'s] theological standard" and postulating that Milton's epic "might simply represent a further change in [Milton's] mind" (131). And even in his own 2021 *Connotations* response, Hale himself writes against "the over-enthusiastic or one-for-one glossing of *PL* from *DDC*" practiced by Maurice Kelley and others (33).[5] In this, I dare say that Hale and I are in agreement.

I should add that Kerr's continuing scholarship on *DDC* is particularly germane to my own statements against deferring to *DDC* on matters of the theology of Milton's later poems. Indeed, at the aforementioned June 2022 Conference on John Milton, in an award-winning paper entitled "Milton and Theology: Reflections on *De Doctrina* and *Paradise Lost*," Kerr, having quoted at some length my resolution to study the theology of Milton's later poems largely independent of *DDC* (Urban, "Revisiting" 181), emphasized that *DDC*, in light of the labyrinth of complexities evident in its manuscript, should be understood as "not a repository of Milton's theological thought, but an artifact of his theological thinking" ("Milton and Theology").[6] In other words, what Milton has written throughout *DDC* reflects his thought—perhaps his experimental thought—at the particular time of his writing, but it should not be viewed as his final conviction on any particular topic. I believe that the combination of these scholarly voices, even amid their affirmation of Miltonic authorship, allow for, and indeed themselves help carve out, ample space for doing the kind of theological analysis of the later poems for which I am advocating.

More Recent Significant Challenges Regarding *DDC*'s Authorship

I also think it necessary to specifically challenge Hale's previously quoted statement that the relationship between *DDC* and *Paradise Lost* should be studied by Milton scholars in a manner that is "undeflected by lingering doubts of authorship." In fact, I will go so far as to suggest that the notion that scholars should not harbor "lingering doubts" regarding Milton's authorship is at this present time not only increasingly problematic but even professionally irresponsible, although I write those final phrases not to criticize Hale but to highlight the significance of recent developments in *DDC* scholarship that postdate Hale's article, developments that I shall address in the next paragraph. But even before Hale's article appeared, Falcone, in his 2010, 2018, and 2020 challenges to Miltonic authorship offered cogent arguments concerning significant differences between presentations of the Mosaic Law in *Paradise Lost* and *DDC*, as well as matters concerning the overall theological consistency of Milton's undisputed canon in contrast to the anomalies that appear in *DDC*. It is noteworthy that nowhere in his 2021 article does Hale address any of Falcone's concerns or even mention Falcone, whose objections to Miltonic authorship, I contend, give ample reasons for readers to have "lingering doubts" concerning Miltonic provenance. And moving beyond Hale, I find it disconcerting that, aside from Kerr, not a single scholar advocating Miltonic authorship has seen fit to respond to Falcone's objections. In all fairness, Falcone's 2010 article was published in an Italian journal and no doubt escaped the notice of most scholars, but nonetheless I dare say that, by and large, the dominant scholarly response to lingering challenges to Miltonic authorship has simply been to ignore those challenges, a response—or non-response—that, aided by the paucity of published challenges besides those of Falcone, has effectively relegated the minority position toward *DDC*'s authorship into scholarly oblivion.[7]

Even more recently, however, two essays by James Clawson and Hugh Wilson have appeared that challenge Miltonic authorship of *DDC* on, among other things, stylometric grounds.[8] The first article, published in *Renaissance and Reformation* in a special issue on *Digital Approaches to John Milton,* having asserted that the treatise "contradicts the theology of Milton" (Clawson and Wilson 168) and noting "many incongruities" between *DDC* and Milton's undoubted canon that "have to be explained away" (186), examines the treatise by employing stylometric analytical methods that are more thorough and up-to-date than those offered in *Milton and the Manuscript of* De Doctrina Christiana (see 177-85). Clawson and Wilson conclude that a considerable majority of *DDC* after book 1, chapter 4—including a major part of the aforementioned explicitly antitrinitarian book 1, chapter 5—does not appear to be Miltonic in its provenance (see 194-97), and they suggest that *DDC* should either be considered as "a text of patchwork provenances compiled by some unknown person" (197), or that the German Socinian Jeremias Felbinger, whose "style is the only one registering across the length of the treatise," should be "high on the list of candidates" (197).

A second essay, which lists Wilson as the lead author and appears in a 2022 volume co-edited by Hale, continues this discussion, averring to dispel several longstanding "myths" regarding Miltonic authorship (Wilson and Clawson 354-61) and directly critiquing the stylometry used by Campbell et al. in *Milton and the Manuscript of* De Doctrina Christiana, thus challenging "another enduring myth": "that stylometry has proved Milton's authorship of the text beyond doubt" (Wilson and Clawson 361; see also 361-69). Having pointed out the irony that the old stylometry actually suggests more connection between *DDC* and the writings of Augustine and Bernard than those of Milton's canon (369), Wilson and Clawson put forth various newer stylometric tests (369-76), asserting that "stylometry casts doubt on evidence of Milton's hand in the bulk of *De Doctrina Christiana*" (376). Wilson and Clawson then offer historical (376-81) and stylometric (381-89) analysis to examine the possibility that Felbinger is a better candidate for the treatise's authorship, asserting that while the "style" of the treatise "resembles that of Milton's only rarely," "in all three independent tests, Felbinger's works more closely and more consistently match the style and grammar patterns of the disputed work" (389). Although Wilson and Clawson are not ready to unequivocally assert Felbinger's authorship of *DDC*, they do conclude both that "[T]he theology and supposed chronology of *De Doctrina Christiana* contradict the public avowals and the typical modus operandi of John Milton" and that "several varieties of computational analysis suggest that the style of *De Doctrina Christiana* does not resemble Milton's," postulating instead that the treatise "could be an orphaned work by someone else" (390).

While I urge readers to examine Clawson and Wilson's articles for themselves, I can state emphatically that their presentations are powerful enough to suggest that no one who seriously examines their evidence should confidently assert that *DDC* ought to be studied without the "lingering doubts" that Hale dismisses. Rather, in light of Clawson and Wilson's studies, doubts concerning *DDC*'s provenance seem entirely appropriate and indeed professionally responsible. It remains to be seen how the larger field of Milton scholarship will react to—or if they will simply ignore—Clawson and Wilson's discoveries, but I believe the challenges their articles pose to the status quo merits a thorough and thoughtful response and indeed an overall change in disposition toward the treatise in relation to the undisputed Miltonic canon.

Final Reflections

For myself, I find my views on the relationship between *DDC* and Milton's poetry increasingly influenced by Clawson and Wilson's articles as well as Falcone's and Kerr's contributions. And specifically pertaining to my own work on Milton's theology in the later poems, I find myself pondering the theological ramifications of Milton's likely being author of merely—or perhaps not even—the earliest portions of chapter 5. Should these portions then rightly be regarded as merely the aborted musings of Arian speculations that Milton chose not to further pursue? Put another way, if the opening part of chapter 5 is in fact Milton's writing, then perhaps it should most accurately be regarded, to use Kerr's recent phrase, as "an artifact of [Milton's] theological thinking"—and indeed his *speculative* thinking—something that can in no way be regarded as a more trustworthy declaration of this theological convictions than his explicit Trinitarian affirmations in the Nativity Ode (1629), *Of Reformation* (1641), and, I believe, in *Of True Religion* (see Falcone, "Irreconcilable" 92-93, 98-100, and 102n15). With these ponderings in mind, I do intend to make some limited use of *DDC* in the manner that Hale advocates for in his response: that one might consider the "cancellations and redefinitions" between treatise and poems, changes that "show us how Milton thinks and went on thinking" (33), even as I continue to move away from my 2015 suggestion that "Milton's striking emphasis upon the Son's whole-life obedience" appears to be "rooted in the heterodoxy of his Arian Christology" (Urban, "John Milton" 836). But in any case, my future use of *DDC*, as I stated in my 2020 article, will be non-deferential and highly cautious, a caution that has only grown in recent months in light of both Clawson and Wilson's stylometric analyses regarding the highly limited nature of Miltonic provenance within chapter 5, and Kerr's memorable June 2022 statements contending that *DDC*'s theological assertions cannot be definitively regarded as Milton's final position.

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NOTES

[1] This is Hale's approach in his recent "The View from *De Doctrina*."

[2] In *Milton's Arianism*, Bauman, grounding his position in Book I, chapter 5 of *DDC*, argues: "Plainly Milton intends this person [the "presence divine"] to be the Father" (264), a position Kerrigan, Rumrich, and Fallon follow in their edition of Milton (see note at *Paradise Lost* 8.405-07) and which Dobranski also follows in his recent edition of *Paradise Lost* (see note at 8.405-06). See also Quiring 189.

[3] See also my recent article that affirms, by virtue of his repeated "I am" statements, the deity of the Son in *Paradise Regained* (Urban, "Metagenre" 403 and 406), although this article lacks any discussion of the controversies surrounding *DDC* and instead analyzes *Paradise Regained* independently of *DDC* (cf. Urban, *Milton and the Parables* 215-17). One may contrast my approach to *Paradise Regained* to that of Stephen B. Dobranksi, who in his 2022 biography of Milton grounds his discussion of Milton's brief epic upon the Arianism of *DDC*, as revealed by his statement, "Because Milton took the heretical position that the Son was not God, the challenges that Jesus faces in the poem seem a genuine test of his virtue and wisdom" (*Reading* 200). Of course, by virtue of the Son's kenosis and the doctrine of the Son's peccability, one may instead recognize that the Son may be both true deity *and* a human being developing in wisdom and virtue amid his genuine resistance to sinful temptation.

[4] Hale references Kerr's earlier publications on *DDC* but not his 2019 *Connotations* response to Falcone.

[5] The practice that Hale warns against remains current within Milton studies. See, for example, Stephen B. Dobranski's new edition of *Paradise Lost*, a volume Dobranski says he has "designed […] with an eye toward first-time readers" (Introduction xxviii). Dobranski announces that a prime goal of this particular edition is "to clarify Milton's religious beliefs with cross-references to his heterodox theological treatise, *On Christian Doctrine*" (xxviii). See also my discussions of Dobranski in n2 and n3 above.

[6] Kerr reinforces this point within the Introduction to his forthcoming book, *Milton's Theological Process*. Kerr's paper at the June 2022 Conference on John Milton was awarded the Charles W. Durham Award for the best paper at the conference. I thank Kerr for reading an earlier draft of this paper to ensure that I referred to his presentation accurately.

[7] It merits notice that the recent discussions of *DDC*'s provenance, including Clawson and Wilson's groundbreaking 2021 article, have taken place outside of the scholarly venues that dominated the earlier discussions regarding *DDC*'s authorship: *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, *Milton Studies*, and *Milton Quarterly*, each of which seems to have moved beyond participation in any such debates after the publication of *Milton and the Manuscript of* De Doctrina Christiana and especially after John Rogers's celebratory review of this book declared the debate regarding *DDC*'s authorship to be "authoritatively resolved" in favor of Miltonic provenance (66). It also bears mentioning that, as of 1 April 2023, *Milton Quarterly*, which regularly abstracts numerous recent articles on Milton published in other venues, has not abstracted any of the articles written by Falcone or Kerr that appear in the *Connotations* debate that began with Falcone's 2018

essay, although *Milton Quarterly* has abstracted my and Hale's 2020 and 2021 *Connotations* articles. Similarly, Falcone's 2010 essay was never abstracted in *Milton Quarterly*.

[8] Clawson and Wilson's article is officially part of the summer 2021 issue of *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, but it did not appear until late January of 2022. Both Kerr and I had read this article prior to our respective presentations at the 2022 Conference on John Milton, which each took place during the same session.

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Six-Word Narratives and Hybrid Genres in Digital Contexts: A Response to David Fishelov

PAOLA TRIMARCO

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For further contributions to the debate on "Six-Word Narratives and Hybrid Genres in Digital Contexts: A Response to David Fishelov," see http://www.connotations.de/debate/parodies-of-six-word-stories. If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de.

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Abstract

This short essay offers a reflection on six-word stories. In response to David Fishelov's "Parodies of Six-Word Stories: A Comic Literary Metagenre," this paper aims to complement Fishelov's study by recontextualizing two of his examples. This reframing of the stories into their original online contexts reveals that they are integral parts of larger discourses. In this light, these *stories* could be considered posts in a thread, or, in terms of discourse analysis, these are conversational turns. It is argued that as texts within larger texts these examples belong to a digital hybrid genre. By categorising these posts in this way, the analysis is better positioned to address the issue mentioned by Fishelov, namely that many of the six-word *stories* found in the original study contained some narrative elements but would not be considered *stories* by most readers.

David Fishelov presents an intriguing example of a metagenre within the genre of six-word stories, which themselves can be seen as a subgenre of flash fiction. The parodies of the well-known six-word story ("For sale: Baby shoes, never worn.") are rightly described as *meta*genre, which Fishelov defines as "texts that call attention to the conventions of a specific genre or its prototypical members" (Fishelov 36). While the categorization and discussion of literary parodies are sound, I wish to expand on the study by considering more closely the context of publication of these miniature narratives which have been decontextualised by Fishelov.

As Fishelov notes, the original source of the six-word stories of his study is a website with comments and likes: https://www.reddit.com/r/sixwordstories/top/?t=all. For his analysis, Fishelov has extracted these six-word texts from their original context in order to focus on them as a genre and a parodic metagenre. I would argue that the omitted co-text (that is, the surrounding text) provides additional context necessary to understand how these mini-narratives perform social functions as part of larger discourses. That is, like other digital writings, these texts form hybrid genres that follow the generic rules of more than one genre (see Page and Thomas; Trimarco).

Fishelov accurately describes the six-word narrative genre as containing a sequence of actions ending in a punchline. These narratives, however, can also be seen as part of a larger text, acting as the initial posts in an online discussion, where other participants respond with "likes" and/or their own posts. To illustrate the richness of these as part of a hybrid genre found in online discourse, I will consider two examples from Fishelov's study in what follows.

One of the parodied six-word stories chosen by Fishelov opens the string of a larger discourse as given below. The number in brackets refers to the number of likes each post has received. As a story, the initial post received 344 votes (or likes) at the time of writing this response. Since some of the posts are lengthy and others could still be added, for convenience of this analysis I will not include all the posts. I have also broken down this conversational thread in order to consider different features of this full text.

> *For sale: This story format. Overused.*
>
> For sale: Clever meta post. Pointless. (98)
>
> Double reverse, ironically meta post. "Brilliant." (19)
>
> Redditors now looking for original posts. (21)

Interestingly, each of these three comments refers to the six-word story as a "post" and not a story, with two of the comments noting the parody by referring to the initial post as a meta-post. The genre of online conversations is clearly being acknowledged by the format and the choice of words, such as *post*.

The extent to which these are stories, narratives, or whether they belong to another genre is also noted in Fishelov's analysis: "the narrative element is sometimes less obvious, and some texts seem to hover between six-word *stories* and neighboring mini-genres which are not committed to tell a story (e.g. aphorisms, epigraphs)" (36). In a note, Fishelov defines narrative as "a represented action that involves 'a change of fortune' […] or a change or evolvement from one situation to a significantly different situation" (52n5). While Fishelov does not differentiate *narrative* from *story*, this nevertheless rightly suggests that, while all stories are narratives, not all narratives are stories. In the example above, the *overused* is a represented action, which by definition suggests change in a situation over time. Although narrative elements are present, the missing narrative elements, such as background, plot and resolution, whether expressed or implied, make it difficult for many readers to consider the example a *story*.

The view about these posts not being *stories* is addressed in the next comment in the thread:

> Clever. But not a story. Why is format so important in a six word story? There are only a certain number of format combinations with the brevity of the word limit. Content > format. And your content falls flat, is gimmicky, and albeit ironic, still hypocritical. (15)

This is followed by a few more lengthy comments by the same author about whether most of these are stories, including the following:

> […] Most "stories" in this subreddit are not stories either. They are ideas at best and quite often just sentences and phrases.

> […] There was a beauty to Hemingway's original. It takes time, patience and hundreds of iterations to capture that. While I appreciate the contributions here, I wish contributors put a bit more effort into it.

This thread of comments further illustrates the hybrid genre of online conversation. Short utterances appear as if they were turns in a conversation, alongside a lengthy critical discourse of the type found in written language, that is, without the interruptions of other conversation participants. Characteristic of other online genres, such as chatrooms, this last response is directed at the author of the initial post while at the same time communicating with the larger Reddit audience. We see this in the use of "your" and in how the response refers to other six-word stories in this section of Reddit, including the original story, attributed to Hemingway.

With the exception of the last example, most comments are in six words themselves and are intended to be witty replies. Such posts and the number of likes that they have received draw further attention to the interactive nature of a thread of online communication and the expectation of how readers might react. These social features of online communication and their output of digital texts have been described as involving self-representation and expressions of identity (cf. Page and Thomas; Barton and Lee; Jovanovic). It could be said that these short postings express creativity and wit that are both self-representative and part of the story-writers' group identity. The longer posting could be treated as a critical response that reveals its individual author's self-representation by taking on the role of critic, while positioning themselves outside of the group identity through the criticisms and not following the six-word format.

Another six-word story from Fishelov's article also raises questions about the story genre itself as much as its online context. This story, as Fishelov rightly notes, is not part of the metagenre of parodying six-word short stories. For purposes of illustration, it appears with three of the comments that followed it, again with the number of likes in brackets.

> *I invented a new word: plagiarism.*

> I like that it works here, without having some depressing subtext like every other story. (27)
>
> Well whaddaya know, you sure did! (5)
>
> [In response to the above comment] Haha! I plagerized [sic] the wrong person (5) [Posted by the same person who wrote the original six-word story.]

The initial post or *story* first appeared in another section of Reddit with the label of "Jokes." Indeed, this post reads as if it were a one-line joke. The only action in this narrative is the invention of a new word, with the punchline being that the word is about the wrongful borrowing of other people's words. The action would be meaningless to the narrative if the invention were not of the word *plagiarism*. This example has a narrative element but would not be categorised as a *story*. However, in this case we could claim that the text belongs to the joke genre as well as belonging to the six-word narrative genre and the online conversation genre.

The comments that follow the initial posting refer directly to that posting as if they were turns in a conversation with the writer of the original post responding to another's post. At the same time, as shown with earlier examples, these are written conversations that make clear references to their online contexts, where other six-word stories have been posted. The first comment to the initial posting is also interesting in terms of providing a brief critique of this narrative in the context of the other six-word postings. The expressions of opinions, humour and overall creativity in these posts could, as pointed out above, be seen in the framework of self-representation and identity.

Page and Thomas note that, "At the start of the twenty-first century, much has changed both in the kinds of narratives that are now available in digital media and in the approaches taken to analyse them" (1). Fishelov has provided us with an analysis of texts within the texts, examining the six-word texts as stories, with a focus on those which are parodies. I have extended Fishelov's study by acknowledging the online contexts of these texts, revealing that they are part of a hybrid genre, an online discourse with potentially thousands of participants. This online hybrid genre blends features of spoken interactive conversation with written genres. As they are published online, these six-word narratives belong to another hybrid genre, which might be called *digital six-word narratives*. These are mini narratives that appear as postings, alongside comments and likes, using the affordances of online communication. In this context, they can be treated as *narratives* as opposed to *stories*. As shown in this essay, Fishelov and some of the participants in these online conversations directly and indirectly question the *story* classification themselves.

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"The prismatic hues of memory" (*DC* 769): Visual Story-Telling and Chromatic Showmanship in Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*

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This article is the first entry in a debate on "Dickens and Colour." http://www.connotations.de/debate/dickens-and-colour. If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de.

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Abstract

What if the memory of colour was an integral part of the act of story-telling? *David Copperfield*, Charles Dickens's "favourite child," illustrates the author's will to hold his control over profuse, errant memories, in order to fashion his semi-fictitious autobiography. Yet what has not been analysed so far is the part played by colours in this mnemonic enterprise carried out through fiction. Indeed, chromatic dynamics partakes of memory work. David Copperfield can become the hero of his own life if, and only if, he succeeds in turning "the ghost of half-formed hopes, the broken shadows of disappointments dimly seen" (734) into a succession of bright, vivid memories, paving the way of his *Künstlerroman* towards both artistic success and domestic bliss. Even if direct references to colours may be few and far between, they nevertheless feature at crucial moments and are put to many different uses. They are of course given pride of place in David's phenomenological recreation of his childhood. They are like beacons in his amorous journey, from Dora Spenlow, the "child wife," with her invariable rose bud of a mouth and blue eyes, to Agnes, the "sister wife," with her colour-shifting face. Red is polysemic, pointing in turn to Steerforth's last feat of heroism when, aboard his sinking ship, he sports a singular red cap, to Uriah Heep's ubiquitous red eyes. Colours accordingly would seem to both serve a contrapuntal function, bringing out the more dramatic episodes, and to propound a graphic analogue to what can hardly find any fitting verbal transcription, such as Heep's egregious deviousness. In his retrospective novel Dickens uses colours sparingly to catalyse the act of remembering and detach his autodiegetic narrator's consciousness from the blank of an indistinct past so as to attain the vivid colourfulness of fleeting epiphanic episodes illustrative of the temporary presentness of the past.

In his study of *David Copperfield* titled *Das Leben als Geschichte: Poetische Reflexion in Dickens* David Copperfield, Matthias Bauer speaks of "immanent poetics" (Bauer 358) to analyse the dialectical link between, on the one hand, life as existence or destiny and, on the other, life as story, which underpins the *Künstlerroman*, as well as the act of memory which constantly mediates between the two. Joseph Hillis Miller, for his part, fleshes out this somewhat abstract notion of remembering by evoking "the pictorial vividness of memory" (Hillis Miller 812). The quotation is interesting for two reasons: firstly, "vividness" points to the efficacy of the visual to abolish the distance of time, and, secondly, it emphasises the term "pictorial." Pictures are made up of lines, shapes and contours—which in the case of *David Copperfield* were rendered tangible by Hablot Knight Browne's, aka Phiz's, illustrations—and of colours. Colours in a novel are signifiers which can only be actualised through the readers' mental prism. To quote Paul Cézanne: "Colour is where our brain and the universe meet." (Cézanne 112; my translation).[1]

As a memory novel, *David Copperfield* multiplies levels of subjectivity: there is obviously the real author's and his fictional persona's, through the presence of the first-person narrator. But, since Dickens's fiction is a *Künstlerroman*, the narrator is alternatively the young man in the process of becoming an authorial figure *and* the writer who, having completed his artistic training, casts a retrospective look on his life. Not only is the narrator split between his adult and his younger selves but the interdependency between living and reading is sealed by the activity of "reading as if for life" (*DC* 106). To focus on the use of colours in the novel entails constantly bearing in mind these different real and fictional levels, and also allowing for constant shifts of perspectives.[2] Moreover, a tension is constantly maintained between, on the one hand, "well-remembered facts" (*DC* 225), through the proxy of fiction, testifying to a form of eidetic memory, vivid and precise, right down to colour details, and, on the other, visions, projections, fantasmagoria affording at times "a surrealist view of persons and things" (Hillis Miller 812). It may be hypothesised that colours contribute to the memory work constitutive of the novel's dynamics; they cristallise, dramatise, enhance, galvanise, and of course aestheticise a text which may be read as an artistic anamnesis. In other words, colours cannot be confined to a mere descriptive, ornamental or even symbolical function. The different functions of colours, stated above, come under scrutiny in what follows. The affects and agency of colours in the process of remembering will first be considered, then the various functions of chromatism will be analysed through the example of red, before attempting to read colours as "chromatope,"[3] in contradistinction with Mikhaïl Bakhtin's chronotope, in a third part. Finally, blue will be assessed under the heading "coming out in [one's] true colour[s]" (*DC* 738).

Colours and Affects, and the Agency of Colours

Scientific literature establishes that not only is colour a determining factor in visual memory (Gegenfurtner and Rieger; Suzuki and Takahashi; Wichmann et al.) but that it also enhances memory performance (Adawia Dzulkifli and Faiz Mustafar). Dickens in his own time was already conversant with the incipient literature on colours, through the nascent discipline of anthropology, for example, and its emphasis on skin colour, as suggested by Tara MacDonald in an article on Uriah Heep's redness. Moreover, as editor of *Household Words* (March 1850-May 1859), Dickens may have perused and even perhaps appraised three scientific contributions on colours: one on colouring, two on colour and the eyes, especially colour blindness. This point will be tackled further down.

In David's "narrative of [his] written memory" (*DC* 889), the activity of picturing is key, as claimed by anaphoras in the penultimate paragraph of chapter 5: "*I picture my* small *self* in the dimly-lighted rooms […] *I picture myself* with my books shut up […] *I picture myself* going up to bed […] *I picture myself* coming downstairs in the morning" (*DC* 132; emphases mine). Picturing is polysemic; in this quotation it refers to the act of reminiscing which is given a graphic analogue, but in the wider context of this Victorian novel, it can also consist in the material activity of sketching and drawing, in the here and now of the diegesis, an activity illustrated by the skeletons Traddles repeatedly chalks over his slate (*DC* 143), or in colouring, a practice Dora Spenlow constantly indulges in with her "flower-painting" (*DC* 667). Significantly, the narrator's visual memory may be characterised by this tension between drawing and colouring. This is suggested by the introduction of the character of Miss Mowcher in chapter 22; her physicality is expressed by botched, blurred contours, as if she were a hasty sketch: "a double chin, […] so fat that it entirely swallowed up the strings of her bonnet, bow and all. Throat she had none; waist she had none, legs she had none, worth mentioning" (*DC* 386). The narrator renders the distorted silhouette of the dwarfish woman through the hypertrophy of her double chin eclipsing the rest of her body. She appears as an unfinished drawing, characterised by absence and negativity, with "none" repeated three times. Yet this paucity of neatly drawn lines and contours is somehow offset by the midget's histrionic chatter on red, as if she compensated with colour for what she lacked in shape, as it were: "'Red by nature, black by art'" (*DC* 389), "'it's not—not—not ROUGE, is it? […] What the unmentionable to ears polite, do you think I want with rouge?'" (*DC* 391). Through her polyglossic number, Miss Mowcher, the grotesque beautician, colours her prose through this repeated reference to red and, tellingly, rouge, the cosmetic powder indispensable to produce the particular shade of red which defines her. Thus red, the all-encompassing generic notion, and rouge, the chemical preparation, become the cornerstone of the passage, independently of what is actually being discussed. To all intents and purposes, this chromatic verbal display sticks in the narrator's mind thereafter and affords an opportunity for literary showmanship.

Despite Miss Mowcher's monomaniacal concern with red, colours in *David Copperfield* are rarely limited to fixed, essentialist monochromes. They are in a state of flux in the narrator's consciousness: "New thoughts and hopes were whirling through my mind, and all the colours of my life were changing." (*DC* 935). If anything, colours are transient since they are briefly summoned up from the colourless "mists and shadows of the past" (*DC* 711) or from the blank of infancy. Unlike what happens in *Bleak House*'s opening scene where the tangible materiality of both smoke and fog is perceptible through blackness for the former or physical intrusion for the latter (*BH* 49), mists and shadows in *David Copperfield* are invested with a certain level of metaphorical abstraction. They stand for the chromatic vacuum out of which colours surge as David's memory gives a new lease on life to scenes that had fallen into oblivion. During their ephemeral return thanks to the act of narration, these colours find themselves exposed to the "ruined blank and waste […], to the dark horizon" (*DC* 886) which metaphorically represent the threat of forgetfulness. In his reluctance to adopt a positivist stance, David proves especially sensitive to colours as effects and to their ever-shifting hues, and thus never perceives them as fixed, absolute givens. In this respect, David illustrates what a contemporary American writer calls the "certain ontological indeterminacy" (Nelson 15) of colour.

The first obstacle he has to face stems from the impossibility of naming colours. In the emotionally-charged scene in which Clara Copperfied first returns with Murdstone in chapter 2, David remarks: "I never saw such a beautiful colour on my mother's face before" (*DC* 67). Refraining from being more specific about this "beautiful colour" may evidence the narrator's embarassment at identifying his mother's bliss, in which he has no part at this stage. Later, on the day his mother is buried, "the light [is] not of the same colour [as the other days]—of a sadder colour" (*DC* 184). Again such reluctance to be more specific on the matter of colour could be construed as a sign of the narrator's distraught condition, and colour indefiniteness is associated with affects at this critical moment. Similarly, the absence of clearly defined colours bespeaks despondency on several other instances. The pannelled rooms at Murdstone and Grinby's are "discoloured with the dirt and smoke of a hundred years" (*DC* 209), so that David is easily inclined to find the dismal place in perfect correspondence with his dark sense of despair. In a slightly different perspective, when Agnes Wickfield realises that her father has fallen into Uriah Heep's clutches, she "glide[s] in, without a vestige of colour in her face" (*DC* 643). Therefore it could be maintained that resorting to the linguistic signifier "colour," in other words choosing to stick noncommitally to the hyperonym, i.e "colour" instead of red, pink etc., and thereby pointing to loss of colour, or achromaticity, results in jeopardising the narrative's continuation, premised on the use of colours as triggers to revive scenes from the mists and shadows of the past. This idea is metafictionally acknowledged by the narrator when he claims that "conventional phrases are a sort of fireworks […] liable to take a great variety of shapes and colours" (*DC* 655). Through this remark, David momentarily suspends the thread of his story to comment on the graphic colourfulness of his flamboyant prose. Not only may colours be inscribed in the text but they may also take a life of their own, and lend story-telling its impetus, through intratextual resonances or textual reception. Nowhere is this more perceptible than in chapter 2 when the adult narrator phenomenogically evokes David's nascent sense of self in a passage that could be described as a form of chromatic genesis.

Departing from the logic of chapter 1, relating David's physiological birth from a range of testimonies of the characters then present, the second chapter records the successive steps of the child's coming to consciousness a few years after. Everything originates in the blank—i.e. white, colourless, achromatic nothingness—of infancy (etymologically inarticulacy). In this context, when the narrator calls up his earliest memories, a form of artistic competition is somehow played out between lines and colours, with on the one hand Clara Copperfield's youthful shape and, on the other, Peggotty's unshapely silhouette but prevalent redness. And in this story of origins, colour, i.e. red, wins the day. It becomes a leitmotif recalled years later as the story winds up: "The cheeks and arms of Peggotty, so hard and red in my childish days" (*DC* 947). As a matter of fact, Peggotty's redness cannot be contained within fixed contours, it contaminates the domestic interior of David's childhood house just as it permeates the whole novel, for example "the red velvet footstool" (*DC* 66) which in the child's hypnagogic perception, recreated years later, is indistinguishable from ruby complexion. Besides, redness is also generative since Peggotty's cheeks and arms could be mistaken for apples, untainted by Original Sin, since only birds are presumed to be attracted to them. Thus bright, vivid colours call the shots, as it were, in this brief evocation of what could be termed David's green paradise of blissful childhood[4] before Murdstone's "shallow black eyes" (*DC* 73) harden into "blacker and thicker" (*DC* 73) hair and whiskers. The initial polychrome of the half-orphan's warm nest, with its green, red and pink is soon overrun by the "rich white, and black, and brown of [Murdstone's] complexion" (*DC* 71) and the shadow it casts over the future. In retrospect, what should have been a colourful period of insousciance turns out to be what could be called, through a pun with psychomachia, i.e. a battle of spirits, a *chromamachia* between green and red, on the one hand, and black, on the other. Whereas green heralds the endearing eccentricity of Betsey Trotwood whimsically forbidding donkeys to trespass on her turf, black metonymically refers to the Murdstones' asinine subjection to misguided puritanism: "The gloomy taint that was in the Murdstone blood, darkened the Murdstone religion, which was austere and wrathful" (*DC* 101). "Taint" is of course etymologically equivocal, conflating the Old French *ataint* or *ateint*, i.e. convicted, and the Latin *tinctus* or the French *teint*, giving the English word *tint*. In short, taint conveys the idea of both tint or hue *and* stain or blemish, i.e. the very Original Sin which the Murdstones pride themselves on extirpating from David's corrupt nature.

Polysemic Chromatism: Red in All Its Guises

It is perhaps Wilkins Micawber who articulates most vividly the bond between colours and memory when he speaks of "the scenes and events of the past, tinged by the prismatic hues of memory" (*DC* 769)[5] in a letter addressed to David. Prismatic colours are the colours that can be seen when light goes through a prism—to wit, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. There is admittedly a lot of red, blue and some green in *David Copperfield* and a few rare instances of yellow, such as when the Scotch Croesus Julia Mills marries is depicted as a "yellow bear with a tanned hide" (*DC* 948). Significantly, Micawber chooses to speak of "hues" rather than colours where memory is involved, to signal a continuing process of mental filtering, and probably altering in the process, instead of referring to the plain act of perception of one definite colour. Besides, "tinged" confirms the idea of colour interpenetration, as opposed to neat chromatic discrimination. The paradigmatic opposition between, on the one hand, Newton's *Opticks* which postulated that colours result from the interaction of light with objects, and on the other, Goethe, who in his *Theory of Colour* prioritised the decisive function of the eye in colour perception, helps to understand better what is at stake through the antagonism between an objective and a subjective approach to colour.[6]

Strangely enough, the phrase "prismatic hues" also anticipates a debate which arose in the 1860s, following the production of chemical colours from aniline dyes, between industrialists and scientists, who advocated a material approach predicated upon fixed chromatic discrimination, and artists such as "Ruskin, Morris and Pater who craved for ancient Greek colour-weaving or *poikilia*—a Hellenic term encoding dappledness as well as versatility" (Ribeyrol 2). Even if Dickens's use of colour in the activity of remembering is probably more empirical than derived from any scientific research extant at the time, it is interesting to note his commitment to a subjective, romantic approach to colour. Indeed, the writer's use of shifting colours retrospectively conjures up a mindset. To give but one example, on first seeing his bedroom at the Micawbers' David notices an ornament which his "young imagination *represented* as a blue muffin" (*DC* 212; emphasis mine). The remark does not refer so much to the decoration as to the narrator's mental disposition at the time; namely his constant worry about not eating his fill and a liking for the colour blue, which will be addressed in more detail in a following section. In the same way as David coins the phrase "comical affection" (*DC* 111) to account for his attachment to Peggotty, it could be argued that the "prismatic hues of memory" are inflected by what amounts to "*chromatic* affection," in other words the meaning of one same colour may vary notably according to context and circumstances as much as the character's affects at one particular moment. Put differently, the signifier colour may call up an array of ever-shifting, diverse signifieds. This is particularly noticeable with red. Red is positively connoted with Peggotty, as seen above, and with Emily's "cherry lips" (*DC* 194), as well as the Kentish "orchards […] ruddy with ripe apples" (*DC* 242), but, conversely, it becomes paradigmatic of evil with Uriah Heep's "unsheltered and unshaded" (*DC* 275), "shadowless red eyes" (*DC* 437), like "two red suns" (*DC* 278), or worse the ominous singular of his "cunning red eye" (*DC* 814) in chapter 52, titled "I assist at an Explosion" (*DC* 809). From Georges Bataille (1928) and Roland Barthes (1964) to Jacques Lacan (1973), the obsession with the eye or gaze as a node of taboos and transgressions has been repeatedly addressed. Red is indeed the fulcrum of primary impulses when David, fixed by Heep's glowing red eyes, cannot dismiss the vision of a murderous attack: "I believe I had a delirious idea of seizing the red-hot poker out of the fire, and running him through with it […] the image of Agnes, outraged by so much as a thought of this red-headed animal's, remained in my mind" (*DC* 441; ch. 25 "Good and Bad Angels"). In this passage, the tropism of redness instigates what amounts to a phantasy script. It is triggered by the metonymic chain between the fire in the hearth, the metaphoric sparks of ambition which Uriah snidely thanks David for having kindled in him, and Uriah's omnipresent, searing red eyes: "his shadowless red eyes, which looked as if they had scorched their lashes off" (*DC* 437). The account of a fleeting, hallucinatory moment is superimposed on the memory narrative, linking the incandescent redness of fire literally and metaphorically with the ubiquitous glowing gaze. Precisely, it is the eyes which crystallise this phantasmagorical and infernal chain of associations: "each of its terms is always the significant of another term (no term being a simple thing signified) without it being possible ever to break the chain" (Barthes 122). The logic is further complicated if Uriah Heep is perceived as "one of David's alter egos […] that what he hates and fears in Uriah, he hates and fears in himself" (Stone 121; cf. Bauer 71,73). What is at stake here is chiefly a consuming ambition and the urge to devour the loved one, first Dora and then Agnes. In this perspective, the red eye becomes the nexus of both sadistic and masochistic drives that leave neither of the main protagonists, Uriah and David, unscathed. Thus, David's narrative blends well-remembered facts, in the present case Uriah Heep's successful efforts to enter into partnership with Agnes's father and to win over Agnes herself by the same token, and the delusions of the young man's delirious mind. From the distance of time, the all too present red-hot poker still catalyses an infernal love triangle that persists as an obsession. In this respect, memory does not necessarily appertain to the past as it is indistinguishable from the realm of phantasy, recreated through literary imagination.

