

The End of the Age of Miracles: Substance and Accident in the English Renaissance

by John Richard Tangney

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation argues that the 'realist' ontology implicit in Renaissance allegory is both Aristotelian and neoplatonic, stemming from the need to talk about transcendence in material terms in order to make it comprehensible to fallen human intelligence. At the same time dramatists at the turn of the seventeenth century undermine 'realism' altogether, contributing to the emergence of a new meaning of 'realism' as mimesis, and with it a materialism without immanent forms. My theoretical framework is provided by Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, *Physics* and *Categories* rather than his *Poetics*, because these provide a better way of translating the concerns of postmodern critics back into premodern terms. I thus avoid reducing the religious culture of premodernity to 'ideology' or 'power' and show how premodern religion can be taken seriously as a critique of secular modernity. My conclusion from readings of Aristotle, Augustine, Hooker, Perkins, Spenser, Shakespeare, Nashe, Jonson and Tourneur is that Hell is conflated with History during the transition to modernity, that sin is revalorized as individualism, and that the translatability of terms argues for the continuing need for a concept of 'substance' in this post-Aristotelian age. I end with a reading of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, an anonymous contemplative work from the fourteenth century that was still being read in the sixteenth century, which offers an alternative model of the sovereign individual, and helps me to argue against the view that philosophical idealism is inherently totalitarian.

Dedicated to my parents

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Introduction

Focussing centrally on the period between the publication of the first three books of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in 1590 and the publication of Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* in 1611, this dissertation looks at how a premodern disposition towards 'realist' ontology, as reflected in the literary genre of allegory, begins to change into a concern with epistemology, mimesis and secular drama. Allegory is a typically medieval genre, secular drama an early modern one, while poetry, like philosophy, spans both genres and periods. I am interested in allegory and drama as representing human interiority, and in poetry as their common medium. Because interiority is mediated by signs the first chapter looks at the relationship between words and things in the sixteenth century, when they were equivalent aspects of a material universe created in time by a transcendent God. It argues that two contradictory orientations towards the materiality of signs, and the meaningfulness of objects can be detected in puritan and anglican writers respectively. One of these defines itself in continuity with the middle ages, and the other recognizes a break. One is interested in liturgy and sacraments, while the other is more oriented towards reading and preaching. The latter has affinities with early modern science, while the former exists in continuity with a premodern science that was in all respects *catholic*.

It is my contention that allegory is readable as psychomachia. In presenting the psychology of a typical rather than a particular individual, allegory also has much to say about the political state in which such an individual is constituted. The interiority that Allegory depicts is a mappable one, extended in space, and the ineffable otherness that it points towards is God. Naturalistic drama, which I treat in the third and fourth chapters, presents particular individuals as representative, in a political sense, of a greater whole,

not as microcosm to macrocosm, but as manifestations of an immanent reality with no discoverable inside or outside. The characters evince an interiority that is not spatial, but that has much in common with the metaphysical substance that is the telos of allegory. Yet the actors in a Shakespearean drama often represent themselves as having the transcendent longings of premodern Christians, while Spenserian allegory contains the seeds of post-Aristotelian secular materialism.

The fourth chapter looks at Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller*, Jonson's *The Alchemist* and Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy*. These works manifest a relation between words and things that is no longer realist but not entirely mimetic, or 'realist' in the modern sense of that word. Nashe's picaresque narrative continually subverts logical connections in favour of equivocal ones. Jonson figures language as a fungible substance, rendered opaque by the deceitful characters who use it for ill rather than for good. Tourneur's work is instructive because it is rendered incoherent by the same tensions that enabled Shakespeare. These are tensions between idealism, materialism and what I call nominalism. I qualify the term nominalism because while there is arguably a connection between the literary fictions I am writing about, and the late medieval philosophical tradition that is problematically termed 'nominalism', I am less concerned with tracing the lines of filiation than with showing that these writers are thinking about a universe made up of individuals rather than species or ideas. Aristotle subordinated the individual to the state, and modern democracy makes the state serve the individual. In both cases there is a productive and potentially destructive tension between individual and collective. Aristotle and modern democracy have in common a concern with human flourishing, but their materialism, in every sense of that term, deprives them of an ultimate meaning such as

that provided by medieval Christianity. The rise of modern science results in what is, from this religious perspective, a barren type of knowledge, one that describes the world without explaining it in terms of first and final causes. As a result of its unboundedness it lacks substance for many of its inhabitants. The loss of substance was a result of sin in premodern Christianity, and in modern epistemology is more likely to be attributed to God's absence than his anger.