It could be hypothesised that the attention to colours allows the reader to revisit the novel by plotting chromatic itineraries. Carrying on with red, it may be said that a series of hyponyms not only enrich the hues, tints, tones, and shades of this primary colour (ruby, ruddy, sanguine etc.), but also that through their semantic inflections they cover the whole spectrum of Dickens's process of storytelling, allegorised through the famous red and white side of streaky bacon (*Oliver Twist* 134, and *DC* 125). Seen in this perspective, redness applies indiscriminately to the comic and tragic, innocence and corruption, and elicits both attraction and repulsion, in "regular alternation" (*OT* 134). To take up "ruddy" for example, it qualifies both James Steerforth's handsome head (*DC* 488) and Heep's ugly one, stained by "unwholesome ruddiness" (*DC* 578). Therefore redness is undoubtedly polysemic, even to the point of dissolving into chromatic chaos when "[Heep's] eyes seemed to take every shade of colour that could make eyes ugly" (*DC* 686). Yet it could also be argued that red is incremental and shifts from one pole, the horrendous, to the opposite one, the beautiful, through degrees or stages, rather than through abrupt juxtaposition. Comedy affords such an intermediary stage, which is best illustrated by the adjective "sanguine" that aptly defines Micawber's temper (*DC* 227).

In the tradition of eighteenth-century lampooning, some passages of *David Copperfield* satirise high society, and red is used for comedic purposes. When David, Traddles and Heep are invited to dine at the Waterbrooks', a family of solicitors (ch. 25), the conversation soon turns to aristocracy and blood, and progressively becomes gory and ghoulish: "We might have been a party of Ogres, the conversation assumed such a sanguine complexion" (*DC* 434). Poor Traddles finds himself ensconced "in the glare of a red velvet lady" (*DC* 433) and David in the gloom of a lady described as Hamlet's aunt, which is both an intertextual acknowledgment of the thespian quality of the text and a parodic hint at said lady's complicity in performing bloody deeds. Moreover, comedic redness operates fully with the pantomimic figure of Red Whisker, a young man with red whiskers whom David imagines in the role of his egregious rival in his passion for Dora Spenlow (*DC* 545). Red Whisker makes a show of his redness down to his culinary preferences: "By and by, I saw him, with the majority of a lobster on his plate, eating his dinner at the feet of Dora!" (*DC* 545). In his flustered condition, besotted as he is with Dora, David sees Red Whisker everywhere, and when he forms a passing attachment to "a young creature in pink" (*DC* 545), he suspects Red Whisker may be a more advantageous party for her, and is hardly reassured on realising that "[t]he young creature in pink had a mother in green" (*DC* 545). What started off as a fixation with red unleashes a surreal colour vertigo with the omnipresent Red Whisker returning at regular intervals like a chromatic *idée fixe*.

The butcher boy is another of David's bugbears, standing halfway between the comedic Red Whisker and the satanic Uriah Heep, and invariably sporting his "mulberry-coloured great coat" (*DC* 444, 445, 638). The coarse butcher with his "rough, red cheeks" (*DC* 324) is the nemesis of the young gentlemen of Dr Strong's school, chief of whom, David, who takes it upon himself to beat him in single combat to vindicate his and his peers' honour. There is of course an element of classism when the labouring menial, "bloody but confident" (*DC* 325), quickly gains ascendency on the young scholar. However, whereas with Uriah Heep class difference entails life-long enmity, the difference between David and the butcher is short-lived. Indeed, soon after David gets his own back on the butcher, known for anointing his hair with beef suet, the latter mellows into the respectable figure of family man and constable. As for Uriah Heep, he remains the "detestable *Rufus*" (*DC* 445; italics mine)—Latin for red-haired—which, according to Michel Pastoureau, was a common word of abuse among the monks in the middle ages alongside with "subrufus" (Pastoureau, *Rouge* 113). Interestingly, once Heep has been sent to jail where he acquires all the qualities of a model prisoner, no mention is made of red any more in relation to his character. It should also be noted that Pastoureau remarks how only the Biblical David is spared from the cultural and anthropological bias stigmatising redness. In Samuel 1.12, David is described as "ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to." Could David *Copper*field have a ruddy complexion? After all, copper is used as colour to describe Julia Mills's Indian servant in the last chapter (*DC* 948), and copper is also the skin colour of Dev Patel, the actor who plays the part of David in Armando Ianucci's 2019 adaptation of Dickens's novel. Therefore, ultimately, colours can raise ethical questions pertaining to inclusive casting in theatrical and cinematic adaptations. In any case, red in all its guises is fundamentally plural and multivalent and is even invested with solemnity when Steerforth is seen for the last time. A valedictory note is struck with the red cap Steerforth is sporting just as his boat is about to be swallowed by a high, green wave. At this crucial juncture, the narrator seems to freeze the fateful vision as if to bid farewell: "He had a singular red cap on,—not like a sailor's cap, but of a finer colour" (*DC* 865). The emphasis laid on colour, in what is manifestly a momentous event, gestures towards an indefinable red, perhaps a sublime red. And red and green (a mix of yellow and blue) are complementary colours on the colour wheel so that green, associated with rebirth in the seasonal cycle, sublimes, in the chemical sense of rendering gaseous and impalpable, this ever receding and indefinable red, within the novel's chromatic crucible.

Chronotope and "Chromatope"

Bakhtin "give[s] the name *chronotope* (literally, 'time space') to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (Bakhtin 84). The assumption in this subsection is that in chapter 3, "I Have a Change," Bakhtin's dialectic intersection between time and space could be more productively replaced by a confrontation between space and colours, hence the neologism *chromatope* propounded for what follows. Chapter 3 marks a departure from the narrative's chronology characterised at this point by the mounting pressure entailed by the arrival of the Murdstones at Blunderstone, and affords a momentary escape out of temporal bounds and chronological ordering—a parenthesis as it were. Space is at first striking on account of its oddity. Indeed, to young David, Norfolk's flatness defies the very roundness of the earth, a singularity which he can only put down to the fact that Yarmouth is probably "situated at one of the poles" (*DC* 77). In this absence of temporal encroachment, space is complemented by colours to call up the sensation of universe, hence the choice to coin the concept of "chromatope." Put differently, colours somehow come to stand in lieu of time. At any rate, they certainly bestow a narrative dynamics of their own upon the chapter as a whole.

Firstly, the tang of the fishing village is metonymically expressed by "pitch, and oakum, and tar" (*DC* 78) which call up dull colours such as black and brown. But this lacklustre environment recedes in the background as soon as David steps into Daniel Peggotty's boathouse, which is compared to Aladdin's palace and turns out to be the open sesame for a colourful exploration. The empirical stance adopted in chapter 2, "I observe," is superseded in chapter 3 by a complete reversal of perspectives, because now colours seem to take on a life of their own. They indeed become divorced from their referential function to play their respective parts in a phantasmagoria in motion as David explores the boathouse. The ontological divide between the colours in the story and the colours in the paintings represented in the story is erased. Consequently, David is as much struck by a "blue mug" (*DC* 80) on a table as he is by pictures representing scripture subjects in improbable colours: "Abraham in red going to sacrifice Isaac in blue, and Daniel in yellow cast into a den of green lions" (*DC* 79). David's vision, a more accurate term than perception under the circumstances, could perhaps be accounted for as "sleep mentation […] a dreaming logic characterized by a set of operational structures not typically found in the waking state" (Haskell 345-46). Indeed, dreamwork as per Freud is founded on two main principles, namely condensation and displacement, and often entails the reversal of one thing into its antithesis (Freud 296-321 and 321-26). In the novel, the pictorial form of the oneiric displayed through David's visit of Dan Peggotty's boathouse illustrates the first two principles, and adumbrates the third one. Displacement through reversal first, the boat is a house and, therefore, instead of movement, there is stasis and immobility: "To hear the wind getting up out at sea […] no house near but this one, and this one a boat" (*DC* 82). As befits dreamwork, causal links are eclipsed by condensation and repetition, and this is where colours *do* come in. The walls are "whitewashed as white as milk" (*DC* 80), and Peggotty's white apron is twice mentioned as if to spell out a fantasy of maternal plenitude compensating for Clara Copperfield's growing estrangement at this point in the story. Transmogrification is carried out through red when, after scrubbing himself raw, Dan Peggotty's complexion is indisguishable from the colour of the "lobster, crabs, and crawfish" (*DC* 82) he is used to fishing. As seen above with Red Whisker, the crustaceans are destined to develop into a chromatic obsession later in the novel. But dream grammar also postulates abrupt reversals: after appearing like a rubicund freak, Dan Peggotty, through anamorphosis, features like a colourful fairy tale king. The power of the poetic vision is delegated to Emily, and reported by David as narrator, which is in itself proof of the young man's budding passion: "'If I was ever to be a lady, I'd give him a sky-blue coat with diamond buttons, nankeen [yellowish buff] trousers, a red velvet waiscoat, a cocked hat, a large gold watch, a silver pipe, and a box of money'" (*DC* 85). Emily's short description is a trove of colours, a chromatic matrix for the whole novel. If Dan is evoked in polychrome, Emily, that "blue-eyed mite of a child" (*DC* 87)—a tell-tale pleonasm clinging to the ideal of unalterable innocence—is for her part monochromatic. She embodies that blue which in *David Copperfield* conveys all the shades and hues of romantic love and the novelist's sincere engagement with the theme of love.

Coming Out in One's True Colour

Blue is allegedly Dickens's favourite colour: "If you ever have occasion to paint the Mediterranean, let it be exactly that colour. It lies before me now, as deeply and intensely blue" (Dickens qtd. in Forster 331). In his scientific article on "Colours and Eyes," which Dickens edited for *Household Words*, Henry Morley observes: "A pure blue, well illuminated, is in the next degree [i.e. after yellow] least likely to pass unperceived; some colour-blind persons pronounce it to be the colour of which they have the most vivid perception" (Morley 522). Blue seems to be granted a special status in *David Copperfield*, both as a natural tinge enhanced by the sunlight and as liable to work what amounts to miracles with visually impaired people. Of course, blue had undergone many transformations by the time Dickens was writing *Copperfield*—ever since the middle of the eighteenth century with the serendipitous discovery of Berlin, later known as Prussian, blue. And blue was also refined thanks to aniline dyes up until the middle of the nineteenth century (Pastoureau, *Bleu* 115-17). One critic, Iain Crawford, speaks of "formulaic color tagging" (45) and notes David's "special partiality for things blue" (45) and, more interestingly, underscores the colour's tight link with desire, and perhaps more covertly, sexuality (46). In *David Copperfield* blue links together Emily, Steerforth, the eldest Miss Larkins, Dora as well as some other lesser characters, such as Mrs Steerforth's little parlour maid, in romantic lanes of memory. The first time David encounters Mrs Steerforth's little servant, his attention is immediately caught by the "blue ribbons in her cap" (DC 491), a detail which only proves how much he has fallen captive to Dora's "blue ribbons, and a quantity of curls" (*DC* 456), met shortly before. Therefore colours, in the present case blue, have no bearing on an actual situation: they are but triggers in the kaleidoscope of David's memory. And when David meets the little maid for the second time and notes that she has replaced her blue ribbons with "one or two disconsolate bows of sober brown" (*DC* 734), it is not so much to express his interest in the maid's sartorial metamorphosis as to reflect on his own sad mood. He has, at that point, fallen into a "brown study" (*DC* 734), i.e. a melancholy introspection, in which he finds himself haunted by "the ghosts of half-formed hopes, the broken shadows of disappointment" (*DC* 734). Therefore colours, regardless of the characters or situations they are associated with, should be considered on their own merits, by and for themselves. This argument could be substantiated by the French phenomenologist Claude Romano, when he says that "ontological chromatism […] is no longer a mere instrument of imitation, or the signature of objects, but a pure dimension of thinking or being" (309; my translation).[7] And Maurice Merleau-Ponty propounds the phrase: "one sole tone of being" (135) to express the idea that colour draws its irreducible existence from its very essence, irrespectively of what it is used to qualify:

> What is indefinable in the *quale* [i.e. a quality or property as perceived or experienced by a person], in the color, is nothing else than a brief, peremptory manner of giving in one sole something, in one sole tone of being, visions past, visions to come, by whole clusters. (Merleau-Ponty 135)

Can a typically Dickensian way of relating to the world be extrapolated from *David Copperfield*, by focusing on blue? The idea of clusters is worth addressing because as Jeremy Tambling aptly argues in his introduction to the 2004 Penguin classics edition:

> It is as if the repetition in the book functions to deposit layer after layer of sedimentation into the novel, so that memories and the past can be created through a rich context established through different textual levels, which are reinvoked time and time again, rather than the plot simply moving forward. (Kindle edition 298)

Because of its iterative quality, colour partakes of this sedimentary function at work in the memory process, and its inflections vary according to the narrative levels considered, for example whether the narrator is metafictionally evoking the workings of his mnemonic activity, or else fully immersed in an episode of the past which he is bringing back into his present act of telling. Although blue is less present quantitatively than black or red, it bears witness to the logic of recollecting most convincingly because it allies cognitive and affective qualities.[8]

Blue first gives itself as a fixed idea when the narrator recalls arriving in London for the first time and attempting to remember the name of the inn he was bound for: "I forget whether it was the Blue Bull, or the Blue Boar; but I know it was the Blue Something" (*DC* 122). Precisely the "Blue Something" (capitalised in the text) underlines the prevalence of "blue" over whatever it may qualify. This is a case of hypermnesia of the colour blue. And, indeed, perhaps because it originates from David's first encounter with Emily, blue is the starting point of one of the novel's most prevalent memory chains. Blue blends light and darkness and by extension the ephemerality of a recollection in the midst of the obscurity of the forgotten. At Salem House, Steerforth dips a match in a phosphorus box to shine a blue glare for a fleeting moment in the dormitory. Like the magic lantern Marcel Proust was to use years later in *Swann's Way*, a paradigmatic memory novel (Proust 9-10), the match conjures up, in retrospect, years later, a sense of ineffable mystery and lost familiarity, mixing nostalgia and the thrill of transgression: "the secrecy of the revel, and the whisper in which everything was said" (*DC* 138). Blue probably also draws a veil of modesty on past intimacies. By the same token, blue is also imbued with romanticism and a whiff of eroticism. David linguistically represses the first stirrings of love, potentially as a result of his puritan education. Indeed, at the beginning, with Emily, blue conflates desire and its sublimation: "I am sure my fancy raised up something round that blue-eyed mite of a child, which etherealized, and made a very angel of her" (*DC* 87). In a Roman Catholic country, this association between blue and angel would call to mind the marial blue in the stained-glass windows of medieval cathedrals. Michel Pastoureau speaks of "bleu de Chartres" and "bleu du Mans" where the holy Virgin Mary is pictured (Pastoureau, *Bleu* 45). However, there comes the moment when in this novel of apprenticeship, which is also a covert novel of sexual discovery, David hyperbolically and obsessively surrenders to the appeal of blue, initially with the eldest Miss Larkins: "She is dressed in blue, with blue flowers in her hair—forget-me-nots—as if *she* had any need to wear forget-me-nots" (*DC* 328; original italics). Then the repetition of blue inscribes David's mounting desire and precludes the very possibility that this beauty may ever be forgotten. David subsequently wallows in blue, alternating between "blue angel" (*DC* 328) and "blue enslaver" (*DC* 333). And the recollection of Miss Larkins still preys on his mind when he loses himself in the contemplation of "the blue eyes of [his] child wife" (*DC* 834), onto whose finger he slips a ring of "Forget-me-nots" (*DC* 550) made of blue stones. Here again the grammar of dream is characterised by repetition together with condensation, and is not ruled by causality or chronology, so that "Little Blossom," or Dora the child wife, becomes one with Emily: "a blue-eyed blossom" (*DC* 501), according to Mr Omer. This process of memory condensation partakes of the oneiric dimension of the novel. In a sense, blue spins a yarn of its own, which may be occasionally riddling though; for example, what is the reader to make of "Uriah's blue bag lying down and vomiting papers" (*DC* 313)? This unsavoury blue seems totally uncalled for and deconstructs the thematic and symbolic coherence of the rest of the novel. This may be a warning that colours can remain cryptic as well as invite prudence and are proof that memory works in unpredictable ways. Or this is perhaps yet another example of Dickens's partiality for jarring contrasts, his proclivity for the above-mentioned streaky bacon. Or is it perhaps the fact that Uriah, even at his most despicable is never totally divorced from David, his luminous double? In this instance, as in many others, blue evidences the ambivalences of identity formation, the fact that on his way towards maturity David has to come to terms with the best and the worst in himself.

When, at the end of his amorous journey, David eventually marries Agnes, his sister wife, whom critics almost unanimously deride as "bloodless, legless, passive, impossibly long-suffering and self-denying" (Garnett 226), the question of how she can fare colourwise is legitimate, granted that blueness has already been so insistently and indiscriminately applied to a whole group of young eligible women. In other words, how is David's second wife's exceptionality chromatically sealed? Dickens opts for an expedient, between choosing one colour, which would be too assertive, and relinquishing colour altogether, which would not do justice to "the dear presence" who "bears [the narrator] company" (*DC* 950) at the moment when the anamnesis reaches its completion, opening the way for the beginning of the act of narrating. Henceforth Agnes is to be forever linked to "a stained glass window in a church" (*DC* 280, 289, 839), which the narrator saw once, without being able to say when or where. Agnes thus transfigures colours by being elevated above the secular and sublunary, and she also exists beyond the span of memory by challenging David's capacity to recollect. If the prismatic hues of memory are instrumental in reviving the scenes and events of the past, the stained glass seems like an absolute, beyond the reach of time; a "tranquil brightness" (*DC* 280) both above and beyond the whole gamut of variegated emotions:

> I love little Em'ly, and I don't love Agnes—no, not at all in that way—but I feel that there are goodness, peace, and truth, wherever Agnes is; and that the soft light of the coloured window in the church, seen long ago, falls on her always, and on me when I am near her, and on everything around. (*DC* 289)

Conclusion

Colours in *David Copperfield* do not work mimetically as indexes of what the Victorian or pre-Victorian world actually looked like colourwise. In other words, the reader cannot get a clear picture of how red, blue, and green actually appeared at the time, in terms of hue, chroma, and luminance. In the same way as for odours or noises, it may be hypothesised that, as cultural historians claim, sensory experience is inextricably linked with the social imaginaries of both the time of writing and the time of reception.[9] And the perception of colours is also intersensorial since one sensory perception cannot be considered in isolation. As this study has shown, in *David Copperfield*, colours are woven into the memory work which makes up the novel's substance. In this respect, the use which is made of colours in the novel ties in with the twentieth and twenty-first scientific literature on the subject. What Dickens mostly intuited in the middle of the nineteenth century; that colours are not fixed signifiers but context-dependent, and that they act as triggers in the process of remembering, is confirmed by recent research on the subject. Sometimes colours are even endowed with a form of agency as they energise the narration through repetition and quasi-surreal visionary digressions. Moreover, colours flag the diversity of Dickens's style, from satire to comedy, and tone, from the romantic to the pathetic. In this regard, they do justice to the novelist's claim to run the whole spectrum of moods in his prose, through the colourful, in more senses than one, image of "streaky bacon." And in a novel underscoring the vulnerability of memories, always on the brink of the infinite indistinctness of oblivion, colours vindicate a form of resilience.

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NOTES

[1] The original French text reads: "La couleur est le lieu où notre cerveau et l'univers se rencontrent."

[2] Mark Spilka categorises *David Copperfield* as a "projective novel, in which surface life reflects the inner self" (Spilka 292).

[3] The neologism "chrom*a*tope" has been chosen even if there is currently a research project on colours in the nineteenth century called "chrom*o*tope." The scope of this ERC project goes well beyond the field of literature to cover art, science and technology throughout Europe whereas the purpose of the present analysis is to underline methodological correspondences between the Bakhtinian *chrono*tope (time and place) and *chroma*tope (colour and place).

[4] The phrase "the green paradise of blissful childhood" is of course a variation on Charles Baudelaire's lines "But the green paradise of childish love […] Innocent paradise of furtive joys" in his poem "Moesta et errabunda" (Campbell 85). The colour green often connotes nostalgia in *David Copperfield*, such as when David reminisces Blunderstone, Suffolk, the village of his early childhood. Although green is much less present than black, red, white or blue in the novel, it is found more emphatically in relation to Betsey Trotwood's "patch of green" (*DC* 251), which she ardently defends against the intrusion of "saddle-donkeys, lady-ridden" (*DC* 250). As a matter of fact, the treatment of green is not devoid of humour in this same chapter 13, when the aunt is reported to be invariably ensconced in a chair behind a "green screen or fan" (*DC* 246, 248, 250, 252). Indeed, this green theatrical prop partakes of the paraphernalia of the woman's

eccentricity. Sometimes green is alleged to be the colour of memory, a fact that is not attested by the literature on the subject, which tends to link mnemonic attributes with warm colours such as red or orange (see Kuhbandner, Lichtenfeld, Spitzer, and Pekrun). That said, because green is linked to resurgence and vitality through the cycle of vegetation, it connotes the persistence or renewal of past traces. This is the meaning of Claudius's words in *Hamlet* "Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death, / The memory be green" (1.2, 1-2), which Dickens takes up at the end of *The Haunted Man*, the fifth and last of his *Christmas Books*. There, Redlaw, a professor of chemistry, after begging from a ghost the power of forgetting his sorrow and his loss, subsequently realises that this gift of oblivion is actually a curse, as it deprives him of interest, compassion, and sympathy. At the end of the story, the characters are assembled in the College Hall beneath the College founder's portrait and seem to hear the words "Lord, keep my memory green" (*HM* 408) as if a voice had uttered them. I am most grateful to Professor Michael Hollington for aptly pointing out to me the significance of green in relation to memory.

[5] Jeremy Tambling in his introduction to the Penguin Classics edition contemplates the possibility that Micawber "perhaps [...] is [...] the hero of David Copperfield's life" (Kindle 590) because "Micawber's writing is a figure of continuity which surpasses David Copperfield, who seems to show a certain exhaustion in drawing his own writing to an end, and behind Micawber's, there is the text, with the extraordinary and unexhausted depths it comes from" (Kindle 610).

[6] Interestingly, Dickens, through Micawber's inflated lyrical prose blurs the opposition between Newton's scientific, prismatic optics and Goethe's insistence on human perception. Indeed, Micawber uses the image of "prismatic hues" to probe into memory processes in a nearly Proustian way, even if the parallel may seem somewhat anachronistic.

[7] The original French text reads: "un chromatisme ontologique [...] n'est plus simple instrument d'imitation, signature des objets, mais pure dimension de pensée et d'existence."

[8] Research on the Kindle online edition of *David Copperfield* gives the following results: blue (56 occurrences), black (121), and red (91).

[9] See for example Alain Corbin's *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* and his *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the 19th-Century French Countryside*.

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"Pride" in Byte and "Prejudice" in Bits: A Medievalist's Perspective on Jane Austen's Novel

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Abstract
It is well known that many of the moral aspects, concepts, and themes that can be found in Jane Austen's novels are based on the eighteenth-century tradition of moral instruction, which, in itself, is part of an older, and in many respects Christian, tradition of moral philosophy and spiritual guidance.

In this paper I wish to demonstrate by means of a computer-aided close reading of the novel, supplemented by a comparative approach as well as several interpretative hypotheses, to what extent Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* mirrors, in a secular context, important elements that are characteristic of the Christian tradition of moral instruction and spiritual guidance. It will be seen that the majority of these elements can be traced back to the mediaeval moral paradigm of the *Seven Deadly Sins*, with the sin of pride usually heading the list. The seven deadly sins—together with their "remedies," the *Seven Virtues*—constitute the subject matter of numerous mediaeval handbooks of religious instruction written in Latin and the vernacular for both clerics and laymen. A word list of Jane Austen's novel will help to identify lexical items that refer to moral concepts. Together with "pride" and "prejudice" these items clearly indicate that *Pride and Prejudice* is eminently suitable for a critical reading on the basis of the mediaeval moral paradigm of sin and virtue.

1. Introduction

It is well known that many of the moral issues raised in Jane Austen's novels are firmly rooted in the eighteenth-century tradition of moral philosophy which found its chief expression in moral, philosophical, and political writings (essays, pamphlets, sermons, treatises) as well as in numerous poems, dramas, and novels, many of which were not only professedly didactic.[1] This tradition, however, did not arise *ex nihilo*, for many of its concepts and ideas go back to moral writings that originated in the cultural context provided by Western Christianity and can also be traced to the moral philosophers of Latin and Greek antiquity.[2]

The very title of Jane Austen's novel invites the application of an alternative moral paradigm with a focus on "pride," in an investigation of the varied and complex moral issues addressed in *Pride and Prejudice*. To what extent can concepts such as sins, virtue, repentance, confession, and reform, as central constituents of the Christian tradition of moral instruction, be traced and identified in the decidedly more secular context of this novel?[3] It is not necessary to carry out an extensive search in order to ascertain that, of the two nouns in the title, *pride* figures most prominently in the mediaeval tradition of moral instruction, especially in the numerous treatises and handbooks[4] concerned with the concept of the *Seven Deadly Sins*.

In several critical scholarly contributions on *Pride and Prejudice*, the eighteenth-century context for "pride and prejudice" has been studied in some depth,[5] whereas the mediaeval context has been largely neglected. In my view, it is the mediaeval context in particular which can provide an excellent heuristic model for an analysis of the complex uses of the moral concepts "pride and prejudice" in Jane Austen's novel.

In order to undertake a detailed study of the use and significance of these two concepts, we should know where, and how often, the nouns "pride" and "prejudice" as well as their related adjectival and verbal forms can be found in the novel. It is for this reason that I have based my study on a programmed word list generated on the basis of an "electronic text" of *Pride and Prejudice*.[6] This word list indicates that the noun "pride," with a total of 47 occurrences[7] in the novel, first appears in chapter five: "every body says that he [Darcy] is ate up with pride"—an indication of the prevailing prejudice of the Longbourn families against Fitzwilliam Darcy, a prejudice resulting, indeed, from "first impressions."[8] Totalling eight occurrences, i.e. in both nominal and verbal forms, the noun "prejudice," by contrast, first occurs considerably later in the novel, namely in chapter 18: "And never allow yourself to be blinded by prejudice?" There, it is also used in association with Fitzwilliam Darcy.

Prior to an analysis of the moral paradigm indicated by "pride" and "prejudice" in Jane Austen's novel, some of the major methodological considerations underlying the programme designed for the word list need to be addressed.

2. Preparing the Word List

A computer programme generating an alphabetical word list of a novel such as *Pride and Prejudice* requires important considerations as to the system of references for every item that will be recorded if this word list is to be used not only for a quantitative and statistical analysis of the "lexicon" of the novel but also as a reliable basis for a critical close reading and analysis of Jane Austen's text. For the programme generating the word list, I chose the software package TUSTEP[9] because this software allows for a quite simple and efficient handling of the references. These supply important information on the occurrence and frequency of every lexical item as well as abbreviations and numbers[10] used in the text.

Since the electronic text which provides the word list does not contain page numbers but *does* contain both explicit and implicit structural information in terms of the chapters and paragraphs of the novel, it is this information that will be used as a system of references. A word list making use of these structural features provided by the electronic text can hence be used in connection with any printed edition of *Pride and Prejudice*.

As most of TUSTEP's modules are based on a system of numbered records, with record-numbers that can be employed in and modified by other programmes related to TUSTEP, a very simple and efficient referencing system is available for the word list. Character strings in the source file which supply explicit information on chapters, e.g. "<CHAPTER I (1)>" etc., will be transformed into record "1.0" etc. Chapters of the novel can accordingly be identified by TUSTEP's "page numbers," whereas information about the paragraphs in a chapter is indicated by TUSTEP's "line numbers."

TUSTEP's system of line numbers will be used for those "lines" in the electronic text that contain only the hexadecimal code "0D" (the digital code for "carriage return"). This code will be used as an indication for the beginning of a new paragraph. The rather abstract hexadecimal code will be transformed into the more explicit tag <par>, and it is by this tag that a consecutive system of paragraph numbers will be created and displayed on the screen, e.g. "1.1" for "chapter 1, paragraph 1" etc. In the same way, the dual record numbers created by a programmed run of TUSTEP's powerful module COPY can be used as an efficient system for the references in the word list.[11]

In designing the programme for the word list, several options had to be addressed that are crucial with regard to the uses of a word list. A simple word list based on the electronic text will show that Jane Austen's novel is composed of a total of 6,423 different items—words, numbers, and abbreviations. An advanced version of a word list with information on the frequency of the individual items will indicate that the sum total amounts to 122,471 items in the novel as a whole, with the definite article "the" contributing 4,333 items to the text and the preposition "to" a total of 4,162. An advanced list will also reveal that 2,364 items occur only once in the text of the novel.

For purposes of critical investigation and interpretation, more sophisticated lists are needed which should, for example, provide more detailed information relating to personal names as well as place names found in a literary text. A simple list will show that the terms of address, i.e. Miss, Mr., and Mrs., have an occurrence of 281 (Miss), 781 (Mr.), and 342 (Mrs.). A more sophisticated word list will indicate that "Miss," followed by a personal name, occurs with a total of 30 variations in *Pride and Prejudice*; "Mr." occurs with a total of 23 variations, and "Mrs." with 26.

The word list generated by my programme script with TUSTEP is even more complex as words italicised in the novel appear as separate entries.[12]

In addition, the list is divided into four thematic sections. The first two sections provide information about both personal and place names, and these two sections are sorted to the front of the list. The first section of the word list with its 206 items is accordingly a useful tool for an investigation of Jane Austen's techniques of introducing the characters in her novel.[13] Section two of the list, with a total of 67 entries, provides a "lexical" topography of *Pride and Prejudice*. Section three of the list is a record of the lexical items which constitute the semantic and thematic field "pride and prejudice." The fourth and final sections contain all other vocabulary items of the novel in alphabetic order, with abbreviations such as "&c." and numbers appearing at the end of this section of the word list.

These brief remarks indicate that the programme assembled for a sophisticated word list requires a high degree of familiarity with the text of the novel on the part of the programmer. As the remarks in note fourteen (see below) clearly indicate, detailed steps were necessary to generate an entry such as "Bingley's Miss" based on the phrase "Miss Bingley's" as found in the text of the novel. Fortunately, structures indicating names of characters in Jane Austen's novels can be defined relatively easily. The character string "Miss Bingley's" can be "translated" into a general pattern which can be used as an algorithm: "Miss followed by space followed by an uppercase letter followed by a series of lowercase letters and ending in a lower case letter which may perhaps be followed by apostrophe followed by s." This basic structure may, of course, involve further elements which can also be defined quite easily, such as "Mr. and Mrs. N" or, to use a concrete example, found at 39/17 of Jane Austen's novel, "Col. and Mrs. Forster."[14] A similar routine was devised for place names, e. g. "Netherfield," "Netherfield House," and "Netherfield Park." Routines similar to those just specified can be used for generating word lists based on other electronic texts as well.

In the process of planning and designing the programme for a sophisticated word list it occurred to me that a word list created for the purpose of a scholarly investigation and close reading of a novel such as *Pride and Prejudice* would profit considerably from a differentiation between direct speech and letters on the one hand, and the narrator's text on the other. For an evaluation of terms that express social and moral values as well as judgements, it is important to know whether these terms are used by the characters of the novel with their limited perception and perspective or by the narrator, in particular by an omniscient one, such as in Jane Austen's novels. This means that the validity and importance of every use of the term "pride" as well as other significant terms should be considered with reference to their context of utterance. But even though a differentiation between "text" and "speech"[15] can be achieved in a carefully programmed word list, the quotation below, taken from chapter eight, paragraph three of the novel, clearly shows that it is necessary to take a good look at the specific context in the parts of the text contributed by the narrator. Here the narrator mentions the term "pride" for the first time:

> When dinner was over, she [Elizabeth] returned directly to Jane, and Miss Bingley began abusing her as soon as she was out of the room. Her manners were pronounced to be very bad indeed, a mixture of pride and impertinence; she had no conversation, no stile, no taste, no beauty.

We see that this is not the narrator's point of view but the rendering of a conversation between some of the characters of the novel and therefore an instance of reported speech. A close analysis of the context of utterance for the first occurrence of the term "pride" in direct speech shows that it is part of a statement by Mrs. Bennet, at 5/14:

> "I do not believe a word of it, my dear. If he had been so very agreeable, he would have talked to Mrs. Long. But I can guess how it was; every body says that he is ate up with pride, and I dare say he had heard somehow that Mrs. Long does not keep a carriage, and had come to the ball in a hack chaise."

Mrs. Bennet is here reporting public opinion and does not express her personal view and opinion concerning Darcy.[16]

The differentiation between direct and indirect narration can easily be achieved by a programmed run of TUSTEP's module COPY. With the help of the quotation marks in the electronic text of the novel, the programme will generate two files, one with the portions of the text belonging to direct narration, the second based on the portions of the text which are part of either direct speech or letters. The first occurrence of direct speech, interrupted by the narrator's commentary, at 1/3, can be used as an example:

"'My dear Mr. Bennet,' said his lady to him one day, 'have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?'" This text will be split: "'My dear Mr. Bennet'" and "'have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?'" will be stored in the file specified for direct speech, and "said his lady to him one day," will be stored in the file specified for direct narration. Both files will be used to generate of the differentiated word list. One instance will suffice to make evident the structure of the entries generated by the programme devised for the differentiated word list. In this list, the adjective "dear" from the quotation above is listed as "@ dear [150] +SPEECH 1/3…" with "+SPEECH 1/3" indicating the position of "dear" in chapter one, paragraph three of the text. The number in square brackets points to this adjective occuring 150 times in the direct speeches and letters of *Pride and Prejudice*. The predicate "said" in the quotation above appears in the differentiated word list as "@ said [357] +TEXT." This entry does not indicate the position of "said" in the novel because of the very high frequency (357 instances) of this lexical item in the parts of the novel representing direct narration ("+TEXT").[17]

After this excursus into the field of programme scripts and some of their underlying considerations, methods and approaches, it is now time to address the issues "close reading" and interpretation of major moral aspects present in *Pride and Prejudice*. It will be seen that the word list generated by my programme is essential for this undertaking as it provides a reliable basis for important interpretative hypotheses and observations. These will be presented in the following two sections of this paper.

3. Working with the Word List: Preliminary and General Remarks

A word list with references relating to the frequency and position of the lexical items in the text of the novel is an eminently useful aid in the process of literary analysis and interpretation. A few examples will demonstrate its advantages.

On the basis of the word list we learn that the name of the heroine of the novel, Elizabeth, appears 582 times, supplemented by 38 occurrences of the genitive "Elizabeth's"; the shortened form "Lizzy" occurs 97 times. By contrast, the hero of the novel, "Mr. Darcy," is mentioned "only" 243 times, supplemented by 175 additional occurrences of the name "Darcy." As to the name "Bennet," the list specifies 18 entries, 60 occurrences are recorded for "Miss Bennet," 79 for "Mr. Bennet," and a total of 140 occurrences for "Mrs. Bennet."

A word list as described above can be used for more complex purposes, not only for a quantitative analysis of the lexicon of a particular text. The word list assembled for *Pride and Prejudice* is also a useful tool to find out more about Jane Austen's skills as a novelist. The system of references in the word list helps ascertain quite easily that chapter 43 with its account of Elizabeth's and the Gardiners' visit to Pemberley, certainly one of the most important chapters as to the development of the plot, is the most highly structured chapter with its 73 paragraphs. The word list also allows for comments on Jane Austen's narrative expertise and fine uses of irony. A brief analysis of the seven occurrences of the noun "fire"[18] in the novel will prove my point. The noun "fire" is used metaphorically only once, at 22/1, where the narrator connects it with expert irony to one of the characters whom many readers of the novel probably see in a very different light:

> But here, she [Charlotte Lucas] did injustice to the *fire and independence* of his [Mr. Collins's] character, for it led him to escape out of Longbourn House the next morning with admirable slyness, and hasten to Lucas Lodge to throw himself at her feet. [emphasis added]

The frequency of occurrence specified for every entry in the list has specific purposes as it can be used to generate a further word list based on the frequency of occurrence of every individual item. An example will suffice to illustrate the potential of the word list. The noun "obsequiousness" appears only once in the text of the novel, at 15/1, and the adjective "obsequious" also only once, at 60/28. A reading of the two paragraphs will show that both terms are used with reference to Mr. Collins.[19]

Two further examples will probably be welcomed by readers and critics with an interest in the theme "happiness" as well as "marriage" in the novels of Jane Austen. The word list reveals that the word "happiness" is used 72 times in *Pride and Prejudice*. By contrast, "unhappiness" is used only twice. The adjective "happy" has a total of 83 occurrences compared to 13 occurrences of "unhappy."[20] The theme of marriage constitutes a further important topic in critical studies of Jane Austen's novels. The word list shows that the noun "marriage" can be found 66 times in *Pride and Prejudice*.[21] The occurrence of both themes used in combination can also be specified by using the evidence of the list. The phrase "happiness in marriage" can be found at 6/10, supplemented by "happiness in the married state" (20/4), "felicity in marriage" (38/6), "happiness with him in marriage" (47/50), "happy marriage" (50/16), and as "connubial felicity" at 15/16. Jane Austen's use of "alliance," apparently a synonym for marriage, should also be mentioned. It will be seen that this noun, used three times in the novel, expresses specific ideas and concepts. At 10/54 "alliance" is in conjunction with "happiness" in the phrase: "planning his [Darcy's] happiness in such an alliance." Bearing in mind that the subject governing "planning" is "jealous" Miss Bingley (see 10/53), the adjective "such" suggests that "alliance" should be understood as "mésalliance" and "happiness" really means "unhappiness." "Alliance" also has negative connotations at 50/12 and an "alliance" between Elizabeth and Darcy is called a "disgrace" by Lady Catherine De Bourgh in her angry speech to Elizabeth (56/45).

After these general observations and commentaries that point out the advantage of a sophisticated word list for the analysis and interpretation of a literary text, it is now time to focus on the main topic of this paper: the analysis of the significance and use of the terms "pride" and "prejudice" in the novel. This enquiry will be supplemented by an evaluation of the import of both terms when the moral paradigm based on "sin and virtue," according to the mediaeval Christian tradition of moral instruction and spiritual guidance, is applied to the moral message encoded in *Pride and Prejudice*.

4. Working with the Word List: "Pride" and "Prejudice"

The word list shows that the semantic field "pride" has a total of 73 occurrences[22]: pride (47), prided (1), proud (22), proudest (1), and proudly (1).

By contrast, the noun "prejudice" occurs only five times, the plural "prejudices" twice, and the verbal form "prejudiced" once.[23] This first quantitative statement based on the word list clearly foregrounds that the semantic field "pride" deserves particular attention in a study of the moral paradigm that can be specified for Jane Austen's novel.

The word list also allows us to locate the occurrences of "pride" as well as "prejudice" when modified by an adjective or in conjunction with a second noun. First "pride & x": The phrase "pride and impertinence" occurs at 8/3, "pride and obsequiousness" at 15/1, "pride and caprice" at 33/38, "pride and insolence" at 36/1, and "pride and conceit" at 58/24. The corresponding phrase "x & pride" is represented by "vanity and pride" (5/20 and 11/23), "pleasure and pride" at 50/21, and "appetite and pride" at 53/60. Accompanied by an adjective or as part of a phrase, "pride" occurs as "abominable pride" (16/40 and 34/31), "family pride, filial pride, brotherly pride" (all at 16/41), "angry pride" occurs at 21/2, "worst kind of pride" at 33/40, "mistaken pride" can be found at 52/4, "every kind of pride" at 52/6, "improper pride" occurs at 59/34, and, finally, "delighted pride" at 61/1. Phrases with "prejudice" also make their appearance in combination with nominal forms: "strong prejudice" (36/1), "general prejudice" (40/23), "family prejudice" (43/37), and "former prejudices" (58/19). These phrases point to the great care that Jane Austen took in addressing different shades of meaning as well as drawing attention to a variety of functions of "pride and prejudice" in her novel.

The word list is also an excellent tool to find out which characters of the novel are associated with "pride." A complete list reflecting this constellation would transcend the scope of this paper. Suffice it to state that such a list is headed by Mr. Darcy, with some twenty instances, followed by Elizabeth.[24] The attribution of "prejudice" to characters in the novel can be stated in a few words: Darcy and "prejudice" can be found at 18/34, 36/1, and 40/23; Elizabeth is associated with "prejudice" at 36/7, 40/21, and 58/19; the housekeeper at Pemberley is thought to be prejudiced at 43/37. Finally, Jane and "prejudice" are in conjunction at 55/52.

After this presentation of the first "bits" and "bytes" of "prejudice" and "pride," it remains to be seen whether the meaning and significance of these two concepts can be diversified, extended, and increased by applying a mediaevalist's perspective to the moral paradigm encoded in the novel. Such a perspective is readily provided by the mediaeval manuals concerned with the seven deadly sins and their so-called "remedies," *the seven virtues*.

A mediaeval moral paradigm based on "sin and virtue" is available in Chaucer's "Parson's Tale," the concluding section of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.*[25] The parson's sermon offers a highly detailed description of the many aspects pertaining to the sin of pride, "superbia," making use of the then very popular and highly expressive image of the tree of sins with its numerous branches and twigs:

> Of the roote of thise sevene synnes, thanne, is Pride the general roote of alle harmes. [...] *De Superbia.* / And thogh so be that no man kan outrely telle the nombre of the twigges and of the harmes that cometh of Pride, yet wol I shewe a partie of hem, as ye shul understonde. / Ther is inobedience, avauntynge, ypocrisie, despit, arrogance, inpudence, swellynge of herte, insolence, elacioun, inpacience, strif, contumacie, presumpcioun, irreverence, pertinacie, veyneglorie, and many another twig that I kan nat declare.

A brief search in the word list, based on the parson's list above, reveals that almost all of the aspects and manifestations mentioned by the parson can also be found in Jane Austen's novel, either as nouns or as adjectives: hypocritical (2), spiteful (1), arrogance (1), impudence (3), insolence (1), impatience (10), and presumption (3).[26]

Even though "prejudice" is not mentioned in the parson's list quoted above, a close examination of the parson's full account of the manifold manifestations of the sin of pride reveals another term, namely disdain, that comes fairly close to the modern meaning of "prejudice"[27]: "Despitous is he that hath desdeyn of his neighebor—that is to seyn, of his evene-Cristene—or hath despit to doon that hym oghte to do."[28] The word list indicates that the noun "disdain" can be found six times in Jane Austen's novel, three times in "+Text" (18/44, 44/10, 56/27) and three times in "+Speech" (33/40, 34/28, 41/18); "disdained" occurs thrice: "+Text" (34/16, 44/10) and "+Speech" (36/8). Long lists with specifications and descriptions relating to the manifestations of pride[29] as well as other sins can be found in many other mediaeval manuals as well. Such lists are the results of careful observation and investigation in the fields of human behaviour and social interaction, which are also characteristic of Jane Austen's novels.

A further analysis and evaluation of the mediaeval moral paradigm constituted by the seven deadly sins reveals that pride was considered to be the basis for other sins. In the words of Chaucer's parson, "pride" is "the general roote of alle harmes." A similar statement can be found in Thomas Chobham's voluminous treatise written for confessors[30] and also in Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne,*[31] a fourteenth-century handbook in verse composed for the instruction of the laity. Since Chobham, Mannyng, as well as Chaucer's parson emphasise that pride generates all other sins, it is worthwhile to consult the word list in order to find out whether any other "deadly sins" are also part of the "paradigm of sins" in Jane Austen's novel.

According to Chobham and numerous other mediaeval authorities, the remaining six deadly sins are "invidia" (envy), "ira" (ire), "tristitia" or "acedia" (sloth), "avaritia" (avarice), "gula" (gluttony), and "luxuria" (lust). The word list reveals that only one of the seven deadly sins is not mentioned directly in the novel. This is the sin of "luxuria," "lust," one of the sins of the body. The evidence of the word list, at a first glance, suggests that members belonging to the society presented in Jane Austen's novel are apparently not guilty of the sin of lust. Another sin of the body, however, "gluttony" (gula), can be implicitly encountered at 8/2: "Mr. Hurst, […] was an indolent man, who lived only to eat, drink, and play at cards." "Invidia" is mentioned in the novel as the noun "envy" (3 occurrences); "ira" shows up as "anger" with a total of 13 occurrences, and "avaritia" as "avarice" (1 occurrence). "Tristitia" or "acedia" (sloth) is also more difficult to locate in the text of the novel. A close look at the word list shows that there are several references to this sin based on the following words: "idle" (8), "idleness" (2), "indolent" (1), "indolence" (2) as well as "dilatory" (2).[32] The word list also allows us to ascertain that one of the minor characters of the novel, Mr. Hurst, is guilty of two "deadly sins": "sloth" as well as "gluttony" (see chapter 8, paragraph 2).

An extended search in the word list reveals that even a reference to the sin of lust can be detected on the basis of three terms whose meaning can easily be related to the sin of "lust": "profligacy" (at 36/4) and "profligate" (at 47/12), "vice" (at 36/4) as well as "dissipation" (at 35/7)—and these four terms relate to Wickham. The sin of "lust" is also alluded to in a statement by the narrator relating to Lydia Bennet: "[Lydia] had high animal spirits" (9/36).[33] The evidence provided by the word list clearly shows that the distinct traces and echoes of the mediaeval moral paradigm related to the seven deadly sins are indeed an important theme in Jane Austen's novel. And this moral paradigm, built on pride, deserves further attention.

The mediaeval moral paradigm has more to offer than long lists and detailed accounts of the manifestations of the seven deadly sins. The paradigm also includes advice on how to avoid and overcome sin. This dual concern is particularly evident in Chaucer's "The Parson's Tale." According to the teaching of Chaucer's parson, the sin of pride can be "remedied" by the virtue "humility," and "The Parson's Tale" offers an excellent description of the contrast between them[34]:

> *Remedium contra peccatum Superbie.*—/ Now sith that so is that ye han understonde what is Pride, and whiche been the speces of it, and whennes Pride sourdeth and spryngeth, / now shul ye understonde which is the remedie agayns the synne of Pride; and that is humylitee, or mekenesse. / That is a vertu thurgh which a man hath verray knoweleche of hymself, and holdeth of hymself no pris ne deyntee, as in regard of his desertes, considerynge evere his freletee. / Now been ther three maneres of humylitee: as humylitee in herte; another humylitee is in his mouth; the thridde in his werkes.

A look at the word list reveals that the concept "humility" also occurs in Jane Austen's novel, in nominal and verbal forms and with a frequency of 22 occurrences (see Appendix).

In her study of the paradigm of virtues that can be inferred from Jane Austen's novels, Sarah Emsley has pointed out the importance of the virtue "humility," with particular reference to Elizabeth and Darcy.[35] I will supplement and expand Emsley's argument by looking in particular at the contexts in which the adjective "humble" with its nine occurrences is used in the novel. It should be noted that the noun "humility"—with a total of five occurrences in the novel—is associated with Mr. Bingley (at 10/24), appears in the context of a general statement at 10/25, and is used with reference to social behaviour in a further three instances (twice at 15/1, see below, and also at 18/61)—and these three instances refer to Mr. Collins.

Mr. William Collins, the rector, is certainly among the more important characters of *Pride and Prejudice*. The word list shows that the name "Collins" occurs 185 times in the novel, compared to 188 instances of the name "Wickham." The word list reveals that the first mention of Mr. Collins can be found at 13/6, and Mr. Collins enters the scene at 13/25. Many readers of the novel, as well as several of its characters, will harbour an aversion to Mr. Collins caused by the contents of his letter addressed to the Bennets. This first impression is reinforced by Elizabeth's and Mr. Bennet's comments on both the letter and its writer at 13/21 and 13/22:

> "He must be an oddity, I think," said she [Elizabeth]. "I cannot make him out.—There is something very pompous in his stile.—And what can he mean by apologizing for being next in the entail?—We cannot suppose he would help it, if he could.—Can he be a sensible man, sir?"
> "No, my dear; I think not. I have great hopes of finding him quite the reverse. There is a mixture of servility and self-importance in his letter, which promises well. I am impatient to see him."

This first prejudice against Mr. Collins is foregrounded by the narrator's ironical, indirect statement, via Elizabeth's thoughts, at 13/20.[36] And it is also the narrator, who, at 15/1, provides a detailed and unmistakeable characterisation of Mr. Collins, the rector in the services of the "proud" Lady Catherine de Bourgh:

> Mr. Collins was not a *sensible* man, and the *deficiency of nature* had been but little assisted by *education* or society [...] The subjection in which his father had brought him up had given him originally *great humility of manner*, but it was now a good deal counteracted by the *self-conceit* of a weak head, living in retirement, and the consequential feelings of early and unexpected prosperity. [...] the respect which he felt for her [Lady Catherine De Bourgh's] high rank and his veneration for her as his patroness, mingling with a *very good opinion of himself*, of his authority as a clergyman, and his rights as a rector, made him altogether a *mixture of pride and obsequiousness, self-importance and humility*. (emphases added)

This characterization of Mr. Collins by the narrator and Mr. Collins's use of the term "humility" in his address to Elizabeth, at 18/61, reveal that his is definitely not true and sincere humility:

> "My dear Miss Elizabeth, I have the highest opinion in the world of your excellent judgment in all matters within the scope of your understanding, but permit me to say that there must be a wide difference between the established forms of ceremony amongst the laity, and those which regulate the clergy; forgive me leave to observe that I consider the clerical office as equal in point of dignity with the highest rank in the kingdom—provided that a proper *humility of behaviour* is at the same time maintained." (emphases added)

On the basis of the conjunction of "pride" and "humility" in the first quotation from 15/1 (see above), a closer analysis of the terms representing the thematic aspect "humility as remedy against the sin of pride" according to the mediaeval moral paradigm is called for, in particular an analysis of the use of the adjective "humble."

A careful reading of the chapters and paragraphs in which this adjective occurs reveals that of the nine occurrences of the adjective "humble," three appear in "+Text" and six in "+Speech" (for the references, see Appendix). Of the three occurrences in "+Text," two are followed by the noun "abode" and one by the noun "parsonage." In "+Speech," three instances of "humble" are followed by the noun "abode," and a further three by "home scene," "parsonage," and "respects." In all nine instances, the adjective "humble" is used solely in connection with Mr. Collins, the rector.

As a rule, we would expect a rector to strive for and cultivate the virtue "humylitee, or mekenesse," one of the virtues referred to in the Beatitudes in the Sermon of the Mount: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt 5:5). But, as the passages in the novel clearly reveal, Mr. Collins uses the adjective "humble" almost exclusively to refer to his material circumstances—and these are far from deserving a characterization by this adjective.[37] The most telling instance of Mr. Collins' concern for his "humble" abode and material circumstances can be found at 18/71, where he comments on the duties of a rector:

> "The rector of a parish has much to do.—In the first place, he must make such an agreement for tithes as may be beneficial to himself and not offensive to his patron. He must write his own sermons; and the time that remains will not be too much for his parish duties, and the care and improvement of his dwelling, which he cannot be excused from making as comfortable as possible.[…]"

This and further pertinent passages in the novel and their use of the terms "humble" and "humility" with reference to Mr. Collins, create the predominating impression, shared by the characters and the readers of the novel, of affected and false humility. This view is in harmony with Darcy's comment on "humility" as expressed at 10/25: "'Nothing is more deceitful,' said Darcy, 'than the appearance of humility. It is often only carelessness of opinion, and sometimes an indirect boast.'" This commentary, addressed at Elizabeth and Mr. Bingley, acutely indicates Mr. Collins's covert boast relating to his advantageous material circumstances.[38]

After having found evidence of the semantic field "humility," the "remedy" against the sin of pride according to the mediaeval moral paradigm, more attention should be paid to the way in which Jane Austen further modifies and expands on the meaning of the concept "pride" in her novel: the occurrences of the noun "pride" reveal an unexpected and highly interesting use of the concept. At 5/18, pride is considered in terms of an almost positive quality by Charlotte Lucas when she comments on Darcy's pride:

> "His pride," said Miss Lucas, "does not offend *me* so much as pride often does, because there is an excuse for it. One cannot wonder that so very fine a young man, with family, fortune, every thing in his favour, should think highly of himself. If I may so express it, he has a *right* to be proud."

A look at the word list reveals a further surprising statement contributed by the character in the novel most frequently associated with "pride" and its negative consequences: at 11/24, Darcy comments on the effects of pride: "Yes, vanity is a weakness indeed. But pride—where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will be always under good regulation." Both quotations demonstrate that the concept "pride" in the novel is not presented as uniform and negative in itself. It has been argued that this positive attitude towards pride may have its origin in eighteenth-century moral writings.[39] However, a careful study of two of the mediaeval manuals used in this paper reveals that pride was not exclusively considered a sin but was also said to have distinct and unmistakeably positive connotations.

In his treatise entitled *Summa Confessorum* Thomas Chobham argues in favour of a careful distinction between "good" and "bad" pride[40]:

> In accordance with true excellence or true honour, the love of such excellence or honour is not pride. However, if pride is said to be the love of one's own excellence, a false kind of excellence may be understood. For a certain excellence is vain and temporal, for example if anybody desires to be praised and elevated above others on account of temporal things. If, however, a person wishes to excel because vice is below him and by way of the virtues ascend towards God, the love of such excellence is good and such pride, if it can be called pride, is good and holy according to the words of St. Jerome: holy pride has to be learned.

Chobham's remark "ut vitia sibi subsint—because vice is below him" comes quite close to Darcy's observation at 11/24: "where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will be always under good regulation." Chobham's text provides a second positive statement concerning pride: "Therefore, if anybody opposes vices in consideration of the excellence of his nature, he possesses holy pride and never sins in this way."[41]

The Gilbertine Robert Mannyng, author of *Handlyng Synne*, took great care in instructing his lay audience in matters pertaining to the sin of pride with its many aspects and manifestations. In addressing the manifestation and consequences of "pride" in connection with worldly offices and authority ("bayly"), Mannyng argues[42]:

> ȝyf þou euer bare þe hyghly
> Yn *ouerdo pryde* for þy bayly,
> Bere þe lowe; men se al day,
> þy bayly shal nat laste alway

Mannyng's qualifying participial adjective *ouerdo* ("exaggerated, excessive") suggests that a moderate degree of pride resulting from an important secular office associated with a higher social status should not be counted as a manifestation of pride. Mannyng's statement is not too far away from the statement by Charlotte Lucas at 5/18, the "*right* to be proud," as quoted above.

An application of the mediaeval moral paradigm of sin and virtue to Jane Austen's novel and its moral message would be incomplete without an extended inquiry into a potential echo of the traditional relation between "pride" and "humility"[43] according to the mediaeval manuals. The occurrence and significance of the term "humility" for the subject matter of the novel has been commented on above, in the section relating to Mr. Collins.

It remains to be seen whether further evidence of the traditional relation between humility and pride can be found in *Pride and Prejudice*.

The concept "humility" can also be linked to Jane Austen's use of the past participle "humbled," with a total of four occurrences in *Pride and Prejudice*, three in "+Text" and one in "+Speech." The first occurrence of "humbled," at 49/48, is used by the narrator in connection with Mrs. Bennet:

> As soon as Jane had read Mr. Gardiner's hope of Lydia's being soon married, her [Mrs. Bennet's] joy burst forth, and every following sentence added to its exuberance. She was now in an irritation as violent from delight, as she had ever been fidgety from alarm and vexation. To know that her daughter would be married was enough. She was disturbed by no fear for her felicity, nor *humbled* by any remembrance of her misconduct. (emphasis added)

Mrs. Bennet, as the passage clearly indicates, does not possess the power to reform her habits and review her opinions.[44]

The second and third occurrences of "humbled," at 50/13 and 52/6, refer to Elizabeth:

> From such a connection [Lydia's marriage] she could not wonder that he [Darcy] should shrink. The wish of procuring her regard, which she had assured herself of his feeling in Derbyshire, could not in rational expectation survive such a blow as this. She was humbled, she was grieved; she repented, though she hardly knew of what.

In this passage, the connection between "humbled" and "repented" is particularly noteworthy as it indicates a highly traditional use of "humbled" which many mediaeval manuals address in great detail in the context of sin and confession.[45]

A constellation of apparently contradicting modes of behaviour relating to sins and virtues can be found in the second occurrence of "humbled," again used with reference to Elizabeth:

> Oh! how heartily did she grieve over every ungracious sensation she had ever encouraged, every saucy speech she had ever directed towards him. For herself she was humbled; but she was proud of him. Proud that in a cause of compassion and honour, he had been able to get the better of himself.

This quotation is evidence of Jane Austen's expert handling of two apparently contradictory concepts—"humbled" and "proud." However, pride, as attributed to Elizabeth in this quotation, is a rather positive feeling, occasioned by virtuous action. It has been pointed out above that Chobham's "superbia sancta—holy pride" is also considered a consequence of virtuous behaviour.

The only occurrence of "humbled" in "+Speech" can be found at 58/24, as part of Mr. Darcy's confession:

> "I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle. As a child I was taught what was *right*, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit. [...] What do I not owe you! You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled."

Darcy's statement expresses a close connection between the sin of "pride" and the virtue "humility" and is perfectly in line with the teaching of the mediaeval manuals.

In contrast to Mrs. Bennet, and, of course, Mr. Collins, both Elizabeth and Darcy, it would appear, are prepared to subject themselves to the painful process of reform, based on contrition, confession, and satisfaction. According to the teachings of the mediaeval manuals, these are the elements necessary for true "penance and reform" based on humility, which is the precondition for overcoming pride. Since true "penance and reform" require a certain disposition of character, it might be interesting to find out how this disposition is indicated in *Pride and Prejudice*. The word list suggests that it is the character trait "generosity."[46] An analysis of the passages in which the concept "generosity" occurs reveals that in the novel it is expressed by the adjectives "generous," "ungenerous," "generous-hearted," and by the adverb "generously." A careful reading of the chapters and paragraphs indicated in the word list shows that Jane Austen attributes this disposition to Darcy, Elizabeth, and Jane Bennet—apart from the Gardiners, perhaps the only characters in the novel (almost) beyond reproach. For these characters, generosity refers to character and behaviour and requires a "greatness of mind" as indicated in chapter 41/18 in relation to

Elizabeth. A similar concept, “real superiority of mind” can be found at 11/24 in association with Mr. Darcy.

The concept “generosity,” it should be pointed out, is also used with reference to Mr. Collins and conveys a very different message compared with the two instances just mentioned. The first use of “generous” regarding Mr. Collins can be found at 11/24 when the narrator comments on the rector’s generosity: “This was his plan of amends—of atonement—for inheriting their father’s estate; and he thought it an excellent one, full of eligibility and suitableness, and excessively generous and disinterested on his own part.” The adverb “excessively” distinctly indicates the narrator’s perspective on Mr. Collins’s idea of generosity. The second instance in association with Mr. Collins can be found at 19/10, in a direct speech addressed to Elizabeth in the process of his wooing her:

> [“]To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the 4 per cents, which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married.”

Both quotations show that, for Mr. Collins, generosity is first and foremost a disposition with a focus on money and wealth and has no relevance for the sphere of human relations.

Apart from the concept of “generosity,” the word list records a second lexical item which expresses—in my opinion perhaps with even greater force—a precondition necessary for the process of penance and reform: “goodness.” The noun occurs a total of ten times in the text of the novel and is used with reference to Jane Bennet (33/40 and 55/54), Mr. Bennet (55/37), the Gardiners (46/5 and 49/41), and Mr. Darcy (40/15 and 52/6). The noun is also used three times in relation to Wickham (36/4, 40/14, and 48/4), in all three instances accompanied by lexical elements that plainly indicate Wickham’s lack of this quality. Surprisingly, there is not a single instance in the novel where “goodness” is used with reference to Elizabeth.

While not associated with the concept “goodness,” Elizabeth is singled out with regard to the concept of “repentance.” It is expressed in the novel on the basis of the verb "repent," and this verb occurs only twice in the novel, first at 37/17:

> His attachment excited gratitude, his general character respect; but she could not approve him; nor could she for a moment repent her refusal, or feel the slightest inclination ever to see him again. In her own past behaviour, there was a constant source of vexation and regret; and in the unhappy defects of her family a subject of yet heavier chagrin.

The second sentence in this passage indicates that Elizabeth is beginning to review her former opinions in the light of new evidence. Elizabeth's process of repentance and reform is complete at 50/13: "She was humbled, she was grieved; she repented, though she hardly knew of what." In my view, the concessive clause introduced by "though" is not a limitation of the act of repentance but increases the general significance of this act.[47]

5. Conclusion

This paper, with its combination of different approaches to Jane Austen's novel—"digital philology" and traditional close reading supplemented by a marked diachronic perspective—, shows that "pride and prejudice" in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* constitute a highly complex theme, more complex and also more comprehensive than it has been presented hitherto in many critical writings on this novel. By applying the mediaeval moral paradigm of "sin and virtue" with its special emphasis on "pride" and "humility" to Jane Austen's text, an application based on the evidence of the lexicon of *Pride and Prejudice* provided by the word list, it has been shown how distinct echoes of the mediaeval moral paradigm, based on the seven deadly sins and the seven corresponding virtues, can be detected in the moral paradigm developed in the novel. It is to be hoped that my argument and hypotheses will be taken up in future investigations of the "survival" of the mediaeval moral paradigm into Early Modern times and beyond. Such an investigation should be undertaken with a focus on its modifications and transformations.

This paper has also shown that the positive attitude towards "pride" that can be found in Jane Austen's novel is by no means an exclusive influence of the eighteenth-century tradition of moral philosophy, as has been suggested in critical studies of the novel. A positive view of pride belongs to a much older perspective that can be identified in texts belonging to the mediaeval tradition of moral instruction and spiritual guidance. Further research should be devoted to this aspect by a close examination of further mediaeval manuals and treatises as well as their treatment of the seven deadly sins, in particular pride.[48]

In concluding this paper, I would like to point out that my hypotheses and observations as to the importance of the mediaeval moral paradigm based on the seven deadly sins and the seven virtues for the moral message in Jane Austen's novel should not be understood as an argument in favour of this paradigm as a direct source for the moral issues raised and addressed in *Pride and Prejudice*. My argument developed here should rather be taken as an invitation to undertake an inquiry into the persistence of a moral paradigm that was developed, modified and cultivated in the cultural context provided by classical antiquity and adopted and modified by its major inheritor, the Christian West. This moral paradigm can also be discerned in literary texts such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

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Appendix: "Sins," "Virtues" and Related Concepts

Figures in square brackets indicate the number of occurrences in the text of the novel. The slash between figures separates chapters and paragraphs. Superscript figures indicate multiple occurrences in a particular paragraph of the novel, e.g. "pride" occurs twice in chapter 33, paragraph 40.

pride [21] +Text: 8/3; 15/1; 20/24; 21/2; 33(II.10)/38, 40^2; 34(II.11)/5, 31^2; 36(II.13)/1; 43(III.1)/23, 58; 44(III.2)/14^2, 16; 50(III.8)/21; 52(III.10)/4, 6, 53(III.11)/60; 61(III.19)/1

pride [26] +Speech: 5/14, 182, 19, 203; 11/23, 242; 16/15, 38, 393, 40, 413, 48, 58; 24(II.1)/23; 34(II.11)/22; 41(II.18)/38; 58(III.16)/24; 59(III.17)/34
prided [1] +Speech: 36(II.13)/8
proud [9] +Text: 3/5; 4/11; 14/1; 25(II.2)/20; 36(II.13)/6; 44(III.2)/3; 45(III.3)/3; 52(III.10)/62
proud [13] +Speech: 5/18, 20, 21; 10/27; 16/38, 41, 43; 43(III.1)/38, 68; 47(III.5)/14; 53(III.11)/8, 34; 59(III.17)/33
proudest [1] +Text: 3/6
proudly [1] +Text: 50(III.8)/14

prejudice [3] +Text: 36(II.13)/1; 43(III.1)/37; 55(III.13)/52
prejudice [2] +Speech: 18/34; 40(II.17)/23
prejudices [1] +Text: 58(III.16)/19
prejudices [1] +Speech: 40(II.17)/21
prejudiced [1] +Text: 36(II.13)/7

humility [2] +Text: 15/1^{2}
humility [3] +Speech: 10/24, 25; 18/61
humble [3] +Text: 14/1; 16/3; 28(II.5)/3
humble [6] +Speech: 14/3, 7, 38(II.15)/2, 4^{2}, 9
humbled [3] +Text: 49(III.7)/48; 50(III.8)/13; 52(III.10)/6
humbled [1] +Speech: 58(III.16)/24
humiliating [1] +Text: 22/18
humiliating [1] +Speech: 36(II.13)/8
humiliation [1] +Text: 46(III.4)/20
humiliation [1] +Speech: 36(II.13)/8

vain [6] +TEXT 16/56^{2}; 37(=II.14)/17; 43(=III.1)/54; 46(=III.4)/19, 29
vain [4] +SPEECH 5/20; 40(=II.17)/19; 41(=II.18)/18; 46(=III.4)/20
vanity [7] +TEXT 6/23; 26(=II.3)/29; 33(=II.10)/38; 36(=II.13)/6; 38(=II.15)/17; 41(=II.18)/25; 52(=III.10)/6
vanity [11] +SPEECH 5/202; 6/2, 21; 11/23, 24; 24(=II.1)/14; 36(=II.13)/8:2; 47(=III.5)/10; 58(=III.16)/26
anger [10] +TEXT 18/43; 23/3; 24(=II.1)/3; 34(=II.11)/6, 8; 37(=II.14)/17; 44(=III.2)/5: 45(=III.3)/8; 47(=III.5)/41; 50(=III.8)/10

anger [3] +SPEECH 46(=III.4)/5; 58(=III.16)/28, 45
avarice [1] +SPEECH 27(=II.4)/9
envy [1] +TEXT 41(=II.18)/40
envy [2] +SPEECH 51(=III.9)/11; 52(=III.10)/14
idle [3] +TEXT 37(=II.14)/17; 41(=II.18)/25; 46(=III.4)/29
idle [5] +SPEECH 8/27; 29(=II.6)/31; 41(=II.18)/18; 47(=III.5)/10; 57(=III.15)/22
idleness [1] +TEXT 36(=II.13)/4
idleness [1] +SPEECH 35(=II.12)/7
indolence [1] +TEXT 50(=III.8)/5
indolence [1] +SPEECH 47(=III.5)/8
indolent [1] +TEXT 8/2
dilatory [2] +TEXT 48(=III.6)/1; 50(=III.8)/5
profligacy [1] +TEXT 36(=II.13)/4
profligate [1] +SPEECH 47(=III.5)/12
vice [2] +TEXT 36(=II.13)/4; 42(=II.19)/1
vice [1] +SPEECH 57(=III.15)/22
vices [1] +SPEECH 11/28
dissipation [1] +SPEECH 35(=II.12)/7

generous [5] +TEXT 15/2; 33(=II.10)/38; 50(=III.8)/14^2; 55(=III.13)/52
generous [6=] +SPEECH 16/41; 36(=II.13)/8; 49(=III.7)/35; 55(=III.13)/38; 58(=III.16)/5, 7
generous-hearted [1] +SPEECH 43(=III.1)/33
generously [1] +SPEECH 52(=III.10)/4
ungenerous [3] +SPEECH 19/10 31(=II.8)/15; 34(=II.11)/12

goodness [4] +TEXT 36(=II.13)/4; 48(=III.6)/4; 52(=III.10)/6; 55(=III.13)/37
goodness [6] +SPEECH 33(=II.10)/40; 40(=II.17)/14, 15; 46(=III.4)/5; 49(=III.7)/41; 55(=III.13)/54

NOTES

[1] See Bradbrook; Ryle; and Devlin.

[2] Sarah Emsley's study *Jane Austen's Philosophy of the Virtues* provides an investigation of this tradition. Emsley also refers to the Christian tradition.