Although it has often been argued that in modernity words came to be seen as transparent windows on the material world, in poetry words continue to be things that draw attention to their own being. Their irreducible materiality defeats referentiality, while poetry's subject matter, proceeding by indirection, is a *via negativa* by which the reader is invited to look for the work's substance in a non-propositional way. In the nineteenth century Matthew Arnold turned literature into a secular religion, suitable to fill the gap left by the receding sea of faith. The Anglican *via media* as explicated by Richard Hooker, in its continuities with Aristotelian Catholicism, and with its regard for sacraments based on things, is closer to my understanding of the value of literature as something accidental and therefore dispensable, but as having a relationship to substance that makes it worth paying attention to. Therefore, I read these early modern works through the *Metaphysics* rather than the *Poetics* or the *Rhetoric*.

The afterword is a reading of a fourteenth century contemplative work called *The Cloud of Unknowing*, that was circulating in England throughout the Tudor and Stuart periods. It too uses the language of substance and accident, and provides a context for the previous four chapters based on Charles Schmitt's recognition that for many fifteenth and sixteenth century writers, Protestants as well as Catholics, physics is a contemplative

science.¹ Luce Irigaray, in her reading of Descartes in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (1993), remarks that "all philosophers -except for the most recent ones? and why is this so? - have always been physicists."² I argue that the darkness of God and the darkness of material substance are identical for the contemplative, while the activist and the scientist are lost in accidents. Yet the active and contemplative lives, while distinct, are not separable, any more than form and matter or substance and accident.

For Aristotle, a *substance* is an object's intellectual essence, while *accidents* are its perceptible attributes. Within an Aristotelian paradigm one can say an infinite number of things about an object without saying what it 'is', because although a *substance* is something circumscribed, its *accidents* or attributes can multiply endlessly. In the *Metaphysics* VI.2.1026b Aristotle describes it like this: "he who produces a house does not produce all the attributes that come into being along with the house; for these are innumerable." He goes on to say that the innumerability of *accidents* is evidence that "the accidental is obviously akin to non-being"³. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* II.6.1106b he makes the same intellectual move in a slightly different form, when he says that "Evil belongs to the class of the unlimited...and good to that of the limited."⁴ The threat of sinful non-being associated with that which is innumerable, or not contained within bounds of any kind, can be seen in the uncontrollable proliferation of disease, of crowds and of violence that made the theater anathema to seventeenth century Puritans and to Augustine of Hippo before them.⁵ The relationship between sin and multiplicity can be

¹ Schmitt, 31

² Irigaray, *Ethics*, 72.

³ Aristotle. "Metaphysics." In *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon, 689-926. (New York: Random House, 1941)

⁴ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by David Ross (Oxford University Press, 1998)

⁵ Augustine, *City of God*. 46, compares the theater to a pestilence.

found in William Langland's *Piers Plowman* C.XXII.270, a medieval Catholic text that was assimilated to the Protestant canon, when Will says that "heaven hath even number and hell is withouten nombre,"⁶ in *Macbeth* when MacDonwald is described as worthy to be a rebel for that "The multiplying villainies of nature do swarm upon him"(1.2.9) or in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (II.IX.15), where Maleger's troops, representing the marks of evil on the human body, are as numberless as gnats in the Fens of Allen and as hard to kill, "for though they bodies seem, yet substance from them fades." In this last allegorical example we can see a convergence of temporal and modal *accidents* - ie. *accidents* as chance events, and *accidents* as physical or moral attributes - because these attackers, whom Arthur and Guyon encounter by chance, attacking the bulwarks of the five senses in the Castle of Alma, are also allegorical representations of the marks of evil on the human body.⁷ It may be argued that from a God's eye point of view time is a place and there is no difference between the two kinds of accident.

The question of God's existence will be pertinent to this dissertation, because in looking at realist ontology and how it translates into modern materialism in the sixteenth century I will also be concerned with the emergence of modern atheism. Yet the period covered by this dissertation ends before the emergence of 'modern' atheism, and I argue that the sixteenth century manifests a type of atheism that is unique to itself. This has to do with the continuing influence of Aristotle in England at a time when Aristotle had disturbing associations with Catholicism. Although scholars preoccupied with defining the renaissance or early modernity as a distinct period, have often emphasised the

⁶ William Langland. *Piers Plowman: The C-Text* (University of Exeter Press, 1978), 372.