[3] Of course, the Christian concept of sin implied by the title of the novel has been pointed out in a number of studies, e.g. Zimmermann. See also Butler (*Jane Austen* 206): "The subject of *Pride and Prejudice* is what the title indicates: the sin of pride, obnoxious to the Christian, which takes the form of a complacency about the self and a correspondingly lower opinion, or prejudice, about others." Armstrong briefly mentions the mediaeval context: "Just as the medieval sin of pride subsumed all other sins, so pride in this novel subsumes prejudice" (xiii). For further studies of the moral and religious aspects in the novels of Jane Austen and their importance for a critical reading and interpretation, see Koppel; and Emsley.

[4] From the numerous mediaeval handbooks devoted to the seven deadly sins, I have selected three texts to base my argument and hypotheses on. These texts were composed by English authors: Thomas Chobham (Latin, early thirteenth century), Robert Mannyng (early fourteenth century), and Geoffrey Chaucer (late fourteenth century).

[5] See for example Johnson; and Armstrong.

[6] The "electronic" text of *Pride and Prejudice* providing the basis for this study was uploaded by Henry Churchyard at "wiretap.spies.com" in August 1994. As I shall use chapters and paragraphs as a system of references for the word list based on the electronic text, I have checked the paragraphs of the electronic text against Chapman's edition from 1932.—Jane Austen's novels have previously received some attention as far as the computational analysis of literary texts as an aid to interpretation is concerned; see for example Burrows.

[7] There is a further reference to "pride" with the inflected possessive pronoun "mine"—chapter 5, paragraph 19.

[8] The phrase "First Impressions" was Jane Austen's working title for the novel, later changed to *Pride and Prejudice*. The word list shows that the collocation "first impressions" does not occur in the published text.

[9] TUSTEP ("Tübinger System von Textverarbeitungs-Programmen; Tübingen System of Text-Processing Programs") is available free of charge for academic institutions.—The programmes assembled for the word list are based on TUSTEP's modules COPY, PINDEX, SORT, and GINDEX.

[10] The abbreviation "&c." has 13 occurrences in the text of the novel; "15th October" occurs in chapter 13, paragraph 13, "26th of November" in chapter 44, paragraph 8, and "4 per cents" in chapter 19, paragraph 10.

[11] Since the word list is designed to be used with any printed edition of the novel, I have decided on a dual system of reference for the several chapters of the novel: a consecutive numbering from 1 to 61 (for modern editions), and, starting with chapter 24, an additional reference indicating volume and chapter (for editions retaining the old system of three volumes); see the entry taken from the word list: "Bingley's, Miss [15] 9/2, 39; 11/2, 4; 12/5; 24(II.1)/1; 26(II.3)/25, 26 [...]." In this paper, references to the text of the novel are based on the conventions of the word list, i.e. "1/1" indicates chapter one, paragraph one.

[12] The phrase "fine eyes," Darcy's compliment on Elizabeth's features, may serve as an example: The phrase occurs at 6/47 and 8/12 and, in italics, at 9/39.

[13] The name of the heroine of the novel, Elizabeth, first occurs at 2/4, whereas the hero, Mr. Darcy, is first mentioned at 3/5.

[14] The several varieties of patterns for personal names can be illustrated with regard to the name "Bingley," which is recorded in the word list as the central constituent of ten patterns: @Bingley, @Bingley, Caroline, @Bingley, Miss, @Bingley, Mr., @Bingley, Mrs, @Bingley's, @Bingley's Miss, @Bingley's, Mr, @Bingleys, @Bingleys'. The symbol "@" preceding all entries in the word list is used for the purpose of distinguishing the individual entries in the list more easily; it can also be used for formatting the word list.

[15] In the following paragraphs, references to those parts of the novel belonging to the category "direct narration" are indicated by the tag "+Text"; "+Speech," by contrast, indicates that a particular portion of the text belongs to the categories of direct speech or letters.

[16] See Appendix with its list of important lexical items "pride," "prejudice" as well as related terms mirroring central aspects of the moral paradigm in the novel based on the differentiated word list.

[17] Of course, the predicate "said" also occurs in the direct speeches and letters of the novel, with a frequency of 45 mentions.

[18] The noun "fire" can be found at 11/2, 15; 15/4; 22/1; 29/42; and 57/9, either on its own or as part of the compound, e.g. "fireplace."

[19] For students of Jane Austen's novels with a special interest in the characters she created, it might be interesting to learn that on the basis of these two lexical items Mr. Collins can be said to occupy a prominent position in the corpus of Jane Austen's major novels—"obsequiousness" and "obsequious" are *hapax legomena*, since they occur exclusively in *Pride and Prejudice*.

[20] An analysis of Jane Austen's other novels reveals that "happiness" can be found 78 times in *Emma*, 87 times in *Mansfield Park*, *Northanger Abbey* includes 39 instances, *Persuasion* 33, and the noun occurs 73 times in *Sense and Sensibility*.

[21] The term "marriage" occurs 36 times in *Emma*, 32 times in *Mansfield Park*, 12 times in *Northanger Abbey*, 29 times in *Persuasion*, and 46 times in *Sense and Sensibility*.

[22] See n7 denoting an indirect occurrence of the noun "pride."

[23] For the occurrence of both concepts in "+Text" and "+Speech" as well as the references, see Appendix.

[24] Readers interested in the constellation "pride" and "characters" are referred to the Appendix where they will find a list with all passages in which "pride" occurs in the novel.

[25] "The Parson's Tale" X.388 ff.; see *The Riverside Chaucer* 299. The symbol '/' indicates the beginning of a new line. On the background of the parson's "sermon," see Wenzel.

[26] For further studies of the concept "pride" on the basis of the parson's specifications, it might be helpful to indicate the positions of the several terms mentioned above: "hypocritical" (+Speech: 2/5 and 13/10); "spiteful" (+Text: 50/6), "arrogance" (+Speech: 34/28), "impudence" (+Text: 5/15; +Speech: 50/9, 57/24), "insolence" (+Text: 36/1),

"impatience" (+Text: 18/68, 23/14, 26/21, 36/1, 40/1, 46/4, 46/26, 48/9; +Speech: 57/14), "presumption" (+Text: 55/21, +Speech: 47/6, 56/40).

[27] The earliest use of the term *prejudice* expressing a (moral) opinion and behaviour (both positive and negative in respect of the object) recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is the Wycliffite Bible of the second half of the fourteenth century (1388), translating the single occurrence of *praeiudicium* in the Vulgate, "ut haec custodias sine praeiudicio" (1 Tim 5:21).

[28] "The Parson's Tale" X.395; see *The Riverside Chaucer* 299.

[29] In his treatise *Handlyng Synne*, Robert Mannyng distinguishes 38 manifestations of the sin of pride (ll. 2988-3702, 105-27).

[30] According to Thomas Chobham, pride is "the origin of all vices and the beginning of every sin (origo omnium vitiorum et initium omnis peccati)" (21). The *Summa Confessorum*, one of the early and influential handbooks concerned with sin and confession, was composed in England before 1216.

[31] See *Handlyng Synne* 105, ll. 2989-94, as well as 127, ll. 3698-99: "For of pryde ys þe bygynnyng / Of al maners wykked þyng.—"Because pride supplies the beginning of all kinds of wicked things."

[32] For the occurrence of these terms in "+ Text" and "+ Speech," see Appendix.

[33] In retrospect, the opening words at 9/36 appear to underline this characterisation: "Lydia was a stout, well-grown girl of fifteen, with a fine complexion and good-humoured countenance."

[34] "The Parson's Tale" X.475-79, see *The Riverside Chaucer* 302-03. In Thomas Chobham's Latin manual "humilitas" also holds a prominent place among the virtues; see Chobham (23): "humilitas caput omnium virtutum conservatione"—"humility, the head of all virtues by its ability to preserve."

[35] See Emsley's study, in particular her account on 100 as well as 102-03. I disagree with Emsley's suggestion (103) that humility as to Elizabeth and Darcy is the precondition for a Christian marriage. In my view, humility is a precondition for a clear perception of oneself and others, a perception not "blinded by prejudice," as Elizabeth observes in her conversation with Darcy at 18/34.

[36] "Elizabeth was chiefly struck with his extraordinary deference for Lady Catherine, and his kind intention of christening, marrying, and burying his parishioners whenever it were required."

[37] See the description of Hunsford Parsonage at 28/3 and 4; see also 15/2: "Having now a good house and a very sufficient income," and 32/12, Darcy's comment: "This seems a very comfortable house."

[38] Even though Sarah Emsley repeatedly refers to "humility" in the sections devoted to *Pride and Prejudice* in her study, it should be noted that the noun "humility" is used in *Pride and Prejudice* exclusively with reference to Mr. William Collins and Mr. Charles Bingley; in both contexts, "humility" refers to (outward) social behaviour (see Appendix). Looking at Jane Austen's other major novels, we find that the use of the concept "humility" in *Sense and Sensibility* (four occurrences: 36/22; 49/47; 50/10, 11) also refers

to outward social behaviour. In *Mansfield Park*, by contrast, "humility," with three occurrences (2/30; 27/18; 48/8), as well as in *Emma* (with one occurrence only, at 54/39), is used in its traditional, Christian sense.

[39] Armstrong refers to Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*. For a brief account of the prevalent, usually negative, views of pride current in the eighteenth century see Elder; and Lovejoy.

[40] See Chobham: "Secundum hoc enim quod est vera excellentia sive verus honor, amor talis excellentie vel talis honoris non est superbia. Cum ergo dicitur quod superbia est *amor proprie excellentie*, intelligitur falsa excellentia. Est enim quedam excellentia vana et temporalis; ut quando aliquis desiderat extolli et elevari super homines in temporalibus. Si autem homo vult excellere ut vitia sibi subsint et sic ascendat per virtutes ad deum, amor talis excellentie bonus est, et talis superbia, si superbia dicenda est, est bona et sancta sicut dicit Hieronimus: *disce sanctam superbiam*" (21-22).

[41] See Chobham (527): "Unde cum aliquis contemnit vitia, considerans excellentiam sue nature, sanctam habet superbiam et nunquam sic peccat."

[42] See *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 3069-3072 (108; emphasis added).—"If you ever behaved in a puffed up way / With exaggerated pride on account of your office, / Behave in a lowly way; we see every day / Your office will not last for ever." Mannyng's adverb "lowe" implies the remedy against pride: humility.

[43] It should be noted that Jane Austen herself emphasises the importance of *humility* as a guiding religious and moral concept and norm of behaviour to overcome the sin of pride and vanity—see her prayer quoted by Butler, "History, Politics, and Religion" (189 and 206).

[44] See the narrator's characterization of Mrs. Bennet at 1/34 and 42/1.

[45] The concept "confession" has three occurrences in the novel: 34/22, 58/40, and 60/16.

[46] The noun "generosity" itself is not used in *Pride and Prejudice*. However, the adjectives "generous" with five occurrences in "+Text" and six in "+Speech", "generous-hearted," one occurrence in "+Speech," and the negated form "ungenerous" with three occurrences in "+Speech" as well as the adverb "generously," with one occurrence in "+Text" are a clear indication of the importance of this concept in the novel. For the references of these terms, see Appendix.

[47] The act of repentance is also indicated by the noun "remorse" at 34/13: "wholly unmoved by any feeling or remorse," and the adjective "penitent" at 36/1: "his style was not penitent, but haughty. It was all pride and insolence." Both terms are used with reference to Darcy. However, Darcy's repentance is referred to at 58/24, in his confession to Elizabeth: "You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled."

[48] To facilitate and encourage further studies in the highly interesting and complex field constituted by "pride and prejudice" readers will find in the Appendix the central lexical items pertaining to the title words of *Pride and Prejudice*, as well as other important terms and concepts mentioned and examined in this study and based on the differentiated word list described in section two of this paper.

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Six-Word Stories as Autonomous Literary Works in Digital Contexts: An Answer to Paola Trimarco

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For further contributions to the debate on "Parodies of Six-Word Stories: A Comic Literary Metagenre," see http://www.connotations.de-/debate/parodies-of-six-word-stories. If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de.

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Abstract

In my answer to Paola Trimarco's thoughtful response to my essay on parodies of six-word stories, I will take up two important issues raised by her. Trimarco claims that, while many six-word stories published online may have a (minimal) narrative element, they should not be categorized as stories. To address this issue, I point out several meanings associated with the term *story* and argue that it is useful to adopt a flexible and inclusive approach for its application. To demonstrate the usefulness of an inclusive approach to the definition of a story, I briefly discuss a specific six-word story that, according to Trimarco, should not be categorized as such. The second issue is that of Trimarco's suggestion to regard six-word stories published online as turns in an ongoing conversation among members of Internet communities, as posts in a dynamic thread of posts and comments, rather than as autonomous literary works. To address this issue, I broaden the perspective and contend that many literary texts, not only online six-word stories, have close relationships with their co-texts (e.g. a sonnet in a volume of sonnets). That online six-word stories may have close relationships with their co-texts (e.g. in the form of comments) should not, however, undermine their status as autonomous literary works, a title that they undoubtedly deserve.

Paola Trimarco's thoughtful response to my essay on parodies of six-word stories raises two important issues, and I am grateful for the opportunity to address them in this rejoinder. The first issue is that of the distinction between a text with a minimal narrative element and the category of a true story. The second issue is that of the approach to six-word stories published online as posts in a thread of posts rather than as autonomous literary works.

Regarding the narratological distinction between a (minimal) narrative element and the category of a (true) story, Trimarco argues that, while many online six-word stories may have a narrative element, they should nonetheless not be categorized as stories. Rather, she suggests using a different terminology and calls online six-word stories "*digital six-word narratives*" (16). In my study of six-word stories, I adopted the basic definition of the narrative element as a representation of an action, defining the latter term as "a change or evolvement from one situation to a significantly other situation" (Fishelov, "Poetics" 44n7; Fishelov, "Parodies" 52n5). This definition of action, inspired by Aristotle, was primarily introduced to distinguish between six-word stories with their basic commitment to tell a story and texts that are not committed to that end but, instead, aim at achieving other goals: e.g. to make a general statement, formulate a memorable lesson, or offer a rich metaphor. A narrative element may occur in the latter kinds of texts (e.g. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise"—*Proverbs* 6:6), but it will be subordinated to other goals (e.g. teaching a moral) rather than to telling a story worth telling.

Before I discuss whether a specific online six-word story with a narrative element can be categorized as a story, let me point out a few meanings associated with the term *story*. Needless to say, I do not offer here a comprehensive narratological discussion but, more precisely, different explications of the term. There may be disagreement among narratologists about the minimal requirement for a text to be considered a story, with some believing that two events connected chronologically are enough, while others argue that chronology alone is not sufficient and we should postulate a causal connection. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan has convincingly argued that chronology is usually sufficient because readers often add (assumed) causal connections even when only the chronology is stated. Thus, for example, the joke in the following account of Milton's life relies on such an addition: "Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*, then his wife died, and then he wrote *Paradise Regained*" (Rimmon-Kenan 17).

Admittedly, the definition of a narrative element used in my study of six-word stories—a representation of an action consisting of a change or evolvement from one situation to a significantly other situation—is quite minimal, but it is by no means weaker than a representation of events connected chronologically with an implied causal connection, as described by Rimmon-Kenan. The crucial point is that even a minimal narrative element—whether achieved through the representation of events connected chronologically with an implied causal connection or through the representation of an action—is distinguishable from a representation of a basically static state of affairs. Thus, there is a very important difference between the dynamic, represented action of "Look, the sun is setting in the west" and a descriptive static statement like "The sun is just above us in the sky"; or a statement that describes a repetitive action, perceived also as a static state of affairs: "The sun sets every evening in the west."

There is, of course, another way to construe a story that goes beyond the above-mentioned ways for creating a minimal narrative element: i.e. to create a developed narrative structure consisting of a problem, a complication, and a resolution. This developed narrative structure usually also offers a rewarding reading experience, associated with effects like anticipation, apprehension, hope, and relief. Theoretically, we can postulate that every story, including six-word stories, should have a developed narrative structure (problem-complication-resolution). Trimarco seems to suggest such a postulation when she argues that, in order to qualify for the category of a story, we need, in addition to a narrative element, "background, plot and resolution" (13). While these three terms are not further defined by Trimarco, it is clear that, if we adopt them as prerequisites, we will set a very high threshold for entering the club of stories: then most, if not all, six-word stories will be banished from the realm of stories. Clearly, the formal restriction of telling a story in only six words poses a serious impediment to attempts to unfold a fully-fledged, developed narrative structure with background, plot, and resolution. Instead, I suggest adopting a more flexible and inclusive approach.

At the heart of this inclusive approach lies the assumption mentioned earlier: namely, that there is an important distinction between the representation of a basically dynamic kind of reality and a basically static kind of reality. If the former, then it qualifies a story; if the latter, then it should not be considered as a story. Note that this flexible, inclusive approach is by no means all-inclusive; it still leaves an enormous number of texts out. When we, on the one hand, adopt a minimalist definition of the term story, it becomes clear that a text like "a flee sucks the blood of mammals, including humans" cannot, and should not, be qualified as a story because it is a general statement aimed at describing a static characteristic of a specific species. On the other hand, a text like "It [the flea] sucked me first, and now sucks thee, / And in this flea our two bloods mingled be" (John Donne, "The Flea") should qualify as a story (in addition to being a poem) because it represents a dynamic reality. Furthermore, in addition to telling us about an action in the past ("It sucked me"), Donne's poem also represents a dynamic element in the speech situation: i.e. things are happening while the speaker is speaking ("and now sucks thee").

While Trimarco claims that it is "difficult for many readers" to categorize many online six-word stories as stories (13), she does not provide empirical evidence to support her claim. Based on my personal experience of reading, teaching, and analyzing six-word stories, I can concede that there are certain six-word stories that raise the question of whether they should indeed be categorized as such: e.g. "The smallest coffins are the heaviest."[1] Note that even this text, which is formulated as a general statement, evokes the dynamic scenario of lifting coffins and evaluating the physical and psychological difficulties involved (Fishelov, "Poetics" 37). Aside from such borderline cases, however, most six-word stories seem to be unmistakably stories, at least in the minimal sense of the term.

When we consider the different, minimal, requirements for a text to be considered a story, especially that of a causal connection between two events, we should bear in mind one interesting feature of six-word stories: the fact that not all the events in the story are explicitly stated, a feature that can be described as "the tip of the iceberg principle" (Fishelov, "Poetics" 37-38, and "Parodies" 36, 48, 52n6). In the prototypical exemplum of a six-word story (wrongly) attributed to Hemingway, for example, the fact that the parents have posted the baby shoes "For sale" ad because their baby has died is nowhere stated in the text. Rather, it is assumed by the readers, who try to provide context, a background, and a reason for the published ad, perceived as the result of a cause-and-effect string of events. This logic is equally evident when other, more mundane explanations are offered for the publication of this ad (e.g. the parents are selling the shoes because they have received two identical pairs as gifts). The fact that a vital part of the story in six-word stories is not present in the text but is, instead, provided by its active readers, enables writers of six-word stories to achieve interesting and rich effects even when the story has only a minimal narrative element.

To illustrate her argument that many six-word stories should not be categorized as stories, Trimarco cites the six-word story "I invented a new word: plagiarism." According to Trimarco, this text "belongs to the joke genre as well as belonging to the six-word narrative genre and to the online conversation genre," but "would not be categorized as a *story*" (15). Before explaining why this text merits the title of a story, let me briefly discuss its categorization by Trimarco as a joke. We can definitely embrace this categorization: the text is funny and has a conspicuous punch-line (or, more accurately, punch-word) structure, which is a clear hallmark of jokes. Such a categorization, however, does not invalidate the possibility of seeing it as a six-word story. When we describe a short story as a comic (rather than, say, tragic) short story, we still see it as a short story; the term "comic" merely reveals what sort of a short story it is. In a similar way, we can categorize six-word stories according to different thematic, rhetorical, or affective qualities, and they will still be perceived as six-word stories. One website of six-word stories[2] even offers the possibility of browsing through its corpus of works by means of categories like "funny," "sad," and "surprise." Thus, while the above-noted "I invented" six-word story can be categorized as a joke, there is no reason why we should not also describe it as a funny, witty, joke-like six-word story.

I would like to argue that the "I invented" six-word story deserves the title of a story not only because it contains a minimal narrative element but because it illustrates certain elements associated with the developed narrative structure of "background, plot and resolution." When we read the text, we may very well imagine how the speaker was sitting at his desk, holding a notebook and a pen (or perhaps under a tree or in a pub). While the story does not suggest any such specific background, it is plausible that, in the process of making sense, we can imagine such background information. The specifics of such a background will, of course, depend on the specific imagination of each reader. We can and even are encouraged to imagine that the speaker was quite busy trying to invent a new word, and he was hence confronting a problem or a challenge. After all, the invention of a new word requires conscious mental effort, unlike eating or breathing. After the speaker has searched his or her mind, and maybe also consulted some (perhaps very poor and incomplete) dictionaries, the eureka-like moment comes, which the speaker is so happy and proud to share with us: "I invented a new word: plagiarism." This six-word story can even be described as a miniature version of an adventure or a quest story in which, instead of a physical challenge, the hero faces a mental challenge: namely, the invention of a new word. The resolution of the challenge is, needless to say, an ironic one because the "invented" word is not only part and parcel of the existing dictionary but also refers to the unauthorized borrowing of words, and thus the punchline has an ironic double-edge and exposes the naivete and ignorance of the speaker/writer.

One may argue that the relatively rich reading that I have just offered, full of embellished details, is the fruit of my own wild imagination. True, the added details are not explicitly written in the text, and I have probably overdramatized some details; but there are good reasons to believe that the story not only enables but also encourages the reader to imagine at least some similar details based on a common understanding of what it means to invent a new word (e.g. that the task presents quite a challenge). Moreover, the fact that some details of the above-offered reading are not explicitly stated in the text is not, in and of itself, an argument against its validity. After all, as we have seen, in many cases of six-word stories an important part of the story is not explicitly stated but is, rather, deduced, implied, or hypothesized by its active readers ("the tip of the iceberg principle"). Thus, even if we play down some of my formulations (e.g. delete "a eureka-like moment"), we can still argue that the above-offered reading is anchored in a text that contains not only a minimal narrative element but even some elements of a developed narrative structure: a challenge or a problem and its (ironic) resolution.

In addition to the narratological issue of categorizing texts as stories, Trimarco calls attention to the fact that six-word stories on websites of specific communities on the Internet are "surrounded" by comments and by other six-word stories. She suggests that an online six-word story should be treated as a post or part of a thread of posts rather than as an autonomous literary work. This particular perspective can help address issues not considered by an aesthetically oriented approach to these stories: it can apply to them concepts borrowed from discourse analysis (e.g. the story as a turn in a conversation) and shed light on the fact that these stories-posts function for their writers as "self-representation and expression of identity" (Trimarco 14). We can agree that such a perspective may indeed contribute to the study of six-word stories on the Internet, especially to our understanding of the platform on which they are published and the relationships between the stories and their response comments. Sometimes, for example, the comments that follow stories and the give-and-take among members of the Internet community can help us to better understand these stories (I myself have profited from such comments more than once).

I would nonetheless like to argue that this added perspective does not undermine or weaken the validity of discussing online six-word stories as autonomous literary works. There may even be something delimiting and misleading about treating such a story as merely the initial post in a thread of posts. It should be noted that, when members of the relevant website community comment on an online six-word story—by writing a variation, parody, or offering an interpretative comment—they are in fact treating it as an autonomous literary work. Furthermore, six-word stories posted originally as part of a dynamic thread in the Internet subcommunity of Reddit (from which I initially took my examples and to which Trimarco refers) were later "severed" from their original context and published under the title of the "Top 500 six-word stories (2018)." This was carried out not by an outside academic (like myself) but by a member of the community.[3] In collecting and publishing this anthology, members of the online community were doing what every reader of online six-word stories is doing: namely, reading and (hopefully) enjoying a specific six-word story as a relatively autonomous literary work.

When discussing the autonomy of online six-word stories, it can be useful to broaden our perspective and address the issue of the autonomy of other kinds of literary texts. While the question of the autonomy of a literary text is pertinent to online six-word stories, it is also relevant, perhaps with different emphases, to almost every literary text published on the more traditional platforms: Can we "sever" a chapter from a novel and read it as if it were an autonomous unit because it contains a systematic philosophical argument or an elaborated allegory that can be read separately (e.g. "The Great Inquisitor" from Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*; "Before the Gate of the Law" from Kafka's *The Trial*); can we read, understand, and discuss as autonomous literary text a sonnet that is part of "a crown of sonnets" (e.g. Lady Mary Wroth's "A Crown of Sonnets Dedicated to Love"); can we read a sonnet that is part of a volume of sonnets (e.g. Petrarch's *Canzoniere* or Shakespeare's *Sonnets*) as an autonomous text without addressing the neighbouring sonnets in the volume; can we read a short story taken from a volume of short stories without addressing the neighbouring stories, especially when the stories are connected thematically (e.g. Joyce's *Dubliners*); and can we read and appreciate separately a novel that is part of a trilogy or even of a larger, more ambitious literary project (e.g. an individual novel by Balzac that is part of *The Human Comedy*; an individual novel by Proust that is part of *In Search of Lost Time*)?

All these questions have received in practice, from readers, critics, and editors of anthologies, the answer "yes." This positive answer highlights the basically pragmatic, not ontological, nature of the issue. In other words, the question is not whether a text (be it a sonnet, a short story, or a six-word story) is "really" autonomous; instead, the question is what we gain and what we lose by reading it as an autonomous literary work and by ignoring, at least to some extent, its relationships with its neighbouring texts. In addition to the pragmatic issue, there may also be a moral dimension involved: do we wrong the author by reading the text of an online six-word story as an autonomous literary work? I would like to argue that, both pragmatically and morally, there are good reasons to read an online six-word story as an autonomous literary work. Regarding the pragmatic aspect, by focusing on the story itself rather than on its relationships with its co-texts, we usually gain an emotional, cognitive, and aesthetic experience, especially when the story is a good one; and, regarding the moral aspect, by treating the six-word story as an autonomous literary work, we in fact honour the author's creative efforts and poetic talent.

Let us return for a moment to the above series of questions about the relative autonomy of certain literary texts and compare them with the relative autonomy of online six-word stories. An online six-word story does not resemble a sonnet within "a crown of sonnets," where the literary form invites (but, still, does not necessitate) reading the sequence of fifteen semi-autonomous texts as one overarching literary work. Reading an online six-word story as an autonomous literary work also does not resemble the "severing" of a chapter from a novel in which it was originally published. Regarding the issue of relative autonomy, I believe that an online six-word story can be likened, from the above list of examples, to a sonnet in an annotated volume of sonnets or a short story in an annotated volume of thematically connected short stories. Aside from some relatively rare cases, we can read, understand, and enjoy a specific sonnet, short story, or six-word story without necessarily examining its relationship with its co-texts.

Reading a sonnet or a short story in light of its relationships with other sonnets or stories in the volume in which they were originally published may enrich our reading of the specific text, just like with online six-word stories. Sometimes, however, it will be more pertinent and rewarding to read a specific text in relation to texts that are not part of its immediate co-textual and contextual environment. A parody, for example, creates a significant intertextual relationship with the parodied text, but the latter is usually not part of the immediate co-textual environment of the parody and belongs to a writer from the past. Thus, we may gain some insights into parodies of six-word stories by reading the comments that followed them; an even more significant insight, however, will be gained by reading them in light of the six-word story that they are parodying, notably the prototypical Hemingway story, which is usually not part of the specific thread in which the parody was published.

True, there are cases in which there is a very strong connection between neighbouring six-word stories, especially when one is posted as a comment on the other. This is true for the following two examples, taken from a website devoted to six-word stories,[4] where the second example was posted as a comment on the first (see Fishelov, “Poetics” 41). The first story reads, “Two lovers. One parachute. No survivor” (Ben Matthews), which was followed by the comment: “You take it, no you. Splat” (Hiatus). This pair of stories illustrates not only the humour of commentators and the fact that they sometimes adopt the format of the original six-word story in their response, but also the asymmetry between an initial six-word story and some of its comments. While the initiating six-word story (“Two lovers”) can be read and enjoyed as an autonomous literary work, in order to understand and enjoy the latter (“You take it”), we need to be familiar with the former. Without knowing the former, the latter will remain enigmatic.

Trimarco cites three comments (on page 12 in her essay) that followed the parody “For sale: this story format. Overused” (Fishelov, “Parodies” 45-46), posted on the specific webpage from which I have taken my examples. All three of the comments cited by Trimarco on this specific parody adopt the format of a six-word story, and two of them, if not all three, can be read, at least to some extent, as autonomous literary works, despite the fact that they were posted as comments (e.g. “Redditors now looking for original posts”). Reading them in light of the initiating six-word story can, of course, enrich our understanding and enjoyment, but knowing the initiating story is not a prerequisite for understanding them. This serves to highlight the fact that, in many cases, being familiar with the initiating six-word story is not a strong prerequisite for making sense of the later six-word story posted as a comment. After all, it is reasonable to assume that commentators who adopt the format of a six-word story wish to be appreciated as writers of a witty and memorable story, not merely as writers of a comment. There may be different degrees of autonomy of the comments written as a six-word story, but the above case of “You take it, no you. Splat,” which requires its readers to be familiar with the initiating story does not seem to represent the norm. If we add the fact that, almost as a rule, the initiating six-word stories can be read without the “crutches” of their comments, it becomes even more clear that most online six-word stories can be read as autonomous literary works.

As we have seen, the question of relative autonomy does not pertain uniquely to six-word stories published online. Indeed, the general fate of six-word stories published online is not that different from the fate of other literary works, whether published online or on more traditional platforms: they can be criticized or praised, commented upon, interpreted, emulated, parodied, etc. Indeed, the Internet and the brevity of the form of the six-word story make the give-and-take between authors and their readers, commentators, and critics faster, closer, and more intense. Nonetheless, the principles underlying this give-and-take are, at least partly, not that different from those of the more traditional genres, modes of publication, and literary communities. In short, while Trimarco rightly calls attention to certain characteristics of the Internet as a new platform for the publication of certain literary works, we should not forget the shared aspects of this new platform with the more traditional platforms: sometimes it is the same old lady, merely in a new dress.

In conclusion, by adopting Trimarco's suggestion to examine online six-word stories as posts in an ongoing conversation, we can indeed sometimes enrich our understanding of these stories, and we can definitely learn much about the context of their publication. However, to adopt the suggested perspective without acknowledging the status of online six-word stories as autonomous literary works may lead us to lose sight of their specific individual literary qualities and aesthetic achievements. Personally, I believe that each and every one of them deserves our close reading and attention.[5]

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NOTES

[1] TheWolfOfWalmart, http://www.sixwordstories.net/2014/02/the-smallest-coffins-are-the-heaviest/.

[2] http://www.sixwordstories.net/#sidebar

[3] https://www.reddit.com/r/sixwordstories/comments/-9erwj1/top_500_sixword_stories_2018/

[4] www.http://sixwordstories.net

[5] This research was supported by THE ISRAEL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (grant No. 1479/19

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Auden's "This Lunar Beauty": Keats's Urn and Hardy's *Tess*

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This article is the first entry in a debate "Auden's 'This Lunar Beauty': Keats's Urn and Hardy's *Tess.*" http://www.connotations.de/debate/audens-this-lunar-beauty/. If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de.

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Abstract

W. H. Auden's "This Lunar Beauty" (1930) appears as homage to a pure "lunar beauty" that is defined by its sexual innocence and remoteness from the changes wrought by painful mundane experience. However, Auden, even at this time, argued the necessity of vital experience, even if painful and wrong, and often contemptuously dismissed innocence, especially sexual innocence. Auden's poem can be more readily aligned with these arguments when we recognize its links with John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.* According to Auden ("Robert Frost"), Keats, who was an important early influence on Auden, vigorously interrogates the urn's insistence on an immaculate beauty that excludes the suffering and misery of human experience. In "This Lunar Beauty," Auden, appearing to praise immaculate and timeless beauty, actually warns us against such fashionings. This critique, I will argue in the last third of the essay, is enabled by his distancing of himself from his speaker, as Keats (Auden believed) had distanced himself from the urn (and, though to a lesser extent, from his speaker). Auden's speaker thickly echoes Hardy's Angel Clare, in his fatal and extremely un-Audenesque constructions of pure beauty, pure woman, Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

"This Lunar Beauty" (1930) is an "elegiac distillation" of the "unworldliness" of "prepubertal" innocence (Fuller 65). This nocturnal and timeless "pure beauty" is "remote from both love and sorrow" (Spears 42) and, according to its speaker, is poignantly opposed to the mundane diurnal experiences that will make us inevitably become another. Auden's vision of timeless "crystalline beauty" even appears to engage in a Wordsworthian "worship" of a child "as untouched and virginal as Diana" (Mendelson, *Early Auden* 83).

How are we to explain this powerful rendering of purity and perfection from a sexually precocious poet who despised "ingrown virginity" ("Sir, No Man's Enemy" [1929)] 36)?[1] The "difficulties" (Fuller 65) and "riddling uncertainties" (Spears 42) of this virgin tribute can be "lessened" (Fuller 65) by recognizing the complications and even the impossibility of love linking to this perfect but isolated beauty. Nevertheless, the praise endures, and difficulties linger. A romanticized child is quite unexpected in a poem by an Auden who rejected a puerile Wordsworth (Mendelson, *Early Auden* 83), identified innocence with emptiness, and aligned permanence and timelessness with eternal stagnation.[2] The salute seems especially surprising from one who repeatedly will link "perfection" with madness and brutality that is especially destructive of children[3]: "Perfection, of a kind, was what he was after / [...] And when he cried the little children died in the streets" ("Epitaph on a Tyrant," *EA* 239). "Beauty later" becoming "another" ("This Lunar Beauty," *EA* 52) is at odds with Auden's assertion that "we do not become a different person as we grow up, but remain the same from infancy to old age" ("The Prolific and the Devourer," *Prose* 2: 414 [1939]). Moreover, this immaculate beauty is defined in opposition to, and separation from, the day. Auden will soon announce that he was "witnessing the dissolution of a historical epoch" because it had been "one during which the day life and the night life were segregated from each other" ("Jacob and the Angel," *Prose* 2: 38). He believed at this time (1939) that "the underlying problem" of a world approaching total war was "a privation of some kind of wholeness" of which this segregation was a symptom (Schuler 14). Committing himself to a "Creator / To whom both the day and the night belong" (Mendelson, "Making" 191),[4] Auden consistently will urge a reconciliation of flesh and spirit, day and night, light and darkness, consciousness and unconsciousness, heaven and earth, eros and agape, and spiritual health with imperfection/open-ended activity/error: "Is it not here [fallen earth] that we belong, / Where everyone is doing wrong, […] Where if we do not move we fall […]" ("New Year Letter," *Collected Poems* [*CP*] 179). Perhaps the poem was a last late burst of "the intense romanticism at the heart of his earliest work" (Mendelson, *Early Auden* 82),[5] another brilliant instance of the poet's deploying the "rhetorically effective" even if it expresses "feelings or beliefs which its author never felt or entertained" and perhaps abhorred (15).[6] In this Foreword to his *Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957* (1966), Auden repudiates the "shamefully" written lines in his "Spain 1937": "History to the defeated / may say alas but cannot help nor pardon" (*CSP* 15): "To say this is to equate goodness with success. It would have been bad enough if I had ever held this wicked doctrine, but that I should have stated it simply because it sounded to me rhetorically effective is quite inexcusable" (15). "Spain" was excluded from the volume. "This Lunar Beauty" was not.

Why didn't this conscientious artist exclude it? Perhaps the author, content with the poem's moonlit obscurities, intended, whatever the poem's sources, that "this lunar beauty" be read as a provocatively changeless and timeless lunar beauty (as the moon is usually identified with change and time), which perhaps it would be without the biography. Here, however, I will explain how the poem aligns with Auden's later less Romantic arguments, many of them already characterizing him when he wrote his dreamy masterpiece. Auden usually had some source in mind when composing, and here his primary intertexts are John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and, almost as important, Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Auden appears to endorse "this lunar beauty" in the same way Keats (according to Auden) appears to argue that "truth is beauty." Just as the ode (as Auden read it) argues for something very different from the urn's utterances, so does Auden's poem undermine the speaker's tribute. This double-argument is enabled by Auden's speaker reflecting, not Auden, but Hardy's late Victorian Romantic Angel Clare in his disastrous idealization of a pure woman.

Auden in "A Literary Transference" (1940) links Keats with the "archetype of the Poetic" who "awakens a passion of imitation, and an affectation which no subsequent refinement or sophistication of his [the reader-poet's] taste can ever entirely destroy" (*Prose* 2: 43-44). Auden locates his own eventual "archetype" in Thomas Hardy, who became when he was sixteen "both my Keats and Sandburg." But Keats had been one of the Romantic poets "on whom Auden first modeled his work." Though yielding to

Hardy, his influence, even as with poets such as Yeats and Eliot, "lingered long after Auden ceased to read or consciously imitate" him (Bucknell xxii; xxi, 25, 153).

If Keats can awaken "a passion of imitation" that cannot "ever" be destroyed, where is the imitation by Auden? His *Juvenilia* contain several poems describing "his 'quailing' at the prospect of joining the ranks of great poets" (Wetzsteon 7; also see Bucknell xxii), and two of these explicitly relate this anxiety to Keats. "To a Toadstool" addresses, in a "lush Keatsian invocation" (Wetzsteon 7), a "Scarlet Beauty" that reputedly can impart the power to "share the passion of the nightingale," but the speaker doubts and "quail[s]" (Bucknell 14). "After Reading Keats's Ode" (1922 or 1923) expresses Auden's anxiety that he might lack the poetic powers of this literary father who generated the "wondrous vision of the divine bird" (Bucknell 16). Auden's "hidden longing for poetic vision of the sort possessed by the Romantic and late-Romantic poets he professed to scorn played a significant part in the course of his development. In time, Auden quietly transformed the self-doubt of his first poems into the longed-for vision" (Bucknell xxii-iii), such as in "Out on the Lawn I Lie in Bed"/ "A Summer's Night" (1933). An even earlier transformation is Auden's rewriting of Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" in "This Lunar Beauty."[7]

Keats's Ode continues to generate widely varying assessments.[8] Luckily, Auden gives us the fundamentals of his own reading of the poem:

> If asked who said *Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty!*, a great many readers would answer "Keats." But Keats said nothing of the sort. It is what he said the Grecian Urn said, his description and criticism of a certain kind of work of art, the kind from which the evils and problems of this life, the "heart high sorrowful and cloyed," are deliberately excluded. ("Robert Frost" [1936], *Dyer's Hand* 337)

He expands this insight to define poetry in general: "We want a poem to be beautiful, that is to say, a verbal earthly paradise, a timeless world of pure play" (338). Nevertheless, "a poet cannot bring us any truth without introducing into his poetry the problematic, the painful, the disorderly, the ugly" (338). There is no finer analysis of "This Lunar Beauty" than these comments on Keats's ode. What Auden says Keats does in his ode explains what Auden does do, or thinks he is doing, in his own enigmatic verses on, not merely a boy's perfect and "pure beauty" but a photograph of a boy, a student at Larchfield Academy, where Auden began as a schoolmaster, April 1930. It, too, is a work of art, like a picture on a Grecian urn (or on Achilles' shield or a painting by Brueghel), or like moonlight itself fallen on the earth.

Auden's speaker tells us in the first stanza that sexual experience would transform this beauty with "no history" into "another." These lines vibrantly dialogue with the ode's opening verses:

> Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
> Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
> Silvan historian, who canst thus express
> A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme […].
> ("Ode on a Grecian Urn" 1-4)

Child, sex, virginity, innocence defined by an absence of sexual experience, violent/intrusive sexuality backgrounding this innocence, a subject defined by sweetness (Auden's third stanza), abnormal time ("other time" in Auden's second stanza), a subject having "happily no history in the ordinary sense,"[9] and the magisterial power of beauty—the intertextuality is indeed dense.

Keats quickly links his subject with what Auden read as "the problematic, the painful, the disorderly, the ugly." The speaker interprets the scenes in terms that emphasize the violent and violently frustrated sexuality that a "still unravished bride" quietly reveals. "Still unravished bride of quietness" seems a puzzling description of a Grecian urn until we read the speaker's lurid constructions of the scenes inscribed on the urn by Keats. The lofty, serene virgin and astutely quiet "bride" (probably embodying art or beauty or both) presides over, as articulated by the speaker, a raucous attempt at ravishing of "maidens" (8) amidst struggle, "mad pursuit" (9), foiled escapes, and the endless playing of pipes and timbrels—which music (or din) the next stanza tells (11-12), if heard, would not be so sweet. Here is disorderly ugliness indeed, or so insists the speaker, though on extant Grecian urns the figures most often appear to be enjoying themselves in classical sex-scenes. But Keats's darker "legend haunts" (5) his English urn's story.

And what lurid if not ugly "legend haunts"—in relation to the ode—Auden's poem? "Had"—not "has"—"a lover" suggests the problematic, a fall from innocence, but it is a condition negatively opposed to and sequestered from Auden's persistent and pure beauty. The next stanza appears poised to waken his pure beauty from its lofty inertia, summoning ghosts to haunt this perfection.

These ghosts actually enhance the inviolability of his lunar beauty. The speaker asserts an active daylight's painful "loss" of the perfection of night, rather than a nocturnal (perhaps slumbering) perfection's loss of daylight vitality, again a statement at odds with Auden's articulated beliefs. Ghosts are the flimsiest of realities; and Auden's ghosts, victimized and haunted themselves rather than haunting ("Lost and wanted"), requiring (like sexual maturity as well as sexual satisfaction) "time" and "inches," fade even further into the daylight that is spurned by a timeless beauty without history. They, like daylight, suffer loss when deprived of contact with timeless and nocturnal perfection, haunted, lost, wanted, and hapless.

This salute to eternal stasis is heightened by Auden telling us where, but neither what nor why nor when nor how, the ghosts haunt. His last stanza, rather obliquely, merely tells us what they, "Lost and wanted," do not haunt. Haunting the timeless beauty—reminding it of the problematic and painful—"was never" the "endeavor" of Auden's dissatisfied, dysfunctional ghosts, who do not seem to have any stable purpose. Moreover, Auden seconds the painful and futile results of completed action that Keats's speaker posits: "Nor finished this ["endeavour"] /was ghost at ease" (*EA* 52). Auden's ghosts when allowed to attain their goal will remain restless, high-sorrowful though cloyed, teased by the ease of classic repose embodied in the photograph.

Auden's speaker then tells us that "Love shall not near/The sweetness here" until "it [this lunar beauty] pass" (*EA* 52). "Sweetness here," as in the ode, seems to comment on a scene/condition rather than on a person: "heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter" ("Ode" 11-12). Auden's lines restate this as: experienced sexual love is perhaps sweet, but wonder of pre-pubescent innocent beauty is certainly sweeter. The lines might critique un-sexual perfection by implying other forms of sweetness less saccharine. They might also be denying (and almost certainly are, in some way) love to this perfect beauty. But the rather formal if not Victorian commandment "shall not" is attached to sexual love, whose action is being limited, while "pass," usually a positive word as noun and verb, suggests virginal perfection that has been liberated for further development. And "till it pass" is highly conditional, in no way certain, and its passing (though not away) suggests that sexual love will (shall?) undertake to realize the condition that this lunar beauty has mastered before passing. Indeed, "till it pass" echoes "yet unravished bride"; and many readers, as with the ode, might assume or even hope that it will not pass away, at least as an ideal. As human life, it must indeed pass away, but the reader, in light of Auden's magical words, would be tempted to prefer that it did not.

Auden's ghosts seem rather anemic in comparison with the romantic ode's shadowy and brutal hauntings. In his second stanza Keats's speaker advises the figure that he calls a "bold lover" to cease grieving for a love that, the lover is assured, can never be consummated.

> Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
> Though winning near the goal yet do not grieve:
> She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
> For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair! (17-20)

This condition might console many a shyer and more Petrarchan lover, but it likely would intensify the despair of the "bold" and sexually frenzied and despairing one constructed by the speaker—or of a gay hedonist who is looking at a boy's beautiful picture. Time, and sexual satisfaction, is indeed inches in this scene, and the time and inches have ceased, preventing sexual realization and an attainment of "bliss," a painful loss indeed.

Nor does anything in Auden's poem near the tortured lines quoted by Auden:

> For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
> For ever panting, and for ever young
> All breathing human passion far above,
> That leaves a heart high-sorrowful [as Endymion's moon?] and cloy'd
> A burning forehead, and a parching tongue. ("Ode" 26-30)

One almost expects next to read of Ixion, Tantalus, or Tithonus. In addition to the problematic "for ever," there's the removal of passion. Many people would welcome this removal as a blessing, but not the figures described by the speaker. These "for ever panting" and "warm" in this "cold pastoral" seem, as they almost pulse into life, caught in a nightmare, though the circumstances are common enough in actual life, and too common in the life of a dying man open to the accusation of grasping for sweets beyond his reach. Despite the speaker's assertion, burning and parching normally describe the before rather than after of intercourse.[10]

Where, again, is the ugly truth in Auden's poem which, like Keats's poem for many readers, seems, in some way, to echo "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know" (49-50)? Auden vigorously exonerates Keats by opposing these lines (which he attributes to the urn) to the poet's own supposed beliefs: "He said nothing of the sort. It is what he said the Grecian Urn said." This strongly suggests that Auden also ascribed to the urn "that is all / Ye know on earth," lines indicating a dualism that was often the subject of Auden's critiques. For Auden, the skeptical misery-revealing Keats is heard murmuring behind these lines. Indeed, the highly conjectural statement can read like an accusation before his relentlessly silent urn: "thou say'st" (48) (not *said*) often appears in circumstances not too far removed from "thou liest." And "still" (1) implies the possibility that the urn will suffer the ravishing so serenely expressed on the urn. It also implies that the speaker might be a little surprised that it had not yet happened. One wonders if the urn has not already experienced trauma. "Unravished" is probably a least positive condition in relation to a bride, and quite quiet brides would not seem to be happy, happy brides. On the contrary, the urn would seem not misplaced, in the next generation, in the home of Miss Haversham.

Nevertheless, Keats's speaker, projecting Keats's woeful world into the urn, also has enthused about the enviable and happy state of strictly aesthetic figures (and their human worshippers) who can escape suffering (like the figures on the urn) by seeking the refuge of art and abstraction.[11] Auden then, if he believed the poem was Keats's criticism of escapes into art, would have had to distinguish between the poet and his speaker in addition to distinguishing between the speaker and the urn.[12] We should then allow Auden the creative space that he allowed Keats in configuring the ode's complex of voices. Whatever the biographical circumstances, there is a significant distance between Auden and his speaker. The poem "has no first or second person personal pronouns" (Blake 139), and "the verb forms are all in the third person singular [...] there is nothing personal through the use of first or second person here" (130).[13] This distancing between speaker and poet is reinforced by Auden's rewriting of another of his poem's primary sources, his "first love" and "the most important" modern model for Auden's earliest poetry (Spears 21, 23; Mendelson, *Early Auden* xix, 27-28, 33, 43): Thomas Hardy, whom Auden closely identified with his childhood and adolescence at Gresham's, where he first learned from him "something of the relations between Eros and Logos" ("A Literary Transference" [1940], *Prose* 2: 47).

"This Lunar Beauty" is one of the English Auden's enactments of Hardy's "hawk's vision [...]. To see the individual life related not only to the local social life of its time, but to the whole of human history" ("A Literary Transference," *Prose* 2: 46-47). This vision is focused on the one who constructs this beauty as much as on the beauty itself. Auden's speaker, impersonal and abstract and generalizing, conversational with "a tone of intimacy" (Blake 142), replicates the late Victorian/Arnoldian/Shelleyan ultra-idealist Angel Clare, who wreaks such havoc in Wessex when he awakes from his dream of Tess D'Urberville/Durbeyfield. "This lunar beauty" is primarily defined by the absence of the conditions that Clare assigns to his formerly pure—or at least purely conceived—Tess when he discovers she is "a young woman whose history will [not] bear investigation" (Hardy 207). She has had a lover and developed the physical feature that most often reveals the fact. Her pregnancy bears sorrow, soon to take her endless look. Tess has become another, with society in general and particularly with Clare:

> "But you do not forgive me?"
>
> "O Tess, forgiveness does not apply to the case. You were one person: now you are another. My God—how can forgiveness meet such a grotesque—prestidigitation as that!"
>
> He paused, contemplating this definition; then suddenly broke into horrible laughter—as unnatural and ghastly as a laugh in hell. (Hardy 179)

Pure moral lunacy continues:

> "I thought, Angel, that you loved me—me, my very self! If it is I you do love, O how can it be that you look and speak so? It frightens me! Having begun to love you, I love you for ever—in all changes, in all disgraces, because you are yourself. I ask no more. Then how can you, O my own husband, stop loving me?"
>
> "I repeat, the woman I have been loving is not you."
>
> "But who?"
>
> "Another woman in your shape." (Hardy 179)

This, with its heart-changes, was indeed a lunar, or lunatic, love of a lunar beauty. Auden's speaker, rapt in visions of timeless and unchanging beauty, more positively might have echoed Juliet: "O, swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon, / That monthly changes in her [circled] orb, / Lest that thy love prove likewise variable" (*Romeo and Juliet* 2.2.109-11). Yet, as in "Out on the Lawn" / "A Summer's Night" (*EA* 136), "Auden uses the image of the moon to give him the same distant, all-seeing perspective as Hardy's hawk" (Wetzsteon 2).[14] What this lunar perspective records is a speaker who seeks a static perfection in beauty and the moon, each notoriously subject to mutability, which pair is soon joined by that most elusive of realities, dreams. This indicates that, despite the speaker's insistence that he has located a beauty without Tess's imperfections, he (like Clare) will be bitterly (and rightly) disappointed.

Indeed, retributive disappointment seems inevitable, as the speaker insists on his Beauty's isolation from "history" and change and time. This is hardly a positive or safe assumption for such a history-minded poet who repeatedly argued the resistless menace of History's ghosts that preclude a too pure beauty. Auden, like his Keats, says "nothing of the sort" to endorse this timeless embodiment of beauty (which, as N. F. Blake points out, is in fact subject to change—unless it is the beauty of art, such as an urn or a poem). Auden's "ghost," apparently mistily Georgian-poetic, becomes a vibrant historical metaphor when linked with *Tess*, where ghosts are a primary force behind the sexual catastrophe. The revelation that Durbeyfield is D'Urberville triggers a string of catastrophes, from the death of Prince to the ill-fated migration to Trantridge, to the location of the disastrous revelation.

These historical/evolutionary/biological forces (the latter identification especially strongly shared by Auden) are embodied in the "rollicking" D'Urberville ghosts (Hardy 57; 52), whose sexual depredations continued to haunt the Victorian landscape(s) that encompassed their own daughters. Tess, embodying Auden's own victimized/victimizing ghosts, does not want to be either a haunted D'Urberville or a haunting Durbeyfield, or even a haunted or haunting farm worker. Believing "'tis always mournful not to be wanted" (Hardy 158), especially at the apparently changeless and paradisal Talbothays, she certainly would not have wished to be (though she is, at least in the poem) one of Auden's ghosts. Yet she is destroyed by the "retribution" (57) linked with these sexual-historical ghosts, whose originals certainly did not endeavor after perfectly sexless beauty, and who are not often at ease, in 1430, 1630, or 1878 or 1930, when they first encounter this beauty, though very likely are when they are finished with it. They, like most ghosts, do find some ease in initiating retribution, destroying one who had aspired to, and had appeared to Clare to embody, this beauty. Clare had not even danced with the child-like virgin Tess at their first fleeting encounter, at the Marlott Cerealia. Even after having been deflowered by Alec (a ghost of a D'Urberville), Tess at Edenic Talbothays, in love with Clare, wished she could remain "in perpetual betrothal" to Clare (157), avoiding change and sex and another sorrow, a lunar beauty that does not pass away. But Clare, not Tess, had insisted on a wedding night, on extending Tess's perfection into an active bed. The result is fatal to his pure, for Auden purely puerile, vision of his dream-girl. Auden suggests that she is hardly the last victim so long as lovers insist on perfect, pure beauty: when the ideal passes, love approaches and fades while sorrow arrives to take its own endless and immaculate look.

The ghostly shadows materialize at one of the D'Urbervilles' old mansions, reduced to a farmhouse. Clare, on his wedding day, experiences the daytime loss of his dream Tess, declaring that she has become another—indeed, another corpse. That night his dream-girl is carried in his embrace, as he insists that his pure woman has literally died—other time kept rather strictly as Tess, still alive, becomes a ghost of herself, lost in the daylight, wanted at night:

> "My poor poor Tess, my dearest darling Tess! So sweet, so good, so true!" The words of endearment, withheld so severely in his waking hours, were inexpressibly sweet to her forlorn and hungry heart. (194)[15]

Separation of day and night indeed causes catastrophe. Carrying his beauty across the moonlit landscape, Clare insists that Tess conform to his ideal even if it kills her, perfecting an immutable inertia by placing Tess in a medieval stone coffin, not unlike the ones that received the bodies of her D'Urberville forbearers. Auden's apparently innocuous lost ghosts assume a terrible significance when linked with Hardy's doomed, lost, and (un)wanted woman who will end her life on a gallows. Killing perfection, haunted by inescapable sexual ghosts, creating havoc for and in the unconscious, is intensely Auden.[16]

The poem, then, is the brilliant result of "Auden's search for a poetic father, a figure who might balance the visionary power of Wordsworthian Romanticism": "The hawk's vision [...] was a substitute for Romantic vision" (Bucknell xxxiv-v). Nearly every line (even "time is inches" with its emphasis on inevitable sexual maturation/experience) of Auden's poem of a pure boy—"*Pur*" (French for "pure" and the title given it in *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden* [1945] 134)—critically intersects with Hardy's novel of "A Pure Woman."[17] These intersections do not generate a single coherent reading of Auden's enigmatic verses. But they clearly destabilize notions of Auden's tight links with the speaker. Few, if any, have empathized with Angel's response to Tess's confession, a response which even Clare's clerical parents, low church of a very old school, thought misguided.

Yet Auden's distinctive rhetoric reconfigures Clare's response to construct a powerful image of the beautiful, much as Keats seems also to seek the refuge of timeless beauty. But Auden, like his Keats, does not yearn to rest in eternal, beautiful inertia. Instead, he prefers a slightly disturbed sleep that will prepare him for the ambiguities of daylight action where everyone, rightly, is doing wrongly. Poetry, Auden believed, makes nothing happen, but at least it can whisper the ugly truth about what we see, and this makes Keats's poem a beautiful but haunted friend, like other beautiful poems on death, such as *Lycidas* (perhaps an even colder pastoral), *Adonais*, and *In Memoriam*. In Shelley's romantic words, our sweetest songs tell of saddest woe, and tragedies are often considered the most beautiful works of art.

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NOTES

[1] Citations of Auden's poetry, unless otherwise noted, will refer by page number to *The English Auden* (*EA*). Citations to Keats's poetry will refer to line number.

[2] In his "Song for Saint Cecilia's Day" (1940), angels come into, rather than escape from, time; an earthly inhabitant, having ascended into Heaven, is invited to return to earth; salvation is linked with the erotic; and his speaker will pray "*that what has been may never be again*" (*Complete Poetry* [*CP*] 220-22). Ease is located "where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all / The gaucheness of her adolescent state" (221).

[3] "Fleeing the Short-haired Mad Executives" counters criminal perfection with the faulty but human, extolling "the faults that flaunt / The life which they [mad executives] have stolen and perfected" (*EA* 149).

[4] These lines are from a draft of the "Song."

[5] Wordsworth "provided the model for his earliest surviving verses" (Mendelson, *Early Auden* 27).

[6] Auden, *Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957* [*CSP*] 15.

[7] Fuller comments upon the ode's influence on "From the Very First Coming Down" (1927) and "Orpheus" (1937), while Spears cites Auden's 1962 article in *Mademoiselle*, where he writes that "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" is an example of the sacred as "'horror and despair'" and the "Ode to a Nightingale" embodies the sacred as "'the romantically mysterious'" (294).

[8] "The poem abounds in multiple and conflicting possibilities for interpretation" (Stillinger 256).

[9] Allott's note in Keats, Co*mplete Poems* 534n3.

[10] Auden does not appear to respond to Keats's fourth stanza, though he would have noted as problematic a scene of slaughter as an act of piety, inscribed on a perfect thing of beauty.

[11] Keats likely shared more of his speaker's enthusiasm than Auden was ready to acknowledge: "The excellence of every Art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth" ("To George and Tom Keats," December 1817, *Letters* 1: 192). Auden, in his essay on Frost, states the opposite: "Art arises out of our desire for both beauty and truth and our knowledge that they are not identical" (*Dyer's Hand* 337).

[12] Stillinger calls the poem an example of Keats's "self-dividedness," teeming with opposites that are neither consistently rejected nor endorsed (255-56).

[13] Blake concludes, "These features also suggest a proverbial quality on the poem which appears to deal with what is perpetually true and with facts and ideas rather than with people" (141). He also points out that the poem presupposes other lunar beauties who—like Tess—lack these perfections.

[14] Wetzsteon adds that this "perspective [...] is a refuge from historical crises rather than a way of casting judgment upon it" (2).

[15] Auden might also have had in mind this passage: "How very lovable her face was to him. Yet there was nothing ethereal about it: all was real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation [...]. He had never before seen a woman's lips and teeth which forced upon his mind, with such persistent iteration, the old Elizabethan simile of roses filled with snow. Perfect, he, as a lover, might have called them off-hand. But no: they were not perfect. And it was the touch of the imperfect upon the would-be perfect that gave the sweetness, because it was that which gave the humanity." (Hardy 118)

[16] Andrew Robert Deane examines Auden's attraction to Hardy's verse explorations of "death and mutability [...] ghosts, phantoms and shadows" (44).

[17] There is also given a title that links with the novel in *Collected Shorter Poems 1930-1944*: "Like a Dream."

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Historical Fetters and Creative Liberation in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*: A Response to Angelika Zirker and Susanne Riecker

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Abstract

The authors describe Shakespeare's double tragedy of Julius Caesar and of Brutus as a creative liberation from the constraints imposed by a historical source. They note that Shakespeare christianizes Calpurnia's nightmare about her husband's assassination, and he invents parallels between Caesar and Brutus and their wives. But what makes *Julius Caesar* a tragedy? The Folio sometimes calls it a "tragedy" and sometimes "The Life and death of Julius Caesar." In fact, a good case can be made that *Julius Caesar* is a Roman history play. Shakespeare came to it fresh from writing nine plays about English history, and generically *Julius Caesar* resembles a history play more closely than a tragedy. It consists of a struggle for power. It is open-ended, like all Shakespeare's history plays, starting in the midst of unexplained action and ending inconclusively. This is the form for secular history that Shakespeare invented in the 1590s.

The historical fetters of the authors' title are provided by Shakespeare's source, Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, translated by Sir Thomas North and published in 1579. Shakespeare drew on this source for much of what he imagines about Caesar himself, Brutus, Antony, and Cicero. By 1599, when the play was likely written, Shakespeare had used another historical source, namely, Edmund Hall, for both of his historical tetralogies and *King John*—nine plays in all. Given this dependence, one wonders if "fetters" is the right image. Might not "inspiration" be better? Shakespeare seldom chose to work without a source, and his sources invariably seem to have animated his genius, firing his imagination by supplying a basis for selection and invention—sometimes even for his wording.

The authors observe that "the tragedy is a double one" (133), that is, the play imagines the death not only of Julius Caesar but also of Brutus, the patrician who leads the conspiracy to kill Caesar. Plutarch had proceeded by comparing and contrasting a Greek hero and a Roman one, so Shakespeare's conjoining of two Roman citizens in the late Republic both nods to Plutarch and departs from him at the same time. The authors also observe that the play differs from its source in its preoccupation with time, most especially with the ides of March. *Julius Caesar* locates itself in the temporal continuum of Roman history by recalling the political dominance of Pompey, by depicting the death of Caesar, and by anticipating the rise of Antony and his conflict with Octavius, who will eventually emerge as "sole sir o' th' world" (*Antony and Cleopatra* 5.2.150) in Cleopatra's phrase.

Zirker and Riecker emphasize Shakespeare's anachronistic christianizing of Calpurnia's nightmare about her husband's assassination. Their point is that the dream offers "conflicting options for evaluation" (141). It can either be accepted along with other imagined events in the play or rejected as blasphemous. The authors note that imagery from the dream reappears in Antony's funeral oration, which is the last appearance of the phrase "sacred blood" (*Julius Caesar* 3.2.134; Zirker and Riecker 143).

The authors strikingly compare and contrast the wives of Caesar and Brutus as parallels to their powerful husbands: "Through the parallel arrangement of the episodes with Portia and Calphurnia, Shakespeare not only extends the concept from Plutarch even to the women but moreover allows insight into the private spheres of Brutus and Caesar" (147). Finally, Zirker and Riecker explicate Antony's orations for the deaths of both Caesar and Brutus, noting that "on the intramimetic level, at least, Antony remains an opaque, if not ambiguous, character" (149).

I should like to frame my response to this fine essay by commenting on the authors' first phrase, "In his tragedy, *Julius Caesar*" (abstract, 133). What makes the play a tragedy? Most obviously, the First Folio does: it calls the play "The Tragedie of Ivlivs Caesar" in its "Catalogue" and in its running title, and its title page includes *Julius Caesar* among "tragedies," which it distinguishes generically from "comedies" and "histories."

But the First Folio's authority is self-contradictory in this case. For one thing, its title for *Julius Caesar* on the volume's title page is "The Life and death of Julius Caesar." What happened to "tragedy"? Moreover, the list of tragedies on the Folio's title page includes "Cymbeline King of Britaine." Does that make *Cymbeline* a tragedy? Besides, Shakespeare had nothing to do with the printing of the First Folio; that momentous task was undertaken several years after his death by his fellow actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell. We owe them an incalculable debt, but the First Folio is the product of their judgment, not that of the one who wrote the plays.

Aside from a label in the First Folio, what makes *Julius Caesar* a tragedy? The assassination of the man for whom it is named? He dies in the eighth of eighteen scenes and in the third of only three scenes in which he appears. Is the play a tragedy, then, because Brutus dies in the end? Should it be called "The Tragedy of Brutus"? Perhaps so—but it is not.

For what it is worth, I would like to suggest that *Julius Caesar* might more profitably be thought of as a history play rather than a tragedy. Our best notion of its date of composition is 1599, culminating a decade in which Shakespeare had written two tragedies that might be thought of in various ways as false starts: *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*. He had also, in the 1590s, written nine history plays: the two tetralogies and *King John*. If we include 1599 itself, the decade also comprises *Hamlet*, but is *Julius Ca*esar more like *Hamlet* or like almost any of the history plays?

For one thing, as Angelika Zirker and Susanne Riecker emphasize, *Julius Caesar* has a double focus, portraying the death not only of its title character but also of the man who leads the conspiracy against him. In broad outline, this double plot is reminiscent of *Richard II*, except that Richard's challenger does not die in the end: he successfully seizes power. For present purposes, the important point in common between *Richard II* and *Julius Caesar* is that both plays consist principally of a struggle for power.

But they have more in common than that. Both are open-ended in that their action has started before the play begins, and it promises to continue after the play ends. As David Kastan pointed out many years ago, this open-endedness imitates the shape of history itself, which is a continuum rather than a sequence of events with a defined beginning and end, like comedy and tragedy (see Kastan). *Richard II* begins with a quarrel between Henry Bolingbroke and Thomas Mowbray whose origin lies somewhere in an unexplained past. *Julius Caesar* similarly begins with a contest between two tribunes and a crowd of commoners, with political tension in the background that is confusingly alluded to but not explained.

The unanswered questions that mark the beginning of *Richard II* are complemented by a new set of questions at the end. What does Bolingbroke's triumph mean? Does it confer legitimacy on him? If it does not, can he secure his succession and hope to make his heirs legitimate? Can he survive psychologically, i.e. can he live with himself, given the momentous implications of what he has done to an anointed king? *Julius Caesar* also ends with questions unanswered. With Cassius and Brutus both dead, is the hope of the conspirators dead as well? Will the Republic be restored, as Brutus had hoped? Having cooperated to defeat Brutus, how will Octavius and Antony manage the tension between them? How will Rome fare, if Octavius and Antony cannot resolve their competition? If their competitive spirit becomes violent, what will the outcome be? Amid the uncertainty, Brutus expresses a vain wish that every soldier and every politician must share at some point: "Oh, that a man might know / The end of this day's business ere it come" (5.1.123-24).

To be sure, understanding history merely as political struggle is simplistic, but if we ask what Shakespeare inherited as a way of staging history, we can better appreciate what his history plays consistently do. The only history Shakespeare knew on stage was salvation history, and he almost certainly knew it firsthand because his hometown was close to Coventry, where one of the great cycles of salvation history was regularly staged, until it was shut down by government order in 1580, when Shakespeare was sixteen. He may perhaps have been remembering staged biblical history when Henry V threatens the defenders of Harfleur with mayhem like that imposed by Herod:

> Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,
> Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused
> Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry
> At Herod's bloody-hunting slaughtermen. (*Henry V*, 3.3.38-41)

Though Shakespeare almost certainly knew what salvation history looked like on stage, his own history plays eschewed it. From the beginning, he wrote secular history, that is, plays about history as a contest between politically powerful men and women to maintain and increase their power.

Julius Caesar would therefore seem to be a Roman history play—the only one Shakespeare wrote. The conspirators compete with Caesar for power, though Brutus naively construes the competition as a bid to restore republican liberty. Having defeated Caesar, Brutus goes on to compete with Antony and Octavius, and after they defeat him, they seem to be preparing to compete with each other: the possibility of that struggle is what makes *Julius Caesar* open-ended as its action ceases. Aside from its title, Heminge and Condell may have understood *Julius Caesar* as a tragedy because it focuses on the deaths of two great men. What Shakespeare's first editors did not see is the many ways in which *Julius Caesar* is more like Shakespeare's history plays than his tragedies.

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Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and the (Re-)Invention of Tragedy: A Response to Angelika Zirker and Susanne Riecker

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Abstract

In their contribution, Zirker and Riecker provide a comprehensive survey of how Shakespeare used his sources, especially Plutarch's *Life of Caesar* and *Life of Brutus*, when writing *Julius Caesar*. Their claim that Shakespeare had to overcome the historical "fetters" of Plutarch and the generic fetters of tragedy, however, can be questioned. Shakespeare was not in any way fettered by his sources but in a position to pick and choose from the rich "banquet" of historical and literary material on offer in the Renaissance.

The same applies to the genre of tragedy, which was a rather loose concept and did not fetter Elizabethan dramatists in any way. *Julius Caesar* can even be considered to mark a new departure, in that Shakespeare invents, or re-invents, a tragic pattern which he would repeat in *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear* and *Macbeth*. It involves a central hero who makes a mistake which causes enormous suffering and will result in the hero's self-recognition and death. This pattern, of course, resembles that of classical Greek tragedy, as summarized by Aristotle. While Elizabethan scholars did not usually have direct access to the Greek tragedians, Plutarch's *Life of Brutus* may be considered the "missing link" between Greek an Shakespearen tragedy, as it contains all the features of tragedy mentioned.

In a rich and well-researched contribution, Angelika Zirker and Susanne Riecker provide a thorough and comprehensive survey of the ways in which Shakespeare made use of his historical sources when writing *Julius*

Caesar. As Zirker and Riecker explain, Shakespeare used many of the details reported in Plutarch's *Life of Caesar* and *Life of Brutus* in a creative way, "to the effect of a structural re-configuration of the historical matter and, more importantly, the relation of the characters involved" (134). This structural reconfiguration manifests itself, among other things, in his divergence or specification of "Plutarch's order of events leading up to the assassination" (135), in the "acceleration and temporal condensation of the events" (135-36), in producing "a hightened sense of anticipation" (137), in his extended usage of "the fire imagery as used by Plutarch" (138), and in giving Calphurnia's dream (as reported by Plutarch) "a more urgent spin" (140). Most notably, Shakespeare introduces numerous references to Christian motifs, as Zirker and Riecker demonstrate in great detail (140-43), and makes Caesar use a memorable Latin tag when speaking his last words, instead of the Greek words reported by Suetonius or the address to Casca found in Plutarch (144).

What I would like to question, though, is Zirker's and Riecker's use of the "fetters" image. Zirker and Riecker contend that Shakespeare manages to achieve a "creative liberation from the fetters presented by history and the main source text" (135) and the "generic restraints of tragedy" (135). I would like to argue that the "fetters" and "restraints" imagery is quite out of place here because it provides a wrong idea of how we should conceptualize either Renaissance culture in general or Shakespeare's dramatic art in particular.

Let us look at the historical "fetters" first: Plutarch provided the material for Shakespeare to work with; he does not put fetters on him. No one demanded of Shakespeare to adhere to the details of his sources or the particulars of historical "truth." If Plutarch had not written the "Life of Brutus" and "Life of Caesar," or if Shakespeare had not had access to North's translation, he would not have enjoyed greater liberty. On the contrary: his scope of creativity would have been much restricted. In order to expand or contract, to deviate from or to rearrange Plutarch's text it needed to be available in the first place. If we were to look for an apt metaphor to describe Shakespeare's use of his sources, I would choose that of a rich banquet, or buffet, with Shakespeare being free to choose the most tasty bits.