⁷ Spenser, 1235, where the editor notes that "Maleger, the captain of the twelve troops besieging Alma's castle, is, as C.S. Lewis pointed out, not Original Sin but the effects of that sin on the physical body of man: pain sickness, death. His name means either 'evil-bearer'...or 'badly sick'.

importance of humanist neoplatonism, and reformation scholars the importance of patristic neoplatonism, I take it that Aristotle remains inextricable from both these strains of realist ontology. This is backed up by the work of Charles Schmidt, who points out that there were six to eight times as many Aristotelian as Platonic works published in Europe during the renaissance.⁸ He also argues that Aristotle continued to be studied in the universities until the seventeenth century. Edward J. Mahoney in a survey of forty late medieval and renaissance philosophers shows that there was widespread agreement that Plato and Aristotle were talking about the same things in different language.⁹ Although Aristotle was associated with Atheism by many sixteenth century thinkers, the emergence of a truly modern atheism had to await the eclipse of Aristotelian realism in the seventeenth century. I will begin this discussion with an iconic modern atheist who engaged in critique of the Platonic and Aristotelian knowledge traditions, and will do so in the context of recent work by early modern scholars on the relationship between words and things, whose 'early modern' orientation may have caused them to overlook the importance of Aristotle to their topic.

⁸ Schmitt, 14, "at a rough estimate, three to four thousand editions of *Aristotelica* were published between the invention of printing and the year 1600. By contrast the number of relevant editions of Plato stands at less than five hundred."

⁹ Mahoney, 10

1. Words and Things

In the *Introduction to Metaphysics* Martin Heidegger describes the Western philosophical tradition as a process of decline from the pre-Socratic apprehension of being in which *logos* and *physis*, which can loosely be equated with words and things, were not yet separate spheres of being. Heidegger glosses these terms as meaning 'gathering' and 'gatheredness,' which he says involve a kind of cohesiveness that has nothing to do with the accumulation of objects in a pre-existing space. This cohesiveness was lost when *physis* degenerated into the Platonic Idea and *logos* degenerated into the categories of Aristotelian logic. In Aristotle, the *physis* that became Ideas for Plato, is reconstituted as nature, and simultaneously a subject-verb-object logic enables him to make syllogistic assertions about it e.g. Man is a rational animal; Socrates is a man; Socrates is rational. In the new meaning of *logos* as 'assertion' and of *physis* as 'nature,' the world is divided up into objectively present 'things' coming to being in a pre-existing space, and into categories in the mind, such as species, genus, quality etc. Standing above these is the Good, an archetype that transcends things as that which they have the potential to be or fall short of. Yet the Good is outside being, and is hard to distinguish from what Aristotle called an accident. In order to ground it in its own being, the Good is made into a totality of individual instances, like a platonic Idea or an Aristotelian species. *Species* derives from *specere*. It is something that can be seen. Thus the Good is reified as part of a deracinated ethics of Christian virtue, separate from any identifiable polis. In Heidegger's mythology, this is how the Platonic Good becomes the Christian God.

Heidegger allows that a trace of pre-Socratic authenticity survives in Aristotle's

Metaphysics, in which Aristotle talks about wonder as the beginning of all philosophy. Heidegger himself places 'questioning' at the center of his metaphysics, which we might gloss as a kind of wondering in the weaker sense of asking oneself a question about the meaning of "being there" (Da-sein).¹ The emotion of wonder was rationalised by Albertus Magnus in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*,² and excised from the version of the *Metaphysics* read by nominalist philosophers who contributed to lines of thought that gave rise to the reformation and to modern rationalism,³ but wonder becomes a key concept in Shakespeare's late plays, as if in answer to the philosophical persons who "make trifles of terrors." Heidegger didn't just retrieve the question of being, but he drew attention to the relationship between poetry and philosophy. For pre-modern philosophers like Lucretius and Boethius, poetry was an appropriate vehicle for philosophy whose aim was to give a sense of the beauty of nature. Lucretius says:

So now I, since this argument seems generally too severe and forbidding to those by whom it has not been handled, and, since the multitude shrink back from it, I was desirous to set forth my chain-of-reasoning to thee, O Memmius, in sweetly speaking Pierian verse, and, as it were, to tinge it with the honey of the Muses; if perchance, by such a method I might detain the attention upon my strains, until thou lookest through the whole Nature of Things and understandest with what shape and beauty it is adorned.⁴

¹ Heidegger, 87, "Questioning is the genuine and the right and the only way of deeming worthy that which by its highest rank, holds our Dasein in its power."