In Andrew Marvell's "Dialogue of the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure", Pleasure invites the Soul to partake of "nature's banquet" (*Complete Works* 25, l. 14). Similarly, the Renaissance dramatist could partake of culture's banquet, a buffet whose sumptuousness was unprecedented in European history. To Shakespeare this banquet was made up of the Latin instruction received at the Stratford-upon-Avon grammar school (which included Virgil and Ovid as well as Cicero and, quite probably, Erasmus; cf. Mack 12-14), the religious disputes which obviously rendered Shakespeare's hometown (with a Catholic-leaning town council but Protestant ministers and a strictly Protestant landlord) an exciting intellectual battleground (Cf. Greenblatt 87-117), the Kenilworth entertainments of 1575 (which Shakespeare certainly witnessed), performances by travelling actors, the aristocratic life and libraries (possibly) of the Hoghton family in Lancashire (see Honigmann) and (quite probably) the Pembroke family in Wiltshire (Kullmann, "Poeticising Emotion" 245-55), the contact with his fellow-dramatists and university wits as well as the law students of the Inns of Court in London and the ubiquitous debates concerning the conflicts of Puritanism and High Church liberalism as well as those surrounding the issue of the Queen's legitimacy. The book market, to be sure, constituted a banquet by itself, as it included numerous translations from Latin, Greek, Italian, French and Spanish, thus opening up avenues to worlds beyond England, beyond the world of commoners and beyond Christianity.

One of the dishes on offer was the story of Caesar's assassination—and what a wonderful story it was (and still is, of course), raising as it does fundamental ethical and political questions: Was the murder of Caesar justified? Was Caesar a tyrant or a benefactor? Was Brutus honourable? What is more important, friendship and loyalty, or the welfare of the state? Is the old Roman republic or the imperial constitution initiated by Caesar's successors the better political system? Suetonius and Plutarch did not answer these questions, and thereby provided posterity with endless food for thought.[1] Apart from the political questions Caesar's assassination raises, it provides great drama, with Caesar entering the senate as prospective king, and being attacked by 23 of his closest friends. The story of Caesar's assassination was omnipresent in early modern England and a favourite of

London dramatists of the 1590s (see, for example, Ronan), and may well have been a story a grammar school teacher like Thomas Jenkins of Stratford could have transformed into a theatrical play and asked his Latin scholars to perform (cf. Greenblatt 27-28).

Shakespeare, to be sure, was bound to stick to the basic cornerstones of this story: Caesar was murdered on the Ides of March; his murderers included Brutus and Cassius who attempted to restore Rome's republican constitution but were defeated in the battle of Philippi. These cornerstones, however, should not be called "fetters"; they offered manifold possibilities of political, ethical and psychological speculation. Furthermore, they were instruments to reach out to audiences not quite as educated as the dramatist was himself, but knowledgeable enough to have heard of Rome, and of Caesar. Beyond these cornerstones Shakespeare was at liberty to provide his own visions of politics as well as the dramas of friendship and married life (see Zirker and Riecker, 145-48), and the personal tragedies resulting from lacking self-knowledge and wrong decisions.

With regard to the genre of tragedy Shakespeare was not fettered by any restraints, either—for the simple reason that there were no such restraints. Tragedy was, as David Scott Kastan notes (esp. 5-6), a very loose concept.[2] Its only definite generic feature was obviously that the protagonist or title character dies in the course of the play. It is true that sets of rules for the genre of tragedy were available. Educated Elizabethans could read Seneca's tragedies, either in the Latin original or in an English translation (*Seneca His Ten Tragedies*, 1581). They would have been able to follow Senecan models when writing tragedies of their own. There would also be a set of classicist rules, based on Renaissance (mis-)interpretations of Aristotle's *Poetics*, available in English in Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* and Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy.* Few (if any) Elizabethan dramatists, however, chose to follow these rules (see Burrow 9-10). Thomas Kyd and William Shakespeare, it is true, were inspired by Seneca to write *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*; inspired, that is, not fettered.[3] Both dramatists adopted the gruesome plots involving multiple killings and the eating of human flesh, but neither adhered to the "unities" of time and place.

At the same time we can certainly determine structural features which connect *Julius Caesar* to other Shakespearean tragedies, most notably to those often denominated "great": *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth.* In all of these tragedies there is a central hero, a man of high rank and admirable qualities, who makes a mistake, a mistake which is due to a miscalculation and a lack of self-knowledge. This mistake then brings about enormous suffering to many people, not least, however, to the tragic hero himself, and will ultimately result in the hero's recognition of his mistake and his death at the end of the play. The audience is invited to sympathize with this hero and to share his sufferings.

The critic who first provided an outline of this tragic pattern was, of course, A. C. Bradley. As Bradley notices, Shakespeare's tragedies (except for the two "love-tragedies" [2], *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*) are about one person, a person of "high degree" (4, cf. 13), whose story is characterized by "exceptional suffering and calamity" (3) and leads up to this person's death, thus becoming "a chief source of the tragic emotions, and especially of pity" (3). The hero's calamities, Bradley explains, "proceed mainly from actions, and those the actions of men" (6); and the hero "always contributes in some measure to the disaster in which he perishes" (6), his deeds being "characteristic deeds," they issue from his character (7) and often follow upon an "inward struggle" (12). These deeds are invariably due to a "fatal imperfection or error" (15) or at least "some marked imperfection or defect" (25).

If we apply this concept to *Julius Caesar*, two things become obvious:
First: The play's hero is Brutus, not Caesar. It is Brutus whose miscalculation brings about suffering and destruction, in spite of his good intentions and high-mindedness. His introspection (2.1.10-34) prefigures that of tragic heroes like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* (see Kullmann, "Ambiguities of Honour" 171-72). It is he, not Caesar, whose fortunes the spectator follows with pity and fear.[4] While Caesar marches to his destruction like an automaton, "a blind victim of the fate to come" (Grene 26), Brutus ruminates over his decision to kill Caesar. His wife justifiably fears for his safety, and we, as the audience, fear with her. We pity Brutus for being driven out of Rome and for quarrelling with Cassius, we fear his final overthrow at Philippi, and we may accept his end after listening to Octavian's final speech. These observations do not invalidate Zirker's and Riecker's remarks about the par-

allelism found in the characters of Caesar and Brutus (144-45). While Caesar, however, only experiences a brief moment of recognition in the moments before his death, Brutus' career is consistently marked by caution and doubt, and his obvious realization, triggered by the appearance of the ghost of Caesar, his "evil spirit" (4.3.280), that he has made a mistake is clearly dramatized.

The fact that the play is called *Julius Caesar*, rather than "Marcus Brutus," should not bother us. To advertise his play Shakespeare obviously decided to build on his audience's foreknowledge and expectations (as Zirker and Riecker remark as well [137]), and Caesar was certainly better known than Brutus. We could compare this title with that of *A Merchant of Venice*. While the merchant in question is by no means the most important or the most interesting character of the play, the title aptly produces the background image of the famous Italian city of commerce and trade. Shakespeare's tendency to build upon audiences' previous knowledge can also be seen in *The Comedy of Errors*, which replaces the city of Epidamnum of the Plautine source with Ephesus, which was known from the New Testament.

Second: The structure of *Julius Caesar* marks a new departure in Shakespeare's career. Rather than following an established pattern (let alone being fettered by such a pattern), he creates a new one.[5] In none of the previous tragedies do we find this interplay of nobility, good qualities, mistakes, suffering, recognition, death and the arousal of pity and fear, which would become a hallmark of the "great tragedies" mentioned.

Speaking of "mistakes," "recognition," "pity" and "fear" we allude, of course, to the uncanny resemblance of Shakespeare's tragedies with Classical Greek tragedy, most notably the tragedies of Sophocles, like *King Oedipus, Antigone,* and *Electra*, and their treatment in Aristotle's *Poetics*.[6] In providing his sketch of the structure of Shakespeare's great tragedies, Bradley implicitly followed Aristotle, who also contended that a tragic hero is a man of high moral and social standing (1454a-54b) who because of a mistake (*hamartía,* 1453a) brings about suffering and destruction, raising pity and fear in the audience, who will, in the end, be released from these emotions (*kátharsis*, 1449b). The plot of a tragedy, according to Aristotle, should contain elements of the fearful and pitiable. This can best be achieved if something happens which is not expected but nevertheless appears as a logical consequence of previous happenings (1452a); pity and fear are intimately connected with an unexpected turning (*peripéteia*) and a recognition (*anagnórisis*) (1452a).

It has often been remarked that Bradley's notion of a character flaw which triggers the tragic chains of events in *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear* and *Macbeth*, does not quite correspond to Aristotle's notion of *hamartia*, which may refer to a flaw in the hero for which the hero is not personally responsible, like the facts that Oedipus unwittingly killed his father and married his mother (see, e.g., Burrow 1-2). We should, however, note that the element of character is not absent from the Greek notion of *hamartía*.[7] Oedipus is not just punished for his inadvertent crimes but also for his hubris, which makes him seek for the origin of the plague with everybody but himself. In this, he does resemble Othello, or Lear.[8]

It was Wolfgang Schadewaldt, the German classical scholar, who most memorably put to words the resemblances between Greek and Shakespearean tragedy. According to Schadewaldt, *Oedipus* and *King Lear*, as well as *Hamlet* and *Electra*, are connected by "some kind of secret blood relationship" ("Shakespeare und die griechische Tragödie" 8; my trans.). Both Oedipus and Lear, Schadewaldt contends, are victims of "Verblendung," 'blindness' ("Shakespeares 'König Lear'" 34), and in the course of the respective plays give words to the utmost abyss of despair, while retaining their royal dignity (29-32). In sharing their suffering, audiences are confronted with the basic facts of the human condition and will learn to endure it ("Shakespeare und die griechische Tragödie" 13, "Shakespeares 'König Lear'" 30).[9]

But how did Shakespeare learn about the Greek concept of tragedy? We can dismiss Schadewaldt's naive notions that Shakespeare's "small Latin and less Greek" allowed him to imbibe ideas of the tragic by reading classical sources, or that conversations "with learned men like Ben Jonson" provided him with insight into these ancient Greek conceptions ("Shakespeare und die griechische Tragödie" 26; see also Harvey 267). There is no trace of the Sophoclean concept of tragedy in Jonson, nor was Sophocles within easy reach of learned Elizabethans. As all students of Classical Greek will confirm, the language of the Greek tragedies is particularly challenging, and while learned poets like Sidney and Chapman read and understood Plato and Homer, Sophocles seems to have been out of reach.[10] The first translation of *King Oedipus* which allowed English readers an insight into Sophocles' tragic art was obviously Theobald's, published in 1715.

We could, of course, argue that Shakespeare's genius or his deep and unprecedented "humanity" made him develop a concept of tragedy (single-handedly, so to speak) which happens to be similar to that of those other experts in humanity, the Greek tragedians. Our awareness, however, that Shakespeare, for all his excellence, was only human (see Greenblatt 216) should make us look for a different explanation. This leads us back to the banquet image mentioned above: what Shakespeare excelled in was a cultural ecleticism based on the vast buffet or storehouse of Renaissance discourses and artefacts.[11] Within this storehouse we should therefore look for a "missing link" between classical Greek tragedy and Shakespeare's own concept of the tragic which we first come across in *Julius Caesar*.

This missing link, I would like to suggest, is Plutarch's "Life of Brutus", which Shakespeare read in Sir Thomas North's translation. Plutarch's Brutus embodies all the qualities which in Aristotle's *Poetics* characterize a tragic hero. He is of noble descent (242-43), very learned (243-45), and his moral qualities are considered perfect:

> But this Marcus Brutus [...] having framed his manners of life by the rules of vertue and study of philosophy, and having employed his wit, which was gentle and constant, in attempting of great things: methinks he was rightly made and framed unto vertue. (242)

His love of liberty and hatred of tyranny are noble qualities (277-79, see also "The Comparison of Dion with Brutus" 316-17)—qualities which set him apart from the other conspirators who are driven by ambition, egoism and spite (280, see "The Comparison of Dion with Brutus" 317). Cassius, in particular, is described as "a hot, choleric, and cruel man, that would oftentimes be carried away from justice for gain" (279). When Brutus finds himself engaged in a civil war against Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar, his military conduct is characterized by fairness and "courtesy" (281, 284, 302). When he realizes that he has lost, he acknowledges his own responsibility (310) and resorts to the noble act of ending his own life (312), while his victorious adversaries recognize his nobility (312-13).

As indicated above, Plutarch carefully avoids passing judgment on whether the murder of Caesar was justified, but it is obvious that this act was at least morally questionable. It is evil men, like Cassius, who persuade Brutus to take a leading part in the assassination ("The Comparison of Dion with Brutus" 314); and when comparing Brutus to his Greek counterpart, Dion (who killed Dionysius, the Syracusian tyrant), Plutarch points out that Dionysius was undoubtedly evil and tyrannical (315), unlike Caesar, who "it seemed he had rather had the name and opinion only of a tyrant than otherwise that he was so indeed" (315). Caesar, moreover, had saved Brutus's life and honoured him "above all his other friends" (316). The implication is that Brutus, in spite of his noble intentions (317-18), should not have given in to his friends' persuasions, and that this is his fault, his *hamartía*, for which he is finally punished. He put too deep a trust in his friends' moral and political reasoning, as well as in his own ability to set things right after the potential tyrant has been removed. As with Agamemnon and Orestes, the descendants of Tantalus, his decision to act may have been influenced by his ancestry: Plutarch begins his account with a reference to Junius Brutus, who reputedly "put down the Tarquins from their kingdom of Rome" (242). Even though Marcus Brutus does not share his ancestor's "sour stern nature, not softened by reason" (242), he may not have been able to shed this hereditary predisposition.[12]

Plutarch's account also resembles Greek tragedy in its plotting and its management of pity and fear. As in Aristotle's concept of tragedy, there are unexpected turnings, which, however, appear as the logical consequences of previous actions (such as the expulsion of Brutus and his friends from Rome in the aftermath of Caesar's murder). Before we read of the final battle at Philippi we are told of his military successes so that the battle constitutes a *peripéteia* or turning-point, which goes along with Brutus' recognition (*anagnórisis*) of his failure and guilt. Following Brutus' career we pity his misfortunes, we are on his side when reading about his quarrels with his evil friends (286-88), we share his fears when he encounters his "evil spirit" (289).[13]

I would like to suggest that it was mainly from this text that Shakespeare learned about the Greek conception both of personal tragedy and of the main dramaturgical possibilities of the tragic genre. He may also have taken from Plutarch two features which ancient Greek tragedies do not necessarily possess. One of them concerns the ethical quality of the hero's tragic mistake. Aristotle contends that the best kind of tragic plot is one in which the hero commits a deed without at first realizing how terrible it is, like Sophocles' Oedipus, who later learns that he has killed his own father (1454a). Unlike Oedipus, however, who has killed his father inadvertently, Plutarch's Brutus knows he is killing a friend. It is only later, however, that he realizes that his decision to kill Caesar was based on an error of judgment.[14] Similarly, Hamlet, Othello, Lear and Macbeth know they are killing, or rejecting, a person close to them, and only realize later that they should not have done so. The reason why Brutus (in Plutarch *and* Shakespeare) allows his friends to persuade him to kill Caesar, in spite of his better judgment, is obviously rooted in his friendliness and nobility, i.e. in his character. As with Shakespeare's later heroes of tragedy, his good qualities are commingled with a tragic flaw which leads to a fatal error.

The other innovative feature which Shakespeare may have taken from Plutarch's "Brutus" is the dramaturgical one of controlling the readers'/audiences' sympathies. In Sophocles' *King Oedipus*, this king is decidedly unlikeable for most of the play. It is only after his recognition of his tragic mistakes that we pity him. In his "Life of Brutus," by contrast, Plutarch from the beginning presents Brutus as an admirable person whose fortunes we sympathize with, no matter which mistakes he will make in his subsequent career. In this he becomes the prototype of the Shakespearean type of tragic hero, which will recur in *Hamlet, Othello, Lear* and *Macbeth*. We not only fear for and pity these heroes, we also sympathize with them, no matter how absurd their errors of judgment (*Othello*) or how heinous their crimes (*Macbeth*) may be.[15] With the deaths of these heroes we are finally released from our contradictory feelings, and may perhaps experience an Aristotelian *kátharsis.* Far from liberating himself from generic fetters, Shakespeare used Plutarch's tragic "Life of Brutus" as an inspiration to invent (or re-invent) a tragic recipe of his own, which happened to resemble the Sophoclean/Aristotelian conception of tragedy and would become constitutive for later conceptions of the tragic in post-Renaissance Europe.[16]

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NOTES

[1] As Nicholas Grene notices, "ambivalence in literature is a much cherished modern virtue, but many of the ambiguities of *Julius Caesar* Shakespeare inherited from his classical and Renaissance sources. There was no single tradition of interpreting the events leading up to and following the assassination of Caesar, no one orthodox evaluation, moral or political [...]. In Shakespeare's main source, Plutarch, the movement from Republic to Empire is regarded with very mixed feelings" (14).

[2] See also Martin Coyle's assessment: "Tragedy and its central figure, I suggest, are [...] constantly overlaid with motifs, new signs, and new values in a world where drama is reinventing itself as part of a burgeoning leisure industry and competing with other forms of popular entertainment such as bear-baiting" (24-25); as well as Burrow 5-6 and 11.

[3] Harold Bloom contends that "*Titus Andronicus* certainly derives much of its badness from Seneca" (80). Of course, *Titus Andronicus* is not a "bad" play—it may work wonderfully well in performance. Like Seneca's tragedies, however, it produces horror rather than pity and fear, i.e. those characteristics which Shakespeare's "great" tragedies share with Sophocles and ancient Greek tragedy. On *Titus Andronicus*, see Bevington 54, and Miola, who devotes a whole chapter on *Titus Andronicus* as "the most Senecan of Shakespeare's plays" (13-32).

[4] Bradley (2n) also considers Brutus the one and only "hero" of *Julius Caesar*. See also Bevington 58: "Brutus, whom traditional neo-Aristotelian criticism inevitably singles out as the play's tragic protagonist, is a man of noble and even worthy intentions whose seemingly best qualities help to undo him"; and Nevo 98-99: "It is Brutus' career in the play that follows the characteristic Shakespearean trajectory".

[5] See also Andreas Mahler's assessment: "*Julius Caesar* is Shakespeare's first 'experimental' tragedy" (182), set to deconstruct "the ancient phantasmagoria of a brotherhood of love" (183). It is certainly part of Brutus' and the audience's tragic experience that this brotherhood of love is finally found illusory.

[6] Pursuing the fetters/banquet imagery I would like to argue that the Renaissance buffet even had the Greek concept of tragedy on offer. That Shakespeare was not fettered by it can be seen from the fact that he was apparently the first English dramatist to partake of this particular dish.

[7] Cf. also Schadewaldt, "Shakespeare und die griechische Tragödie" (18) who defines character in Sophocles as a propensity to a certain fate.

[8] Colin Burrow notes that "Greek ethical thought was also part of the amalgam that made Shakespearean tragedy, even if Shakespeare, as seems likely, never read a word of Sophocles in Greek" (17), and goes on to quote an example from Plutarch's "Life of

Coriolanus." See also David Bevington, who comments on the resemblance between *Othello* and *Macbeth* and "Aristotle's definition of tragedy" (63-65).

[9] Cf. Poole, who also notices resemblances between Greek and Shakespearean tragedy, comparing, for instance, the dramatization of fear in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and *Macbeth* (15-53), and the dynamic of questions and answers in Oedipus and Hamlet (88-125). Poole does not look for influences on Shakespeare but explains the resemblances by the generic features of tragedy: "[Tragedy] embodies our most paradoxical feelings and thoughts and beliefs. It gives them flesh and blood, emotional and intellectual and spiritual substance. Through tragedy we recognize and refeel our sense of both the value and the futility of human life, of both its purposes and its emptiness" (239). Other classical scholars who comment on the similarities between ancient Greek and Shakespearean tragedy include Michael Ewans (446-51), M. S. Silk, and George Steiner (540-42). None of them, however, offers any suggestion as to how Greek notions of tragedy found their way into Shakespeare's dramatic output.

[10] Some English readers may have read one of the Latin translations published on the Continent, or even studied the original (see Harvey), but if they did, this reading does not seem to have left any major impact on English letters, at least before the eighteenth century.

[11] Greenblatt uses a different and perhaps even more pertinent image to characterize Shakespeare's eclecticism, stating that "he was a brilliant poacher—deftly entering into territory marked out by others, taking for himself what he wanted, and walking away with his prize under the keeper's nose" (152).

[12] John Harvey, who contends that Shakespeare may have known Sophocles, draws attention to the complexities of characterization, of protagonists and antagonists, in both Sophocles and Shakespeare (263). I should like to argue that these complexities are also present in Plutarch's "Life of Brutus."

[13] As Poole contends, "tragedy is founded on the relationship between sufferer and spectator" (14).

[14] Ruth Nevo draws attention to the fact that "in all the Roman plays which are derived from Plutarch 'evil' is limited to the inherent limitations of human knowledge [...]. Thus in *Julius Caesar* the catastrophe comes about not on account of vice, or depravity, or knavery, but simply through errors of judgment" (96). This indicates that the gap between *King Oedipus* and *Julius Caesar* is not that great. We may wonder if the mistakes made by Hamlet, Othello and Lear could also be described as "errors of judgment."

[15] As Bradley notes, the "spectacle" of Macbeth's "inward torment compels a horrified sympathy and awe which balance, at the least, the desire for the hero's ruin" (15).

[16] This includes Schiller, whose *Don Carlos, Maria Stuart* and *Wallenstein* clearly follow the tragic pattern inaugurated by Shakespeare; see, for example, Steck and Birkner.

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A Particular Trust:
George Herbert and Epicureanism

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This article is the first entry in a debate on "George Herbert and Nature." http://www.connotations.de/debate/george-herbert-and-nature/. If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de.

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Abstract

This article explores George Herbert's engagement with Epicureanism, and Lucretius in particular, with Donne and Bacon serving as important intermediaries. While differing on questions about divine care for the world and eternal resurrection, Lucretius and Herbert both use poetry to shape readers' views about these metaphysical questions. In his Latin and English poetry, Herbert challenges Epicurean ideas about death and *securitas*, but he also begins to develop a Christian theology of nature that can accommodate Epicurean atomism, which sets him apart from an Aristotelian mainstream and makes way for the physico-theology of later decades.

> Nay, even that school which is most accused of atheism doth most demonstrate religion; that is, the school of Leucippus and Democritus and Epicurus. For it is a thousand times more credible, that four mutable elements, and one immutable fifth essence, duly and eternally placed, need no God, than that an army of infinite small portions, or seeds unplaced, should have produced this order and beauty, without a divine marshal.
> Francis Bacon, "Of Atheism" (1610)

> And as thy house is full, so I adore
> Thy curious art in marshalling thy goods.
> George Herbert, "Providence" (1633)

This article aims to illuminate George Herbert's engagement with Epicureanism, and Lucretius in particular, with Donne and Bacon serving as important intermediaries.[1] This investigation will contribute to our exploration of Herbert's engagement with nature in the present debate in *Connotations*: while giving different answers, Lucretius and Herbert share an investment in big questions about nature and the divine, as well as a controversial conviction that these metaphysical matters are best handled poetically. What is more, in *The Country Parson* and *The Temple*, Herbert begins to develop a theology of nature that can accommodate Epicurean atomism, setting him apart from an Aristotelian mainstream and making way for the physico-theology of later decades. Recent literary criticism and intellectual historiography have set the stage for this study, as Lucretius's influence on poetry in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is becoming better understood. While the Roman poet's heterodox philosophy would not be seriously entertained in English intellectual circles until decades after Herbert's death, there was patristic Christian precedent for appropriating aspects of Lucretius's magisterial *De Rerum Natura* (*DRN*), and Renaissance poets too were capable of appreciating the *DRN* in spite of its heterodoxy. Literary criticism from the 1920s and 1930s is also relevant here, as we recollect that Lucretius was repeatedly invoked in early conversations about what constitutes "metaphysical poetry." Considering Herbert through this lens will add a new valence to his frequent use of dust imagery in *The Temple* and help us understand better his mature theology of nature.

Herbert and Nature

This essay will be joined by four other explorations of Herbert's engagement with nature: Angela Balla's "Herbert and Gerson Reconsidered: Mystical Music and the Conciliarist Strain of Natural Law in 'Providence,'" Sarah Crover's "Kinship and the River Cam: George Herbert's Anthropocentrism Reconsidered," Paul Dyck's "The Providential Rose: Herbert's Full

Cosmos and Fellowship of Creatures," and Debra Rienstra's "'I Wish I Were a Tree': George Herbert and the Metamorphoses of Devotion." Together, these essays give the lie to the idea that Herbert was so spiritual (or "puritanical") as to despise nature,[2] whether construed as the created world or human nature apart from grace.[3] They show that even in his devotional poetry, Herbert evinces a keen interest in the spiritual status of nature, asking what distinguishes us humans from nonhuman creation, what other creatures can teach us, what we might owe them, and what will be their eternal fate. Herbert also engaged throughout *The Temple* with unredeemed human nature in the form of classical learning: my essay and Rienstra's bring to light previously unremarked engagement with Ovid and Lucretius, two poets who were associated with each other in the humanist circles in which Herbert participated.[4] Tellingly, all of us consider Herbert's lengthy poem "Providence," which emerges as an especially rich resource for understanding his most mature view of nonhuman creation. The poem memorably pronounces humankind "the world's high priest"—but what does this mean? We do not all approach these questions from the same angle or reach identical conclusions, but we all agree that Herbert's treatment of "uneven nature" ("Faith," see n1) is worth a second look.

Lucretius in Herbert's England

The Roman poet Titus Lucretius Carus (c. 99-c. 55 BCE) was the most successful preserver and popularizer of the philosophy of Epicurus (341-270 BCE) through his six-book philosophical epic *De Rerum Natura* (*DRN*), usually translated *On the Nature of Things*. Epicureanism shares some ground with the popular notion of an "Epicure," in that (as Bacon put it in *The Advancement of Learning*) Epicureans "placed felicity in pleasure and made virtue [...] to be but as a servant, without which, pleasure cannot be served and attended" (137-38). But Epicureans recognized that maximizing pleasure over one's lifetime requires a good measure of virtue and moderation;

what is more, moral philosophy was only part of the picture. As Lucretius memorably captures, this sect believed (following Epicurus and Democritus before him) that the universe was composed of nothing but infinite, indivisible particles moving in a void, uncreated by any supernatural power. The "gods" are composed of more tenuous atoms than humans can see, but they are still material, and they do not concern themselves with human affairs. *Religio*, superstitious practices aiming to please the gods, are harmful and misguided, and Epicurus is to be venerated for delivering humans from *religio*'s clutches. We need not now fear death because death means annihilation, with no rewards or punishments afterward. The best life is therefore a life of ἀταραξία or *securitas*, literally "separation from cares": secure in the truth that nothing is of eternal value, humans are free to live in a way that maximizes pleasure and minimizes mental and physical pain, avoiding political ambition, and gladly relinquishing life at the end.

Even in ancient Greece and Rome, these were minority views, a situation that did not change over the ensuing centuries. The Bible famously records St. Paul's engaging the Epicureans by proclaiming that Athenians were "in all things [...] too superstitious" in terms of moral philosophy (Acts 17.22, KJV), agreeing with the sect that this was a culture still in thrall to *religio*. And in natural philosophy, Aristotle's physics with its four terrestrial elements and denial of a vacuum prevailed over Epicurean atomism from the classical period into the Renaissance. Since Lucretius's own times, Epicureans have often been caricatured as mere hedonists or atheists, though the church father Lactantius (c. 250-325), an architect of European Christendom, engaged deeply (if combatively) with Lucretius's philosophy and poetics.[5] The general historical narrative of *DRN*'s relative obscurity throughout the medieval period, followed by a spectacular Renaissance recovery, has been upheld by recent scholarship, with some more focused attention being given to English reception of the *DRN* between its first known appearance on the island in 1461 and the flowering of interest and first complete English translations in the middle of the seventeenth century.[6] These studies implicitly or explicitly challenge early twentieth-century claims that no meaningful engagement with Lucretius took place in England before the 1650s.[7]

The present exploration of Herbert and Lucretius contributes to this body of work and builds especially on the attention these scholars give to Bacon and Donne, both of whom influenced Herbert considerably. Other literary and philosophical engagements with Lucretius in Herbert's neighborhood are also worth mentioning: the first text of the *DRN* to arrive in England was commissioned and imported by a Cambridge man, John Tiptoft (1427-70), and wound up in the hands of one Jane Owen, friend to (and likely the niece of) the Welsh epigrammatist John Owen (c. 1564-1622).[8] After the publication of Dennis Lambin's widely popular Latin edition of the *DRN* (1563-70), more informed echoes and appropriations begin to crop up in English literature, including those by Edmund Spenser, George Sandys, George Puttenham, Ben Jonson, and Josuah Sylvester.[9] Besides Bacon, other thinkers to engage substantively with atomism in the first half of the seventeenth century include Henry Percy, Thomas Hariot, Robert Burton—who styled himself "Democritus Junior"—and George Herbert's brother Edward. (Lancelot Andrewes and Joseph Hall wrote of Epicureanism in the more traditional, horrified way.[10]) What is more, Herbert explicitly mentions Epicurus twice and atoms once,[11] and editors of Herbert's works occasionally note possible allusions to Lucretius; these references will be discussed below. In sum, Herbert was familiar with Epicureanism in general and Lucretius in particular, and probably not only through Donne and Bacon. Because he was so well acquainted with both men, though, their treatment of Epicureanism deserves attention here.

Donne's treatment of Epicureanism is less obviously sympathetic than Bacon's and may give a better indication of how Herbert likely related to the Latin philosopher-poet. Donne and Herbert were family friends; both were (eventually) clerics deeply invested in theology and the care of souls, and both wrote metaphysical lyric poetry. In his sermons, Donne repeatedly attacked the Epicurean notion that God is not involved in human affairs, but he found the Epicurean goal of *securitas* more congenial, claiming that a Christian version of the doctrine is licit, for "even Tertullian, in his Christian philosophy, places happiness in *rest*."[12] Donne was also interested in atomism: he owned a number of books treating the subject and was connected with natural philosophers interested in it, such as Percy and Hariot (see Hirsch 72). Donne's most famous allusion to atomism appears in his *First Anniversary* (1611), where he writes dolefully that this world "is crumbled out againe to his Atomis / 'Tis all in pieces, all cohaerance gone" (212-13). Considering these lines, Nicholas Hardy accuses Donne of creating a false dichotomy between "an atomist cosmology and its Aristotelian or biblical rival," illustrating "the gap between a genuinely Lucretian understanding of atomic interaction, and its parody" (208-09). This conflation of Donne with his speaker may not be quite fair: with "cohaerance" Donne could be nodding not only toward atomic lack of coherence (e.g. *DRN* 2.67) but also toward the repeated refrain in which Lucretius sets bounds on atomic chaos and monstrosity with his universal "alte terminus haerens" or "deeply clinging boundary stone" demarcating what can and cannot come to pass (e.g. *DRN* 1.76-77). In any case, Donne is clearly interested in atomic crumbling and its spatio-temporal limits. David A. Hirsch has traced through Donne's work a preoccupation with the atomization of the body at death and its reconstitution in the resurrection, concluding that "[i]n the atom, as in God, Donne finds a lost center, an invisible and indivisible source of immortality" (89).

To this scholarly discussion of Donne and atomism, Jessie Hock has recently added the argument that "Donne's thinking resonates with Lucretius's when he tackles the tricky question of the soul's corporeality, or the body's spirituality," partly because Lucretius "does this theorizing in a language of love," the same approach Donne takes in many of his most famous poems, such as "Air and Angels," "The Ecstacy," and "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" (98). When, in this last poem, Donne compares lovers' souls to "gold to aery thinness beat," for instance, Hock very plausibly hears *DRN* 4.727, in which Lucretius likens *simulacra* to "brattea [...] auri"—translated by A. E. Stallings as "gold to airy thinness beat" (Hock 96).

Hock's larger project is to show how early modern readers were tuned in to Lucretius's savvy use of poetry to shape hearts and minds, redeploying his techniques in the service of their own political or erotic ends, some of which (anti-war polemic, for instance) they shared with him. Hock views Donne as a "claspe" (e.g. 25, 100) linking an older Petrarchan deployment of Lucretius's poetics to the more serious engagement with his materialist philosophy on view in later authors such as Lucy Hutchinson and Margaret Cavendish.

Lucretius's poetics raise a final site of Donne's engagement with Epicureanism: the Epicurean analogy of atoms and letters of the alphabet.[13] In book 2 of the *DRN* he writes:

> Quin etiam passim nostris in versibus ipsis
> Multa elementa vides multis communia verbis,
> Cum tamen inter se versus ac verba necesse est
> Confiteare alia ex aliis constare elementis;
> [...]
> Sic aliis in rebus item communia multa
> Multarum rerum cum sint, primordia rerum
> Dissimili tamen inter se consistere summa
> Possunt; ut merito ex aliis constare feratur
> Humanum genus et fruges arbustaque laeta. (*DRN* 2.688-91, 2.695-99)
>
> Why, notice that scattered throughout these very verses
> Are many letters common to many words,
> But still you must confess, each word and verse
> Has different letters for its elements;
> [...]
> So, although various things possess a mix
> Of atoms shared by many other things,
> The constituted wholes may be unlike,
> And it is right to say that different atoms
> Make up mankind and grains and the glad orchards. (Esolen 76-77)

Donne uses this analogy of language and material reality cheekily to describe a woman in "The Anagram":

> Though all her parts be not in th'usuall place,
> She'th yet an anagram of a good face.
> If we might put letters but one way,
> In the lean dearth of words, what could we say? (15-18)

He also observes in a letter written in 1612:

> But, sir, if our letters come not in due order, and so make not a certain and concurrent chain, yet if they come as atoms, and so meet at last by any crooked and casual application, they make up and they nourish bodies of friendship. (*Life and Letters* 1: 305)

Behind Donne's wry references to Epicureanism is a certain sensitivity to the philosophy and its possibilities. With "crooked and casual," he invokes Lucretius's notorious discussion of the *clinamen* or atomic swerve that gave rise to an infinite series of worlds, unintended by any supernatural intelligence. Donne's reference ends on a positive note of coherence, order, and friendship, however, and this too is in line with Epicurean teaching on the *ratio* of the cosmos and the value of friendship.[14] In linking human *poesis*, "making (up)," with the composition of the universe, Lucretius gives Donne a valuable resource for thinking through questions of divine creation and poetic vocation that mattered a great deal both to himself and to Herbert. Indeed, more than any other feature of the *DRN*, Lucretius's metaphysical poetics align him with Donne and Herbert and distance him from Bacon.

Still, in Francis Bacon Herbert had a friend who knew the *DRN* well and was remarkably sympathetic to Epicureanism. Besides writing several letters and poems to Bacon during his time as university orator at Cambridge, Herbert helped to translate Bacon's 1605 *Advancement of Learning* into Latin (*De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum*, 1623) and wrote a beautiful Latin poem for him at his death (Drury 130-38).[15] On his side, Bacon dedicated his 1625 *Translation of Certain Psalms* to "his very good frend Mr. George Herbert" in gratitude for his help with *De Dignitate*. Notably, the *Advancement*—the text of Bacon's Herbert likely knew best—appeared during the period between 1605 and 1612 when Bacon was most "strongly inclined toward atomism" (Gillespie 251), a bent that shows in his 1612 *Essays* as well. Bacon's admiration for Lucretius is nowhere more evident in *The Advancement* than when he translates the famous opening of *DRN* 2 on his most cherished conviction:

> Of knowledge there is no sacietie, but satisfaction and appetite, are perpetually interchangeable; and therefore appeareth to be good in it selfe simply, without fallacie or accident. Neither is that pleasure of small efficacie, and contentment to the minde of man, which the Poet *Lucretius* describeth elegantly,
>
> *Suave mari magno, turbantibus æquora ventis: &c.*
> *It is a view of delight* (sayth he) *to stand or walke upon the shoare side, and to see a Shippe tossed with tempest upon the sea; or to bee in a fortified Tower, and to see two Battailes ioyne uppon a plaine. But it is a pleasure incomparable for the minde of man to bee settled, landed, and fortified in the certaintie of truth; and from thence to descrie and behould the errours, perturbations, labours, and wanderings up and downe of other men.* (52)

In this passage Bacon effectively maps his *instauratio* onto Lucretius's *ratio*: whatever specific physical questions remain unanswered—and Bacon and Lucretius agree that there are many—both philosophers have found the universal truth of the nature of things and moved from sea-swept ignorance to the tower of security. Besides this shared framing conviction that they have respectively found the true *ratio*, the two men also shared more specific beliefs.

This is not to say that Bacon explicitly assented to heterodox claims such as the universe's existence from eternity or annihilation of the soul at death, but much that was in the *DRN* appealed to him. At this time, he called atomism a "necessity plainly inevitable" (Gillespie 251), for instance, though he later rejected the theory. He took a sympathetic view of the Epicurean emphasis on what might now be called wellness, as well as the willing relinquishment of life when it becomes a burden. He appreciated Lucretius's preference for sensory perception as the most trustworthy basis for the acquisition of knowledge, over and against the more cogitative methods favored by the majority in their respective ages. He even liked Lucretius's view of the gods to a point; the idea that gods are beyond human pettiness and that superstition is harmful resonates in many ways with Bacon's Calvinist upbringing.[16] Lastly, as I will discuss below, Lucretius and Epicureanism informed Bacon's understanding of nature and providence, in ways that shaped Herbert's understanding of these things as well.

Unlike Lucretius's, Bacon's cosmos points to God: he famously argued in his 1612 essay "Of Atheism" that "God never wrought Miracle, to convince Atheism, because his Ordinary Works convince it" (90). His natural philosophy, however, is more Epicurean than Aristotelian. He denies that any of God's works are truly ordinary, for atomism, the school "most accused of Atheism, doth most demonstrate Religion." He explains:

> It is a thousand times more Credible, that foure Mutable Elements, and one Immutable Fifth Essence, duly and Eternally placed, need no God; than that an Army, of Infinite small Portiouns, or Seedes unplaced, should have produced this Order, and Beauty, without a Divine Marshall. (91)

It is worth noting in passing that the contrafactual situation Bacon describes, wherein "eternally placed" matter needs no divine intervention, is the deistic view retroactively credited to Herbert's brother Edward. At this point, though, Bacon is establishing that Epicureans of all people need providence to explain what happens in nature. Bacon returns to this point in the expanded *De Dignitate*, where he compares God's use of nature to that of a canny Machiavellian who "can use the service of other men to his owne ends and desires; and yet never acquaint them with his purpose" (166). So, too, Bacon argues,

> the wisdome of God shines more wonderfully, when Nature intends one thing, and *Providence* draws forth another; then if the Characters of *Divine Providence* were imprest upon every particular habitude and motion of Nature. Surely *Aristotle* after he had swelled up Nature with *Finall Causes* [...] *had no further need of God:* but [...] those Philosophers which were most exercised in contriving those

> Atomes, found no end and issue of their travaile, untill they had resolved all at last into *God,* and *Providence.* (166-67)

Bacon seems to hold that Lucretius (at least) believed in providence: in *Wisdom of the Ancients*, he translates Lucretius's *fortuna gubernans* in *DRN* 5.107 as "guiding providence" (64-65), giving a Christian tone to Lucretius's less directed hope that the world not crumble to atoms in his own lifetime. This may be a mischaracterization of Lucretius, but the idea of a chaotic and crumbling nature held together by providence resonates strongly with Herbert's mature views, as we shall see.

In sum, apart from any direct knowledge of the *DRN* gained during his education, Herbert had a model of a poet/priest's engagement with Epicureanism in Donne, and he spent considerable time with the work of Bacon, who knew the *DRN* and Epicureanism well and who evinces great appreciation for the philosophy, especially as expounded by Lucretius. Noting this appreciation, C. T. Harrison wrote that Bacon's Epicurean bent "was ignored by his contemporaries" (4). More likely, a perceptive reader and translator such as Herbert noticed but declined to respond directly, preferring (like Donne, and Lucretius himself) to work out his own philosophy of God and nature poetically. The question then becomes: to what extent did Herbert share Bacon's Epicurean sympathies? While there are obvious discordances between Herbert's devotional poetry and the anti-religious *DRN*, several points of harmony suggest themselves as well. All told, the engagement with the scandalous pagan philosophy of Epicureanism in Herbert's Latin poetry and even *The Temple* may surprise many of Herbert's readers.

Herbert's Engagement with Lucretius's Epicureanism

For the remainder of this article, I will consider several places where Herbert's works resonate with Epicureanism as expounded in the *DRN*, bearing in mind that Herbert received Epicurean philosophy through Bacon and Donne as well. These resonances comprise specific echoes as well as more diffuse thematic resemblances; together, they build up a case that the *DRN* is among Herbert's influences, even if it is not the most pervasive or visible influence. As mentioned above, Herbert makes two explicit references to Epicurus and one to atoms, and editors have noted a handful of allusions to Lucretius in his Latin poems. I argue that Lucretius also turns up in *The Temple*, both in Herbert's general use of poetry to convey his metaphysics, and in particular key terms such as "rest," "sweet," and (above all) "dust." Like *Advancement*-era Bacon, Herbert is critical of Aristotelian philosophy, and his treatment of material reality is increasingly consistent with atomism. And like Donne, Herbert answers the existential threat posed by atomism and mortalism with Christian hope in divine power and providence.

1. Metaphysical Poetics

Lucretius's name appears often in the literary-critical discussions of the 1920s and 1930s aiming to define "metaphysical poetry," largely because of George Santayana's influential 1910 *Three Philosophical Poets: Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe*. In the introduction to his popular 1921 anthology *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century*, for instance, Herbert Grierson distinguishes his metaphysical lyrics from "metaphysical poetry, in the full sense of the term," which "like that of the *Divina Commedia*, the *De Natura Rerum*, perhaps Goethe's *Faust*, has been inspired by a philosophical conception of the universe and the rôle assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence" (xiii, qtd. in Cutrofello 78-79). Four years later, T. S. Eliot clapped back in a lecture series given at Cambridge that it would be misguided to "identify 'metaphysical' with 'philosophical' and limit 'philosophical' to those poets who have given expression to a system or some view of the universe," though he concedes that such an approach would limit "metaphysical poets" to Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe.

For Eliot, Lucretius wrote "poetical philosophy" rather than "philosophical poetry" (48-49). Apparently not everyone listened to Eliot, for in 1933 we find James Smith complaining that "Dante and Lucretius [...] have frequently been held to be very like Donne—to be, in fact, metaphysical poets *par excellence*" (223). Like Eliot, Smith insists that "Dante and Lucretius [...] wrote metaphysics in poetry, rather than metaphysical poetry" (237, 239), which was instead the province of Herbert, Marvell, and Donne. Whether because of the success of Eliot and Smith's particular campaign or the general march of literary criticism away from these types of questions, few readers of Herbert are now in danger of viewing Herbert and Lucretius as of a piece—to the point where it bears considering why readers a hundred years ago might have made this category mistake.

Simply put, both poets were invested in philosophical questions of ontology and teleology, and both put this philosophy (unusually) in poetic form, explicitly stating their reasons for this approach in similar terms. In the *DRN*, Lucretius famously compares his philosophical system, his *ratio*, with bitter but healthful medicine; his verses are like the honey a doctor smears around the edge of a cup to trick a child into drinking it:

Sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque videtur
Tristior esse quibus non est tractate, retorque
Volgus abhorret ab hac, volui tibi suaviloquenti
Carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostrum
Et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle,
Si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere
Versibus in nostris possem, dum perspicis omnem
Naturam rerum. (*DRN* 1.943-50)

So I too, since this doctrine seems so harsh
To many who have never sampled it,
Since the mob shrinks back in horror—I have desired
To reveal our doctrine in sweet-throated song,
Touching it with the honey of the Muses,
That I might hold your mind by this device
To attend to my verse, until you grasp the entire
Nature of things. (Esolen 51)

Here for comparison are the opening lines of Herbert's "The Church Porch":

> Thou, whose sweet youth and early hopes inhance
> Thy rate and price, and mark thee for a treasure,
> Hearken unto a Verser, who may chance
> Ryme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure:
>   A verse may finde him, who a sermon flies,
>   And turn delight into a sacrifice. (1-6)

It could be that Herbert hit on this strategy independently, but now that Jessie Hock has shown how well-known Lucretius's persuasive poetics were in early modern Europe, it seems likely that Herbert is harkening to the verser of the *DRN* here, picking up the second-person address ("tibi") and touting of his own verses ("nostris versibus") as well as themes of sweetness ("suaviloquenti, dulci [...] melle"), youth ("pueris" 1.936, "puerorum aetas inprovida" 1.939), and baiting ("ludificitur" 1.939, "decepta" 1.941), from the Latin passage. He also invokes the Epicurean ideal of "pleasure," an ideal he mentions explicitly nine stanzas later when his speaker admits that lust, wine, and avarice offer certain rewards while swearing offers none: "Were I an *Epicure*," he quips, "I could bate swearing" (60). Herbert is not an "Epicure," but he seems willing to use Lucretius's strategy to pull his readers in a different direction, toward a "sacrifice" rather than a *ratio*. Rather than evincing a misguided and harmful fear of the gods as Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter did for Lucretius, "sacrifice" for Herbert means the surrender of one's self to a God whose own self-sacrifice has put an end to death.

2. Death

Appropriately, editors have found Lucretian terminology in Herbert's blustering "Triumphus Mortis," "Death's Triumph."[17] "Triumphus Mortis" is one of two climactic poems near the end of *Lucus* (*Sacred Grove*), a loosely unified poem sequence which dramatizes the transformation of stony, unregenerate man into living flesh and points to the similar concerns of "The Church" (Freis, Freis, and Miller, Introduction xix-xxiv). These two poems—"Triumphus Mortis" and "Triumphus Christiani. In Mortem"—can be read as a point-counterpoint attack on mortalism, similar to the denser treatment this subject receives in Donne's "Death Be Not Proud" as well as Herbert's own "Death." Death is the speaker in "Triumphus Mortis," which is written in unrhymed dactylic hexameter like the *DRN*; also like the *DRN*, the poem contains strident anti-war polemic. Death vaunts his power over humankind through war, the "tree of death" in the sacred grove of *Lucus*. Editors name Lucretius in glossing Herbert's account of the emergence of this "tree": Herbert describes ancient humans as living in oaks and then caves, "quercus habitare feruntur / Prisci, cresentesque [...] cavernas" ("The ancients are said to live in oaks, and then caves," 5-6), evoking Lucretius's account of human origins in book 5 of the *DRN*, "glandiferas inter curabant corpora quercus [...] nemora atque cavos montis silvasque colebant" ("they met their bodies' needs by feeding / from the acorn-copious oak [...] [and] lived in the wild woods and the mountain caves"; 5.940 and 955).[18] Then trouble appears: "Una ex arbore vitam / Glans dedit, & truncus tectum, & ramalia mortem" ("From one tree / An acorn gave life, the trunk gave a dwelling, and the branches gave death"; "Triumphus Mortis" 7-8). With these references to oak trees and acorns, Herbert not only echoes Lucretius's description of primal life among acorn-bearing (*glandiferans*) oak trees but also Lucretius's double use of *glans* as a bullet or cannon-ball.[19] This image of the acorn/bullet (*plumbea glans*) is a major focus in the grim poem (see 60-84): as dust rises from the dead on Death's sulphureous dinner table in hell, unprecedented amounts of carnage are made possible by the leaden "acorn," which and rattles the fragile world itself ("fragilis [...] crepant coenacula mundi," 78) and outstrips even the plague ("pestis," 80) in deadliness. The Lucretian resonance of "Triumphus Mortis" grows when we recall that Lucretius concluded the *DRN* with a lengthy and gruesome account of the plague in Athens (6.1138-

1286)—a triumph for death and yet more for Lucretius's *ratio*, as the dying Athenians finally relinquish *religio*.

Herbert's redeployment of the *DRN* in his own treatment of death is complex. On the one hand, the two poets are diametrically opposed on mortalism, with Lucretius insisting in *DRN* 3 that immortal death ("mors [...] immortalis," 3.869) will have the last word, for death is the irreversible annihilation of our entire being. Herbert instead answers death's vaunting tersely and triumphantly with "the Lamb and the Cross" (*Agnum & Crucem*, "Triumphus Christiani. In Mortem." 6). On the other hand, Herbert and Lucretius both strongly oppose the senseless violence of war; and both ultimately arrive at similar attitudes toward death. For Lucretius, death is not to be feared and should indeed be welcomed as a release from consciousness. For Herbert, death is not to be feared because it is not what Lucretius says it is. Occupying the same place in "The Church" as "Triumphus Mortis" does in *Lucus*, Herbert's "Death" denounces an earlier view that death was an "uncouth hideous thing" (1), a view focusing on the wrong side of death and seeing only "flesh being turn'd to dust, and bones to sticks" (8). These sticks and dust are in fact "shells of fledge souls left behinde" that will "wear their new aray" at Doomsday (11, 19). In light of this knowledge, we can now "go die as sleep, and trust / Half that we have / Unto an honest faithfull grave" (21-23). For Herbert, in sum, Lucretian mortalism is what made Death so scary; now we can see Death as "fair and full of grace" thanks to "our Saviors death" (15, 13).

Closing "Death" with sleep and the peaceful image of a pillow of dust (24), Herbert introduces a theme of "rest" that arises as well in Donne's "Death Be Not Proud" and is central to his own "The Pulley." In all of these instances, Epicureanism hovers in the background, with its compelling case that eternal existence would equate to monotony and misery, and that the highest good to be sought is *securitas* in life followed by annihilation. Donne's speaker in his sonnet sounds Epicurean in telling Death, "From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be / Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow" (5-6), but he ends with a flat renunciation of Lucretius's *mors immortalis*: "Death thou shalt die" (14). In the sermon quoted above, Donne goes yet further, explicitly locating the Epicurean ideal of *securitas* not in a "short sleep" before an eternal waking but in the Christian's everlasting rest itself. Donne recognized with Lucretius that there is something good in the human desire for rest, but where Lucretius harnesses this desire to promote mortalism, Donne harnesses it to promote Christian devotion. Herbert too attacks the Epicurean version of *securitas* while acknowledging rest as a good human desire, in "The Pulley." In creating humans, the speaker says, God bestowed every gift except for rest, explaining that if he were to

> Bestow this jewell also upon my creature,
> He would adore my gifts in stead of me,
> And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
> So both should losers be. (12-15)

The poem calls to mind Augustine's famous declaration, "Our heart is restless until it rests in you" (3), but Herbert emphasizes purpose rather than result, asserting that if our heart were *not* restless, we would never come to God. On its own, Augustine's pithy sentence leaves this counterfactual unexplored, allowing readers to dwell on the "after" of this scenario, a life of rest in God. Herbert ends the poem still dwelling on a prolonged "before":

> Yet let him keep the rest,
> But keep them with repining restlessness;
> Let him be rich and wearie, that at least,
> If goodnesse leade him not, yet wearinesse
> May tosse him to my breast. (16-20)

This poem seems calculated to annoy an Epicurean. To "rest in Nature, not the God of Nature" is their central aim, and repining restlessness is exactly what they want to avoid. Far from being evidence of misguided ambition as for Lucretius, weariness and affliction were for Herbert signs of grace, and rest was to be hoped for only after that journey.

3. Atomism

While Herbert relocates the Epicurean ideal of *securitas* in eternity and roundly rejects Epicurean mortalism, he still views these doctrines as worth his attention, even in *The Temple*. What is more, Herbert appears to share values with Lucretius: both authors convey their philosophy through poetry, both hate war, and both view rest as a good to be sought. In matters of natural philosophy, Herbert also appears to lean increasingly toward atomism, distancing himself from an Aristotelian majority and aligning with his friend Francis Bacon. This alignment was likely conscious on Herbert's part. Summing up Herbert's 1621 poem in honor of Bacon, "post editam ab eo Instaurationem Magnam," W. Hilton Kelliher observed that "to Herbert in this poem Bacon is—what Epicurus represented to Lucretius—the liberator of mankind from error, who freed the spirit of scientific enquiry and dispelled the Idols of the tribe" (543). I suggest that Lucretius's praise of Epicurus is an intertext rather than just an analogue for this poem, for Herbert praises Bacon's attack on the errors of old learning in terms that recall a passage from the *DRN* both men knew well from Bacon's *Instauratio Magna* itself. Herbert calls Bacon (among other laudatory epithets) the "pontiff of truth," "Lord of Induction," "scourge of sophistry," and "axe against error" (3-4, 14, 25). This last epithet, *securis errorum*, punningly calls to mind the Epicurean ideal of *securitas* in general and the opening of *DRN* 2 in particular, which we saw Bacon translated in the *Advancement of Learning*: "*Suave mari magno &c.*" There Lucretius pontificates about the sweetness of observing the wanderings ("errare," 2.10) of others, secure in the knowledge that the only thing to be sought in life is to be free from cares ("cura semota," 2.19).

Besides furnishing another possible allusion to Lucretius, Herbert's poem in praise of Bacon also highlights the extent of the agreement between the two men on the relative value of old and new learning: like Bacon, Herbert sees the Aristotelianism of medieval universities as full of errors, a view consistent with his declaration in the English "Church Militant" that Plato and Aristotle have been supplanted by Christianity, *ergo* by *amen* (see 51-56). Here I consider a related question: did Herbert follow Bacon in his mid-life preference for Epicurean atomism as a foil for Aristotle's natural philosophy? This is not Herbert's primary emphasis in superseding the Greek *ergo* with "Christ's Crosse"—but Aristotle is a particular target, and a look through *The Temple* turns up evidence that he may have come to favor Epicurus over Aristotle in matters of natural philosophy.

Herbert, in *The Temple*, appears sympathetic to two major beliefs articulated by Lucretius: the existence of elementary particles more basic than earth, air, fire, and water, and the future dissolution of human bodies as well as the world into a heap of those particles.[20] To start, in opening "Church Militant," he declares that "the smallest ant or atome knows thy power" (3). He could be using "atome" merely poetically, but it is a striking word choice that instantly conjures Epicurean philosophy, and which is not circumscribed or questioned anywhere in the poem. Herbert also questions the irreducibility of Aristotelian elements in "Temper (II)," when the speaker prays that God would remain with him "though elements change" (14); this line refers to the Epicurean doctrine that earth, air, fire, and water are composed of more basic atoms and therefore subject to change. Here, as elsewhere, Herbert is imagining the scenario described by Donne in the *First Anniversary*: that the world might "crumble [...] out againe to his Atomis" (212), into particles so small that no natural force can put them together again. Like Donne, in the face of this frightening possibility he turns to God, the only power strong enough to resurrect crumbled things.[21]

The possibility that Herbert accepts atomism looks increasingly probable when his references to dust are put in the picture.[22] Dust is one of Herbert's favorite images (see Wilcox xlii), and we have seen several references to dust already in "Death." Most of these references are drawn chiefly from the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, as in the phrase "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" in the funeral service. But dust is also an effective way to illustrate the doctrine of atoms, and Lucretius himself uses dust in this way:

> Contemplator enim, cum solis lumina cumque
> inserti fundunt radii per opaca domorum:
> multa minuta modis multis per inane videbis
> corpora misceri radiorum lumine in ipso
> [...]
> primordia rerum
> quale sit in magno iactare semper inani.
> dum taxat, rerum magnarum parva potest res
> exemplare dare et vestigia notitiai. (2.114-17, 2.121-24)
>
> Consider the rays of the sun that are always stealing
> Into the shade of a house to pour their light.
> There in the void you'll notice many and sundry
> Dust flecks that mingle among the rays themselves,
> [...]
> From this you can project how atoms are
> Constantly tossed along the gulf of space.
> If small things can provide analogies
> For greater, and set us on the trace for knowledge. (Esolen 60)

Lucretius's metaphysical imagination is on view in this conceit, as he uses the image of dust-motes endlessly fighting in a sunbeam to give readers a better grasp of atomic theory. He understood that much of the work of persuading others to accept his *ratio* was imaginative: how could the basic building blocks of the cosmos be indivisible particles too small for anyone to see? For Lucretius, the proof was in the wanton crumbling and strife on view on a larger scale everywhere, from dust motes to plagues. The end of all this, he states emphatically, will be the utter destruction of the world itself: "Multosque per annos / sustentate ruet moles at machina mundi" ("The world's vast structure, / upheld for many years, will fall to ruin"; 5.95-96).

The biblical idea that the world and its creatures are dust and will return to dust thus resonates well with Epicureanism—better, Bacon suggested, than with Aristotelian natural philosophy—and many of Herbert's references to dust can be read in this way. Herbert's dustiest poem, "Church-monuments," is a good example. Contemplating these monuments to the dead buried under them, the speaker wishes his own flesh to "take acquaintance of this heap of dust; / To which the blast of deaths incessant motion [...] / Drives all at last" (3-4, 6). "Incessant motion" tending to universal dissolution is a central tenet of Epicurean philosophy and one that the speaker wishes to understand better; and a "heap" in particular is a Lucretian image, seen in the lines above where the machine of the world will literally "run to a heap" [*ruet moles*]. Herbert continues,

> Therefore I gladly trust
>
> My bodie to this school, that it may learn
> To spell his elements, and finde his birth
> Written in dustie heraldrie and lines;
> Which dissolution sure doth best discern
> Comparing dust with dust. […] (6-10)

Here Herbert's *memento mori* is not a death's-head as in "The Collar"; instead, he imagines the process of dissolution progressed to the point where nothing is left but dust, which his own dust might do well to join in spite of the jet and marble headstones separating them. These pulverized bodies help him "spell his elements"—understand his basic building blocks, with "spell" suggesting the Epicurean analogy of elements to letters of the alphabet that so interested Donne.[23] Herbert's focus on dissolution here may in fact be directly informed by Donne's lament that the world is "crumbled out into his Atomis," based on a change he made between the Williams and Bodleian versions of "Church-monuments." The final stanza of the earlier version contained the lines:

> Flesh is but the glasse, which holds the dust
> That measures all our time; which also shall
> Be broken into dust. (20-22)

In the final version, Herbert changes this last line to "be crumbled into dust" (22, emphasis mine). "Crumbled" suggests atomic dissolution more strongly than had "broken," especially read in light of Donne's declaration of atomic crumbling and Herbert's other references to a "crumme" of dust in The Temple.24

4. Providence

As was the case with mortalism in "Triumphis Mortis" and "Death," when it comes to atomic dissolution, Herbert follows Epicureanism to a point and then departs sharply at the doctrines of God's sovereignty and care for humans, and his own attendant confidence in resurrection. Herbert's stress on these doctrines takes on more imaginative weight in the face of atomism, as Bacon explained: in an Aristotelian world with very few elements, no void and intrinsic final causes, it is easier to imagine that God might be redundant. In the chaotic world of the Epicureans, something or someone is needed to hold things together—a problem on view (Bacon and later natural theologians would point out) in their recourse to *deus ex machina* assertions such as an unprovoked atomic swerve and unexplained universal boundary stones. Herbert gives a different explanation for why the world coheres, both in the present and in eternity: providence.[25] Especially in the poems "Providence," "Faith," and "Vertue," Herbert puts into a positive, poetic form Bacon's insights about the ways an Epicurean natural philosophy necessitates a wise and powerful creator. Bacon, we will recall, asserted that the order and beauty of the world could never have been produced from atomic chaos "without a Divine Marshall" (*Essayes* 91), and further, that "The wisdome of God shines more wonderfully, when Nature intends one thing, and *Providence* draws forth another; then if the Characters of *Divine Providence* were imprest upon every particular habitude and motion of Nature" (*De Dignitate* 166). Where Bacon turned from this line of thought to other things, Herbert followed it further.

I have argued elsewhere that *The Temple* shows the influence of this last claim of Bacon's about "Characters [...] impress" on nature: over his career, Herbert moves away from an understanding of nature as a book full of signifiers, toward an understanding of nature as a household or cabinet full of things subject to divine and human use (see Calloway 99-100). Here I focus on Herbert's celebration of God's savvy "marshalling" of material reality to bring about his will independent of—perhaps in spite of—any intention woven into the fabric of nature itself. God's will is, currently, the persistence of the natural world in beauty and order, and ultimately, the eternal communion of himself with humankind despite the tendency of nature to run to seed that impressed itself so strongly on Lucretius, Bacon and Herbert.[26] In the face of this tendency, Herbert flatly declares in *The Country Parson*, the very persistence of the world is obvious proof of God's superintendence:

> For Nature, [the Parson] sees not how a house could be either built without a builder or kept in repaire without a house-keeper. He conceives not possibly, how the windes should blow so much as they can, and the sea rage so much as it can, and all things do what they can, and all, not only without dissolution of the whole, but also of any part [...] He conceives not possibly, how he that would believe a Divinity, if he had been at the Creation of all things, should lesse believe it, seeing the Preservation of all things; for Preservation is a Creation, and more, it is a continued Creation, and a creation every moment. (281)

In "Providence," the second longest poem in "The Church" and one of Herbert's later compositions, the speaker celebrates the order and beauty of the present world, following the lead of Psalm 104 in adoring "Thy curious art in marshalling thy goods" (94). Where the Psalmist devoted verses to the original creation, however, this speaker focuses on the "continued Creation" visible at every moment; he marvels at plants, insects, and other creatures great and small (including humans), culminating with an exclamation that it would be impossible to celebrate God's works enough, or even to know them all. Combining the Psalmist's confident tone of praise with a Baconian attentiveness to nature, this poem would play a role in the rise of the modern design argument through Henry More and John Ray (see Calloway 90-100).

For, while still in the celebratory vein of the Psalmist, "Providence" takes steps in the direction of a closer consideration of the "how" and "why" of creation. For example, the speaker considers the potential Bacon noticed for the divine Marshal and his creatures to be at cross-purposes, acknowledging that "all things have their will, yet none but thine" (32). He unfolds this idea:

> For either thy *command*, or thy *permission*
> Lay hands on all: they are thy *right* and *left*.
> The first puts on with speed and expedition;
> The other curbs sinnes stealing pace and theft. (33-36)

With "all things" and "all," Herbert makes clear that he does not include just the unruly human will in sin's orbit; all of creation can misbehave, and it is a testament to God's authority that lower creatures can pursue their business while unknowingly bringing about God's will. It can also be the case, though, that creatures behave unconstrainedly not out of sin but for sheer play and diversity: "To show thou art not bound, as if thy lot / Were worse then ours; sometimes thou shiftest hands," the speaker declares, "Most things move th'under-jaw; the Crocodile not. / Most things sleep lying; th' Elephant leans or stands" (137-40). This idea that the world is characterized by bounded variety, Brent Dawson has shown, is shared by Lucretius as well (see 900-01). But Lucretius and Herbert part ways regarding the reason for the bounds—the reason the world currently hangs together—and regarding the immortality of the soul.

Herbert attacks Epicurean doctrine on these matters head-on in the poems "Faith" and "Vertue." As its title suggests, "Faith" affirms a peculiarly Christian virtue and one that Lucretius would not endorse. In closing the poem, the speaker explicitly raises an Epicurean doctrine:

> What though my bodie runne to dust?
> Faith cleaves unto it, counting evr'y grain
> With an exact and particular trust,
> Reserving all for flesh again. (41-44)

This stanza reads like a direct attack on Lucretian annihilationism, perhaps addressing Lucretius himself in response to his assertion that all will "run" [*ruet*] to a heap of atoms in the end, or Donne's speaker who pronounced "all cohaerence gone" in the *First Anniversary* (213). Where Lucretius explained the world's coherence with a "deeply clinging boundary stone" ("alte terminus haerens") past which entropy may not go, Herbert imagines faith as the glue cleaving to atoms with a "particular trust"—a pun aligning Herbert with Donne in his final emphasis on resurrection as triumphant over atomic crumbling.

A final poem in which Herbert evinces bounded assent to Epicurean annihilationism is "Vertue," which opens the same way Lucretius began *DRN* 2: "Sweet." The poem's title is scientific. It is an exploration of the "virtue" or essential properties of natural things—the way things are, to paraphrase Lucretius's title—and the way natural things are in the poem is destined for dissolution. The speaker addresses various "sweet" things of the world in successive stanzas: the day, the rose, and the spring, concluding at the end of the first two stanzas, "Thou must die" (4, 8). This changes to a universalizing "all must die" in the third stanza (12); but the speaker does not end there, where Lucretius would. A final stanza proclaims:

> Only a sweet and vertuous soul,
> Like season'd timber, never gives;
> But though the whole world turn to coal,
> Then chiefly lives. (13-16)

The refrain in "Temper (II)," "Faith," and here in "Vertue" is the same: though our bodies should crumble to atoms, and the whole world be destroyed, we will persist because God wills it. In the present, the very order and beauty of creation is a clear testament to God's existence and power, but Herbert repeatedly entertains the Epicurean notion that this world is eventually destined for total dissolution. Even in that dire circumstance, though, Herbert believes that death will not have the last word. Where the Epicurean lyric poet Horace famously wrote *pulvis et umbra sumus*—we are dust and shadow—Herbert instead insists that we are dust and faith.

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NOTES

[1] I would like to thank Sarah Crover, Paul Dyck, Sidney Gottlieb, Debra Rienstra, and Catherine Freis for helpful feedback at various stages of writing. Any remaining problems with my claims are my own. Quotations from Herbert's English poems come from Helen Wilcox's Cambridge edition; quotations of his Latin are from the *George Herbert Journal* editions edited by Catherine Freis, Richard Freis, and Greg Miller.

[2] The caricature of puritans as despising nature has some truth to it; see my discussion of this in *Literature and Natural Theology*, citing U. Milo Kaufman (183). For instance, in *Husbandmans Companion* Edward Bury catches himself enjoying a garden and "checkt my self for my folly, for letting out my affection upon such poor objects, and letting them grovel so low upon the ground" (120; see Kaufman 186).

[3] Wilcox notes of Herbert's poem "Nature" that the title has "three interlinked primary meanings: the created world, human nature, and the nature of God. The first two are regarded as fallen, but redeemed by grace: 'grace fills up uneven nature' (36 Faith 32)" (155). The first two meanings are in play in this article.

[4] On Ovid and Lucretius, see Hock, e.g. 47-48. On Herbert's coteries, see Malcolmson 1-20; Miller and Miller-Blaise; and Jackson 59-80.

[5] On reductive caricatures of Epicureanism from Cicero to Donne and Bacon, see Hardy 206-11; Hardy notes that Lucretius is often passed over in historical attacks on casual atomism. On Lactantius, see Kiel 623-24, and notes. Tertullian and Augustine (the latter a noted influence on Herbert) also dealt with Epicurean doctrine: see Harrison 1. The school is now being given more of a fair shake: see for instance Austin; and Siegfried.

[6] David Butterfield argues that "Lucretius was very little known throughout the medieval period until his dramatic rediscovery in 1417" (44). On early modern reception of Lucretius, see Norbrook et al. (eds.); and Greenblatt. On reception in England before 1650, see Herford and Simpson (on Jonson) 1: 255-58; Harrison; Kargon (on Bacon) 43-

53; Hirsch; Gillespie; and Hock. Harrison, Gillespie, Hirsch, and Hock all devote attention to Donne, as does Hardy.

[7] See Gillespie, e.g. 242 and 253, challenging Harrison and Mayo.

[8] See Butterfield 51-52; Barbour et al. xx-xxi; Stevenson 378-80.

[9] See Butterfield 56; Gillespie, and Harrison.

[10] See Kargon 5-42; Harrison 5-6 and 9-10. Percy and Hariot were both involved in the Virginia Company, like the Herberts. Though both spent the years from 1606 to 1621 in the Tower of London, their ideas remained in circulation. Edward would meet Lucretius's French disciple Pierre Gassendi and write about Epicureanism in the 1640s in his *De Religione Gentilium*. I list these connections as evidence of the ideas conversed about in Herbert's circles: on these intellectual networks, see e.g. Jackson 59-80; and Miller and Miller-Blaise, especially 2 and 18-19 on Lucretius. They note that a probable conduit of Lucretian ideas to these circles was the French poet Théophile de Viau (1590-1626).

[11] I am indebted here and elsewhere in this article to *A Concordance to the Complete Writings of George Herbert*, edited by Mario DiCesare and Rigo Mignani.

[12] Donne attacks Epicureanism in *Sermons* 9: 303 and 3: 324; the quotation comes from 5:194.

[13] See Harrison 19n8; Hardy 208-09.

[14] On *ratio* and limits on chaos, see Hardy; on Epicurean teachings on friendship, see Armstrong. It is unclear whether Donne noticed the Epicurean emphasis on friendship (downplayed in the *DRN* but discernible in other sources) or coincidentally made this connection.

[15] On resonances between Herbert's poetry and Bacon's philosophy, see Balla, "Baconian Investigation." While I agree with Balla that Herbert shows sympathy with Bacon in a number of ways, I take Crover's point that Herbert does not endorse a Baconian mastery of nature.

[16] On wellness and euthanasia, see e.g. *Advancement* 100-01. Bacon's emphasis on induction needs no citation, but for evidence he recognized this method in Lucretius, see e.g. *Advancement* 31. On the gods, see e.g. *Essayes* 16-18 and 92-93, and *De Dignitate* 118. On Bacon's Calvinist leanings, see Gascoigne.

[17] All possible allusions to Lucretius noted by Herbert's editors appear in his Latin poems, probably because Lucretius himself was a celebrated Latin poet and also because Herbert's best-known English works are not as concerned with strutting his humanist learning. Besides the allusions in "Triumphus Mortis," Herbert occasionally channels Lucretius's "purple" opening lines. For instance, multiple editors have noted a reference to the opening of the *DRN*, "Aeneidum genetrix," in the opening of Herbert's *Memoriae Matris Sacrum* IX, where he addresses his mother as "Genetrix" rather than the more usual "Mater" (Drury and Moul 548; Freis, Freis, and Miller 114). The editors of the forthcoming Oxford edition of Herbert's *Works* also suggest a parallel between Herbert's "saxa [...] perculsa" (*Musae Responsoriae* 23.15) and Lucretius's "aeriae

volucris [...] perculsae" in *DRN* 1.12-13. I am grateful to Rob Whalen for this information.

[18] The editors of the forthcoming Oxford edition of Herbert's *Works* make this connection; thanks to Rob Whalen for sharing. Translations of "Triumphus Mortis" are from Freis, Freis, and Miller. Catherine Freis notes further possible support for Herbert's associating primitive humans with acorns in his letter to Robert Creighton of May 6, 1627: Herbert writes that he is "feeding on mush and acorns following our ancestors' customs" ("Ego hic pultibus vescor et glande, more majorum," *George Herbert's Latin Prose* 74-75). This translation comes from Esolen (185).

[19] Freis, Freis, and Miller xxv and 266: "Lucretius used *glans* with the sense of 'bullet': *plumbea vero glans etiam longo cursu volvenda liquescit* ('and truly a bullet of lead even melts when hurled across a great length') (6.175)."

[20] A third doctrine Herbert may take up more obliquely is Lucretius's optics, wherein sheets of ultrafine atoms stream off of objects and bombard the viewers' eyes: in "Ungratefulnesse" the speaker describes the Trinity as a doctrine we will not see "till death blow / The dust into our eyes: / For by that powder thou wilt make us see" (16-18), and in "Dooms-day" he prays that God would "Summon all the dust to rise, / Till it stirre, and rubbe the eyes" (3-4).

[21] My argument here about dissolution and reconstitution of the speaker aligns with Rienstra's treatment of Ovidian themes in "The Church" in that both trace an arc of fragmentation and loss of identity followed by rebirth; Herbert's *Lucus* follows this same arc and also uses the figure of trees central to Rienstra's reading.

[22] See also Lang-Graumann, on Herbert and the motif of the "Allerkleinste."

[23] On the Lucretian and Platonic references in Herbert's phrase, see Lang-Graumann 165-76. I am grateful to the editors of *Connotations* for this reference.

[24] See "Longing" 41; "The Temper (I)" 14.

[25] Here my consideration of providence dovetails with Balla's reading of "Providence" as a poem exploring natural law, and also with Dyck's treatment of plenitude in "Providence." If, as Dyck points out, "Herbert cannot be consoled by a philosophy of cosmic fullness" because fullness without kindness "turns to exclusion," a Lucretian cosmos can paradoxically be more hopeful, affording a place where (as the speaker, a "crumme of dust," hopes in "Longing") God can "interline" more into the already-full book of the world and "humble guests" can still "finde nests" (49-54; see Dyck, and Balla, "Herbert and Gerson").

[26] Cf. *Country Parson* 271: "By his sustaining power [God] preserves and actuates every thing in his being; so that the corne doth not grow by any other vertue, then by that which he continually supplyes, as the corne needs it; without which supply the corne would instantly dry up, as a river would if the fountain were stopped." I use the idiom "run to seed" because Lucretius frequently referred to atoms as *semina rerum*, "the seeds of things."

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"I Wish I Were a Tree": George Herbert and the Metamorphoses of Devotion

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Abstract

This article considers Herbert's engagement with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in order to explain the speaker's wish to turn into a tree in "Affliction (I)" and "Employment (II)". I argue that, though Ovid's presence in "The Church" is muted, it does irrupt especially at key moments of devotional crisis. Herbert "resorts" to Ovidian strategies as a subtle form of protest when the God of his poems seems most to resemble the gods in *Metamorphoses.* Further, viewing these moments through an Ovidian lens helps reveal an underlying aesthetic of transformation in the sequence and an emphasis on figuration as a devotional tool. From this point of view, the sequence as a whole becomes a kind of slow-motion metamorphosis in which the speaker—not unlike in Ovidian myth—undergoes a transformative fragmentation. For Herbert, paradoxically, this fragmentation, in which human subjectivity appears momentarily lost, enables the speaker to reach a deeper state of communion with God.

> Now I am here, what thou wilt do with me
> None of my books will show.
> I reade, and sigh, and wish I were a tree.

These words, 57 lines deep into "Affliction (I)," rank among the more startling poetic maneuvers in "The Church." A similar maneuver occurs in "Employment (II)" at line 21: "Oh that I were an Orenge-tree, / That busie plant!" Among the possible consummations devoutly to be wished, turning into a tree seems to have had its occasional appeal for Herbert. Herbert's speakers also wish to become—or, in the grammar of the poem, *do* become—flowers, stones, singing birds, springs sprung from tears—all of it standard poetic fare, perhaps. There may be any number of reasons why a poetic speaker might wish to be a tree, and I will explore some of those reasons below. However, I will argue that previously proposed explanations for the tree wishes in "Affliction (I)" and "Employment (II)" leave out an important net of reference for Herbert. The tree sprouts in "Affliction (I)" at a moment of devotional impasse, when none of our speaker's books would show what God would do with him. Momentarily stymied, for poetic instruction Herbert may have turned from his holier books to a thoroughly unholy book: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Though Ovid's presence in "The Church" is muted, it does irrupt especially at moments of devotional crisis. I propose that Herbert "resorts" to Ovidian strategies as a subtle form of protest when the God of his poems seems most to resemble the gods in *Metamorphoses*. Further, viewing certain of these moments through an Ovidian lens helps reveal an underlying aesthetic of transformation throughout the sequence, an emphasis on figuration as a devotional tool. From this point of view, the sequence as a whole becomes a kind of slow-motion metamorphosis in which the speaker—not unlike in Ovidian myth—undergoes a transformative fragmentation. For Herbert, paradoxically, this fragmentation, in which human subjectivity appears momentarily lost, enables the speaker to reach a deeper state of communion with God.

Ovid in the Early Modern Period

As all the essays in this debate on “Herbert and Nature” demonstrate, Herbert’s poems often engage thoughtfully with other texts, including texts of “scandalous pagan philosophy” (124), as Katie Calloway’s essay on Lucretius argues. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, with its scandalous behavior among gods and mortals and its ready transformations of humans, animals, plants, and gods into other things, might have been considered poor spiritual formation for early modern schoolboys, yet the text was a pillar of the early modern curriculum. According to Colin Burrow, Ovid was “drilled into schoolboys almost every day of their lives” (304) in the late Elizabethan and early Stuart periods, so George Herbert and his schoolmates at Westminster School and Trinity College could not help but have their imaginations formed at least in part by the shapeshifting gods and transforming mortals of *Metamorphoses*. While Herbert could easily read his Ovid in Latin, he would also have had available the popular 1567 translation by Arthur Golding, as well as the 1626 translation by George Sandys. Golding in particular attempts to square *Metamorphoses* with Christian virtues and a Christian-inflected ideology of created order. His 800-line introduction proves entertaining reading today, as Golding ties himself in knots trying to explain how good Christians can remain morally unscathed while reading this pagan work featuring perversions galore. The secret, based on Golding’s fourteener treatise, is to allegorize extensively, imagine that virtue is consistently rewarded and vice punished in Ovid’s tales (which is manifestly *not* the case), and remind oneself that, despite the constant boundary-crossings in Ovid, there are, in fact, clear metaphysical divisions among the categories of plants, animals, humans, and the divine.

Herbert’s Theology of Nature and Distinctions Among Orders of Being

Engaging with Ovid in a book of devotional poetry, then, entailed some challenges. A poetic moment in which a human speaker wishes to turn into a tree may not constitute an offense against Christian metaphysical divisions; however, it is important to consider the ideological insistence at the time that, although the nonhuman created world could serve to reveal God, humans were created ontologically superior to the other creatures, a distinction that must be upheld. As Keith Thomas notes in his magisterial work on humans and nature in the period:

> Wherever we look in early modern England, we find anxiety, latent or explicit, about any form of behavior which threatened to transgress the fragile boundaries between man and the animal creation. (38)

Golding's introductory gymnastics remind us that the abiding enthusiasm for Ovid's boundary-busting tales in this period jostles against prevailing ideologies that posit essential distinctions between divinity, humanity, and the other creatures. As the essays in this debate observe, Herbert himself was at least somewhat invested in expressing a theology of nature and in maintaining distinctions between ontological categories as part of that theology—and *how* he parsed those distinctions has inspired our collective analysis. Herbert's apparent overall assent to this principle of essential distinctions between God and humans and between humans and the other creatures makes the Ovidian tree moments even more curious.

As a telling example of Herbert's latent theology of nature and his understanding of essential distinctions among orders of being, each of the essays in the current debate focuses to some extent on the poem "Providence." "Providence" maintains essential distinctions while at the same time subtly questioning a simple view of human superiority. The opening of the poem echoes Psalm 104's catalog of creation, praising at length and in conventional terms the diversity, purposefulness, and orderliness of a world in which even poisons and thorns have their place. Also conventional is the declaration of human exceptionalism, specifically because of the human capacity for language:

> Onely to Man thou hast made known thy wayes,
> And put the penne alone into his hand,
> And made him Secretarie of thy praise. (6-8)

However, as Angela Balla explains, the poem does not quite operate as a straightforward, consistent statement of Herbert's views. Instead, the poem subtly enacts a process through which the speaker's early statements of human superiority are eventually undercut. Balla argues that the "moral witness" of the creatures "provide[s] the speaker the near-moral guidance he needs to humble himself before God and his 'fellows.' As the speaker follows this guidance, he allows Providence to tune him spiritually so that he will contribute fairly, that is, justly and beautifully, to the cosmos' mystical music" (311). Balla's argument strikes me not only as a persuasive reading but also fittingly reflective of Herbert's typical strategy for constructing a poem, in which the poem itself enacts a process of discovery. By the end of the poem, the speaker's initial self-assurance in his role as "the world's high Priest" is quietly set aside, receding into uncertainty concerning whether he can fulfill an even more tempered priestly role sufficiently. David Glimp, in his essay "Figuring Belief," posits a similar view of the poem's conclusion, noting that, by the end of the poem, the speaker does not so much speak on behalf of other creatures as receive their guidance in order to "augment" his own praise:

> All things that are, though they have sev'rall wayes,
> Yet in their being joyn with one advise
> To honour thee: and so I give thee praise
> In all my other hymnes, but in this twice. (145-48)

Thus, Glimp writes, "[d]evotion originates not with mankind, but with the advice of the created world" (126).[1] This observation corresponds to Balla's contention that Herbert derived from Gerson a conviction that creatures provide a "moral witness" to the rational—but flawed—speaker.

Similarly, the poem "Man" begins by declaring human superiority and then subtly undercuts it. The poem at first rehearses the conventional idea that all creation is intended to serve humans, from humble herbs to highest stars. Humans are the pinnacle as well as microcosm of all creation: "Man is ev'ry thing, / And more." As both Paul Dyck and Sarah Crover show, however, this arrogance is contextualized by a relationship of kinship that entails human stewardship and care toward nonhuman creation. I would suggest that "Man," too, enacts its own questioning of human arrogance. Stanza 2 initially declares human superiority, but then coyly leaves some doubt: "[Man] is a tree, yet bears no fruit; / A beast, yet is, or should be more." The "should be" in line 9 echoes the "Or can be" slipped into line 5. Intriguingly, Herbert altered line 8 from the Williams manuscript, which reads "He is a tree, yet bears *more* fruit" (emphasis added). This alteration deepens the doubt about human superiority subtly present in the poem's triumphant opening gestures, and this slight fissure in the edifice of superiority gets cracked open a little wider in the poem's last two stanzas. "More servants wait on Man, / Then he'l take notice of," declare lines 43-44, hinting that human superiority is not automatic. It can be taken for granted and thereby squandered. Thus, the palace of Man needs God to dwell in it, lest Man become mere witless arrogance.

A Pedagogy of Figures?

If nonhuman creatures can chasten human superiority, might Herbert's tree-wishes constitute a pedagogy of figures? Indeed, this is one theory that has been posited to explain why Herbert might wish to be a tree: becoming more like a nonhuman creature might assist the poet in praising God better. As Dyck points out, "the characteristic Herbertian question" is "shall I write, / And not of thee?" (270; "Providence" 2-3) Insofar as the poems are efforts to praise, the creatures come into it partly because they provide assistance. In fact, Glimp's central argument in his essay is that, in poems like "Providence" and "Man," and indeed in the whole *Temple*, Herbert is deploying "meditation on the creatures," a spiritual practice thought to offer the human devotee a "set of representational resources" through which one can understand and even adjust one's sense of self before God—the creatures "teach" through metaphoric application (114). As Glimp observes—and as Balla's essay confirms—the biblical psalms and other scriptures depict the creatures as sharing both a capacity and an obligation to praise. In fact, in some ways, as writers in the period noted,[2] other creatures' praise is better than human praise because it remains uncomplicated, natural, automatic, entirely sincere. The non-human creatures exemplify a "mode of belief not routed through consciousness" (115) and are thus blessedly free of all the stormy weather that consciousness inevitably brings.

We might suppose, then, that when the speaker of "Affliction (I)" wishes to turn into a tree, this is primarily a poetic wish, a flourish of fancy, and Herbert may simply be drawing on the devotional tradition Glimp describes and acknowledging wistfully a creaturely model of unconscious praise. In reference to the orange tree in "Employment (II)," Glimp outlines this possible explanation:

> life as a tree represents a minimal version of existence, one stripped of aspiration to any kind of autonomy, distinction, or capacity for purposive self-fashioning. To want to be a tree, to "grow / To fruit or shade," is a way of giving up and letting go, an ascetic renunciation of one's will in the face of a radical incapacity either to discern God's plan or autonomously to assemble a viable life. (116)

To be a tree, in other words, is to sink into that uncompromised praise of God to which Herbert's poems persistently aspire, and which is persistently complicated by the vagaries of life and devotion. Herbert therefore may simply be bolstering his own faltering human praise of God throughout "The Church" by drawing on images of trees, flowers, birds, and even stones to create "an augmented revenue stream of praise, human giddiness notwithstanding" (Glimp 131). Glimp thus proposes that ultimately the poems themselves *become* creatures, capable of offering praise absent the writer and therefore free of the human heart's waverings.

While this is a convincing and elegant argument to explain many of Herbert's images, I would note that, in the moments of arboreal wishing in "Affliction (I)" and "Employment (II)," the speaker is not wondering, "Oh dear, how can I praise thee better, O God?"[3] He is, instead, thoroughly cross-biased by the mysteries of suffering, the puzzling sense that God is tormenting him for no discernible reason. He is crying out: "Why is God hurting me?" Nor does the speaker, in those moments, settle comfortably into tree life and call it a day. So, the accumulation-of-praise theory is useful for explaining the purpose of many creaturely metaphors in the *Temple* as a whole, also laying the groundwork for the evocative idea of poems as creatures. But that approach does not fully explain the particular turn to tree-longing in moments of devotional impasse, nor the ambiguous resolutions of those moments.

Other Approaches to Explain Tree-Wishing

Other approaches relating to these moments add helpful nuance but also prove not entirely satisfying. Joseph Glaser suggests that the wish to be a tree in both "Affliction (I)" and "Employment (II)" is a wrong turn, a "patently false" way out of the difficulty. The desire to be "mindlessly righteous" (327) will not do, Glaser scolds. Heather Asals and others propose that in "Affliction (I)" the speaker needs to learn that he is already the tree of Psalm 1, rooted by the river of God's word (see Asals 45). Surely the scriptures are full of spiritually significant trees, but neither of the Herbert passages in question constitutes merely a wish for serenity in the word of God; instead, they are focused on an escape from suffering. Nor do these moments settle into resignation to God's benevolent pruning process, as we see in "Paradise" or even "Affliction (V)," another poem in which the poetic lines twine around the speaker, and indeed all humans, transforming them into trees: "We are the trees, whom shaking fastens more" ("Affliction (V)," l. 20). We have reached no such settled place in "Affliction (I)" or "Employment (II)." Perhaps a more pertinent model, then, comes from the biblical Job, a figure famously representing devotional impasse. Job also ponders the advantages of tree life in Job 14:7-9 when he laments that, while a man's life is "of few dayes and full of trouble," trees at least grow back when they get chopped: "For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut downe, that it will sprout againe, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease"

(Job 14:7). However, while Job wistfully ponders the advantages of botanical regeneration, he does not quite wish to become a tree. Instead, his focus remains on the distinction between the fortunate tree and the unfortunate human, helplessly unregenerative against the whims of an inscrutable God.[4]

Ovidian Patterns of Encounter and Devotional Impasse

Job comes close, but the question remains: in these moments of devotional impasse, why would Herbert's speaker long not merely to be *like* a tree in some salutary way, but to turn *into* a tree? Dwelling in kinship with creatures, receiving the devotional example of the creatures—this is not quite equivalent to poetically rejecting human distinctiveness from other creatures. What purpose is served by this poetic choice? In order to find a more persuasive, underlying dynamic for the tree moments in "Affliction (I)" and "Employment (II)" and other similar moments in "The Church," we need to consider figuration itself. In his tree-moments especially, Herbert pursues a devotional figuration something more akin to transformative fragmentation. To understand how this might work, we must reach beyond the bounds of Christian texts and theology and consult that master of poetic transformations: Ovid.

As Leonard Barkan writes about Ovid's poetic strategy, "metamorphosis simultaneously justifies belief in rigid categories of experience and demonstrates the sometimes glorious, sometimes terrifying occasions when the categories dissolve" (58). Herbert's poems present theological distinctions existing in useful paradox with poetic dissolutions, and further, in depicting moments of intense experience, particularly suffering, Herbert sometimes sets aside even the Bible (even the book of Job) and engages in Ovidian-style dissolutions. I would suggest that, when the God of his poems seems most to resemble the gods in *Metamorphoses*—capricious, tormenting, apparently indifferent to human suffering—Herbert "resorts" to Ovidian strategies as a subtle form of protest. In Ovid's stories of encounter between gods and mortals, we notice a number of disconcerting—and instructive—patterns. The gods interfere with mortals sometimes to punish them for an outrageous offense such as cannibalism or incest or narcissism—Golding was right that sometimes offense *is* punished in Ovid. On other occasions, as with Arachne, the gods transform humans because the humans have recklessly challenged the gods' superiority in some endeavor. Poor Actaeon models another option: he was merely in the wrong place at the right time, with the understandable audacity to peek at a naked goddess. Finally, with wearying frequency, Jove or Apollo spots a lovely young maiden and sets out to possess her, so that the encounter is motivated by nothing more than a god's lust and dominance. Daphne, Io, and an assortment of nymphs have done nothing to bring about their suffering except to be lovely. The searing desire of the gods pursues these human unfortunates until their humanity is dissolved and they are left as laurel trees, birds, heifers, streams. Ovid is also interested in the moment of transformation itself, sometimes slowing it down into successive frames of description, like stop-action animation. We feel around inside the terror and sometimes relief of the transformed figure as their human subjectivity dissipates. Finally, Ovid is attentive to the post-metamorphosis speech situation. Actaeon can only "groan or weep" (3.190) once he has turned to a stag. Philomela as a nightingale cannot speak, but she can sing. Echo can only echo. Overall, Ovid portrays the gods as maintaining the god-human distinction—at least in terms of power—by blurring distinctions between humans and other creatures.

If we reconsider "Affliction (I)" from an Ovidian point of view, some of the poem's elements come into better focus. The first line depicts a God in pursuit of the speaker: "When first thou didst entice to thee my heart." This is a poem about the pain of divine seduction. As in Ovid, this seduction is characterized by deception, and we see Herbert's speaker retrospectively noting that he at first "thought the service brave," but, by line 23, the month of May is over and his years with "sorrow did twist and grow." There is a sense throughout the poem that God has lured the speaker in on false terms. Those verbs in l. 23 also reverberate with Ovid's characteristic slow-motion descriptions of transformation. In fact, verbs throughout the poem, like "entwine" (l. 9), "twist and grow" (l. 23), and "entangled" (l. 41), subtly suggest that this speaker has been transforming into a botanical state from stanza 2 on. This was evidently deliberate on Herbert's part: in the *W* manuscript, line 9 reads "Thy glorious houshold-stuff did mee *bewitch* / *Into thy family*" (emphasis added). Herbert revised the poem with the word "entwine" apparently in order to retain that sense of deceptiveness but also to press the botanical metaphor. Then, in lines 25-28, we have an especially vivid depiction of transformation:

> My flesh began unto my soul in pain,
> Sicknesses cleave my bones;
> Consuming agues dwell in ev'ry vein,
> And tune my breath to grones.

As in some of Ovid's descriptions, we experience the pain of metamorphosis from the inside, with attention to the collapse of human speech into creaturely groans.[5] By line 36 of "Affliction (I)," the speaker has moved on from groans to becoming increasingly tree-like, "blown through with ev'ry storm and winde." By the time we arrive at line 57, when the speaker wishes to be a tree, we might not be so startled after all. Having read Ovid, too, we know that the crisis of divine pursuit inevitably leads to metamorphosis. At this crisis moment, while lamenting that none of his books will show what God will do with him, Herbert's speaker does not say, "So I look out the window at the garden and wish I were a tree." He says, "I *reade*, and sigh, and wish I were a tree" (emphasis added). Has the speaker picked up a different book now, a scandalously pagan one with different patterns of electric encounter between gods and mortals?

In the *Metamorphoses*, once a god's victim is fully transformed into a tree—or flower or bird—there is a kind of relief. Daphne, to take the most pertinent example, loses her humanity when she becomes a laurel. But at least the metamorphosis ends the torment of Apollo's relentless pursuit. It is striking that in Ovid mortals who, for whatever reason, catch the eye of a god have no means of escape. Once pursuit begins, they are trapped. Whatever relief might come about through metamorphosis, they are still trapped. Apollo does not love Daphne, he merely desires her, wishes to possess her. After she becomes a laurel, he still claims her as his own. She *becomes* poetry, a figure of Apollo's domain. Similarly, the tree-wish in "Affliction (I)" leads directly into the final stanza, where we do not find a pleased, settled, or trusting speaker, reveling in non-cognitive praise. Instead, we find a speaker who is still resistant and still trapped by this inscrutable God.[6] And notably still speaking. The very last lines underscore a crucial distinction between Herbert's poem and Ovid's tales: in Herbert's poem, the mortal *loves* the God. In *Metamorphoses*, mortals do not love the gods. Even Europa only gets tangled up with bull-Jove because she has been manipulated into desiring him in his bovine form. If they are wise, mortals in Ovid's world will offer sacrifices to the gods as obliged and otherwise lay low. What makes the final lines of "Affliction (I)" so searing, then, is that this speaker's post-quasi-metamorphic persistence is rooted, if you will, in a profound act of human subjectivity: love. Though the speaker is clean forgot, reduced for a glimmering poetic moment to arboreal anonymity, he still loves God, or more precisely, desires to love God, or even more precisely, does *not* desire *not* to love God: "Let me not love thee, if I love thee not."

To bring us to the orange-tree moment in "Employment (II)," we work through a somewhat different devotional impasse. In both "Employment" poems, the speaker is in a dark mood, frustrated by his own apparent uselessness. "Employment (I)" begins with the wish to be like a flower that at least would bloom before it dies. However, the speaker laments that he is neither a flower, nor the bee evoked in line 18, but only a weed. The poem concludes with the thought that a weed can become a reed and thus join a consort, a thought Herbert may be drawing from the Ovidian story of Pan and Syrinx. In this tale, parallel to the Apollo/Daphne myth, Pan pursues the nymph Syrinx. To escape Pan's pursuit, Syrinx is turned into reeds, out of which Pan makes a pipe. Similarly, in "Employment (I)" the desired metamorphoses are presented as potential compensations for divine ill treatment. The poem ends with the speaker resolved into reed-metamorphosis, but unresolved in the desire for a meaningful quasi-speech act, a strain in the consort—even while the poem itself, of course, becomes a strain, perhaps in both the musical and effortful senses of that word. By the time we reach "Employment (II)," the mood is darker, the frustration more extreme. Man is a "quick coal / Of mortall fire" (ll. 6-7), the speaker notes, easily reduced to ashes without careful tending. "Life is a businesse, not good cheer; / Ever in warres" (ll. 16-17), he goes on, sounding a bit like Hamlet in his "thousand natural shocks" mood (3.1.63). In the *W* manuscript, the poem takes a sharp turn at line 20 and the speaker wishes to be a "laden" bee, dropping blessings on men. The orange-tree wish is the revision, the on-second-thought version. An orange tree is a "busie plant," the speaker notes, and thus he would always be laden with "fruit for him that dressed me" (l. 25). This time, the metamorphic wish remains in the subjunctive mood, followed by a "but no" gesture in the final stanza. The poem ends in frustration, which Herbert intensified in revision. The *W* manuscript ends with "Thus we creep on," while the *B* version ends with "So we *freeze* on, / Untill the grave increase our cold" (emphasis added).

Ovidian Figuration and Devotion

What might be the difference between Ovid's tales, where unfortunate mortals, in the world of the story, actually do become a tree (or some other creature), and Herbert's poems, whose tree-wishes leave the speaker in an ambiguous half-state? To pursue that question, we must consider the role of figuration in both Ovid and "The Church." As Leonard Barkan observes in his reading of the Actaeon, Narcissus, and Echo sequences, the slippage between human and creature in Ovid creates a mirror state for the characters involved:

> Metamorphosis becomes a means of creating self-consciousness because it establishes a tension between identity and form, and through this tension the individual is compelled to look in the mirror. (46)

For Herbert's speakers, *figura* operates similarly. Evoking bees and coals and trees, the speaker is engaged in a "tension between identity and form" as part of a process of self-examination before God. In those shimmering moments, as the speaker appears to waver between form-states, the work of devotional transformation happens, or at least is attempted. Through figuration, the speaker seeks understanding and strives through stages for some fixed state beyond the vicissitudes of devotional effort. That figurative freezing at the end of "Employment (II)," then, is a dark version of a settled resolution that the speaker does ultimately desire. The poems in the sequence tumble on, working through a series of transformations toward some longed-for resolution. Again we can look to Barkan, this time in his reading of the horrific stories of Philomela and Myrrha: "For all its emphasis upon the blurring of clear categories, metamorphosis is as much concerned with reduction and fixity as with variability or complexity" (66). Tormented mortals, suffering either because of their own transgressive passions or someone else's, find beyond their transformative trauma a state of fixity—or at least we readers experience that fixity as Ovid's tumble of tales leaves the transformed figure and moves on to the next story. There is, perhaps, some comfort in that literary fixity, because even though the characters are left in a state of diminishment by human standards, at least there is beauty—of song or leaf or petal—and a place in a story. Herbert's poems work similarly, since even when the poem ends in tension, it still ends, and the sequence moves on. As with Keats's Grecian urn, the poems create fixity by freezing a point in a process for our meditation: a paradox that art enables.

We might accordingly think of the entire sequence of poems in "The Church" as a kind of slow-motion metamorphosis in which the speaker is, one might say, torn into figurative fragments both by the divine pursuer and his own desire, while longing for some state of fixity beyond the struggle. With that premise in mind, we can perceive the transformative process writ small in several sequences of poems throughout "The Church." The speaker finds himself in a place of suffering, works to understand that suffering through the mirroring process of figuration, and at last reaches some kind of momentary resolution or at least resignation. The long opening sequence of "The Church," for example, could be seen to follow this pattern in a more dilute way. From "The Thanksgiving" through "Easter," the speaker is not so much suffering as grappling with the agonizing question of how to reckon with Christ's passion, that strange "art of love" that the speaker struggles to "turn back on thee" in line 47 of "The Thanksgiving"—making a sly reference to Ovid's *ars amatoria*. However, as the speaker temporarily concludes in "The Reprisall," "There is no dealing with thy mighty passion" (l. 2). The poet persists in vexing this question from several angles through numerous poems, hinting along the way that the purported, more theological question may be masking the speaker's personal suffering after all ("I am all ague" in "The Sinner"; "not thriving" in "Redemption"). Finally, we reach "Easter Wings," where we witness a kind of Ovidian resolution. We are so familiar with the poem that we do not often appreciate the oddity of the speaker turning into a bird in its very form. The metamorphic process in the poem is squeezed, in both stanzas, through the narrow passage of affliction, beyond which the speaker prays to take flight, duly imped with Christ's wing, and then, like a lark ascending, to sing.[7] How delightful that, along with the speaker, the poem itself turns into a bird. After spending some time with Ovid, however, this metamorphic process comes as an altogether unsurprising outcome of an encounter with divine mystery.

Much later in "The Church," three poems just before "The Flower"—"The Search," "Grief," and "The Crosse"—grapple more directly with suffering and God's purpose. "The Crosse" gathers the concerns of "The Search" and "Grief" to depict the crux of the matter (if you will), recalling "Affliction (I)" with lines like "Taking me up to throw me down" (l. 22) and ending with the image of the speaker languishing as a weed even in Paradise, recalling that same image from "Employment (I)." Then, in "The Flower," we have the culmination of this mini-sequence with gestures at once more resigned, more weary, and more confident than Herbert's previous resolution poems.[8] Interestingly, "The Flower" turns on that paradox of mutability and fixity. Stanza 1 evokes the spring metamorphoses of flowers, and, by stanza 2, the speaker's heart *is* the flower, recovering greenness after being dead to the world underground. In stanza 3, God is portrayed as the god of sudden metamorphosis: "Killing and quickning, bringing down to hell / And up to heaven in an houre." With all this metamorphosis going on, the speaker suggests, how are we supposed to know what things actually *are*? "We say amisse, / This or that is." Things are as God declares them to be, and humans are left to puzzle about this: "Thy word is all, if we could spell." That line, of course, explodes with interpretive possibility.[9] But if we focus on the question of ontology and metamorphosis, the line serves as a kind of declaration that being is mutable and God is the ultimate definer of what a thing *is* in any given moment. Fixed ontological categories are actually contingent on God's ongoing defining will.

The next line, in response to the killings and quickenings and orthographic confusions, craves stability: "O that I once past changing were, / Fast in thy Paradise, where no flower can wither!" The speaker longs for that Ovidian moment of post-metamorphic fixity, relief after the electric encounter with a pursuing, tormenting god. At this point in Herbert's poem, it is as if we are entering the psychology of the post-metamorphic flower. What does the flower think *after* it has become a flower? In Ovid, we never know. But in truth, flowers do not actually enjoy a state of fixity. They are constantly changing, too, in fact serving as standard figures for mutability in virtually every poetic tradition. In the next section of the poem, then, lines 24-42 reflect on the mutability of an ordinary flower. That leads to the moment of resignation, tinged, as Helen Gardner notes (see

Wilcox 566-67), by a pungently paradoxical mixture of resentment and wonder:

> These are thy wonders, Lord of love,
> To make us see we are but flowers that glide.

This resignation to the beauty of changeability as a wonder constitutes an aestheticization of the vicissitudes of life. We are—we helpless flowers—beautiful. Fixity is an illusion, but as compensation we have a place in a story. And we might wonder that the line does not read, "we *are like* flowers that glide." Here the speaker and the figure are one, a humble identity of terms: "we *are but* flowers that glide" (emphasis added). The Paradise evoked in the next lines, a Paradise earlier presented (l. 23) as the place past changing, is depicted here—corrected, we might say— as a state of humility and acceptance in which to bide. *That* is Paradise. Striving through stages for some fixed state beyond the vicissitudes of devotional effort leads instead to loving the strife. The beloved strife, moreover, leaves an aesthetic remainder: the poem, the song.

Richard Lanham, in his study of eloquence in the Renaissance, notes that in Ovid's Narcissus story "the moment of metamorphosis as the moment of most intense wishing clearly allegorizes the poetic imagination and its transformational possibilities" (59). Herbert's poems are full of intense wishing, most acutely in those moments of devotional impasse when God's actions are most painful and inexplicable. It is the speaker's longing for God that makes God's Ovidian moods more painful. And thus, especially at those moments, Herbert reaches beyond biblical precedents or philosophical niceties into a wilder discourse, pushing the figurative operation of poetry to its limits. Herbert needs not only to *use* figures but to *inhabit* them. After all, Christianity is fundamentally about transformation. The center of the faith is a divinity taking on humanity—not as a temporary ploy, but eternally—in order to pursue, not dominance and possession, but a holy reconciliation with creatures. The Christian, in response, hopes to undergo a metamorphosis, through conversion and sanctification, which leads to one being, like Christ, "raised imperishable."

Thus, the crisis of divine pursuit inevitably leads to a searing metamorphosis in the Christian universe, too. This conviction renders the poetic figure not merely decorative or instructive but indeed revelatory, a reflection of a true and harrowing mutability. The distinctions break down, the human subject diminishes into fragments as the figures multiply through the tumble of poems. Yet in this case—by grace, Herbert would say—the process leads not to final diminishment but to communion. The state of fixity reached at last, beyond the fragmenting transformations, is one in which "all things [are] more ours by being his," as "The Holdfast" professes (l. 12), and in which a restless soul can at last surrender, sit, and eat. Along the way, the pain of transformation leaves its traces in song, art, beauty. Thus, Herbert's poetic fragmenting into a tree—or flower or bird—is precisely the kind of shaping fantasy that grows to great constancy, strange and admirable.

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NOTES

[1] Helen Wilcox, in her edition of Herbert's English poems, summarizes the critical debate on why the last two stanzas of the poem seem to be either two drafts or an intentional doubling of ideas (see 415-16).

[2] Glimp mentions, for example, Godfrey Goodman's 1622 pamphlet, *The Creatures Praysing God* (see 119-20).

[3] Perhaps a point of interesting comparison: In "Gratefulnesse," the poem in which Herbert most pointedly asks this very question—how can I praise God better?—no such Ovidian metamorphosis takes place.

[4] I am not aware of anyone who has previously noted Job 14:7-9 in connection with l. 57 of "Affliction (I)." However, Helen Wilcox in her edition does suggest that Job along with the Psalms of affliction are sources for the poem (see 160) and catalogs numerous specific references to Job elsewhere in *The Temple* (cf. 723).

[5] In fact, Herbert's several poems featuring groaning—"Sighs and Grones," "Affliction (IV)," and "Longing"—read quite poignantly when imagined as coming from Ovid's victims.

[6] For a different reading, see Leimberg. My own reading is rooted in Herbert's dependence on the sonnet tradition, in which concluding a poem in painful impasse is a common strategy. See Rienstra, "'Let Wits Contest': George Herbert and the English Sonnet Sequence."

[7] The subjunctive mood in "Easter Wings" turns to indicative in "The Banquet." In that later poem, we see the transformation of the speaker realized through another metamorphic phenomenon: the Eucharist. God, in merciful condescension, transforms into the elements (ll. 22-35). The speaker welcomes the familiar sweetness of the wine and bread and is enabled to rise up to God: "Wine becomes a wing at last" (42). The poem "sweetly" figures Calvin's view of the Eucharist—in which partakers are raised into the real presence of Christ.

[8] For a more extensive examination of Herbert's resolutions, see Rienstra, "'Mend My Rhyme': Resolutions in Psalms, Sonnets, and Herbert's 'The Church.'"

[9] Helen Wilcox, in her edition, offers a brief summary of critical commentary on this line (see 152).

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