² Quoted in Platt, 9, "Wonder is defined as a constriction and suspension of the heart caused by amazement at the sensible appearance of something so portentous, great and unusual, that the heart suffers a systole. Hence wonder is something like fear in its effect on the heart. This effect of wonder, then, this constriction and systole of the heart, springs from an unfulfilled but felt desire to know the cause of that which appears portentous and unusual: so it was in the beginning when men, up to that time unskilled, began to philosophize - they marvelled at certain difficulties which were as a matter of fact, fairly easy to solve....wonder is the movement of the man who does not know on his way to finding out, to get at the bottom of that at which he wonders and to determine its cause....Thus Aristotle shows in that branch of logic which is called poetic that the poet fashions his story for the purpose of exciting wonder and that further effect of wonder is to excite inquiry..., so that through wonder the cause would be looked for, and the truth discovered...To get back to the point: we define the man who wonders as one who is in suspense as to the cause the knowledge of which would make him know instead of wonder."

³ Cf. Daston and Park, Chapter 3

⁴ Lucretius, 45

Lucretius doesn't want to appear to be imposing meaning on nature, but to embody meaning in his poetry. This at once makes it palatable to the multitude who may not be receptive to intellectual beauty, and establishes poets and philosophers as a kind of aristocracy equal to their patrons.

If the purpose of philosophy is to embody as well as explain truth, then it may also be said that the connection between philosophy and poetry can be found in the place where logical coherence breaks down and materiality is foregrounded. For Heidegger poetry and philosophy are united by a concern with Nothingness.

Only poetry is of the same order as philosophical thinking, although thinking and poetry are not identical. Talk about Nothing remains forever an abomination and an absurdity for science. But aside from the philosopher, the poet can also talk about NothingIn the poetry of the poet and in the thinking of the thinker, there is always so much world space to spare that each and every thing - a tree, a mountain, a house, the call of a bird - completely loses its indifference and familiarity."⁵

In this quotation Heidegger imagines that each individual can be separated from its species and seen as an object for which there is no *specific* descriptive term. 'Nothing' is an abomination for the scientist because it signals an end to discourse, not through having found the answer to all possible questions, but through the perception of a mystery that escapes from propositional logic. A poet falls silent at the end of his work not because he has closed the circle of meaning, but because the place where the circle fails to close brings him back to the beginning, to a contemplation of his own finitude in relation to the magnitude of what he can't say. This kind of subjective sense of finitude stands in contrast to the finitude of things objectively present in the world or in the mind that a scientist catalogues or dissects.

⁵ Heidegger, 28

As we will see, there is an unnerving lack of distinction between subject and object when one tries to think ontologically rather than logically or scientifically, and this indistinction can be poetic or prosaic. On the one hand the finitude of objectively present substances exists within the infinity of the space and time in which their individual instantiations come to be and pass away, and they are mediated by the infinity of discourse that can only describe without ever defining. On the other hand the subjective experience of finitude and mortality, which is humbling, can be a painful experience of being itself. Over-zealous devotion to the source of Being and nihilistic despair of its existence are close to one another, rather than being at opposite ends of a spectrum. Negotiating an ethical path between them for Spenser and Hooker, means upholding the Aristotelian virtue of moderation, something that has remained a virtue in modern conceptions of the aesthetic. It also means the discovery of a method, or 'way through' the chaos of experience to an apprehension of Truth. Yet Aristotelian method in its recognition that truth is logically and ontologically prior to its discovery through the examination of nature, is a realist like Plato, who in the *Timaeus* writes that

Whenever the maker of an object looks to that which is always unchanging and uses a model of that kind fashioning the form and quality of his work, all that he thus accomplishes must be good; but if his eyes are set upon something that has come into existence and uses a generated model, the object thus fashioned will not be good⁶

In the *Poetics* Aristotle favours the imitation of nature, where Plato favours the imitation of God, which leads to their being associated with drama and allegory respectively by early modernists, yet the knowledge of God represented in allegory must come through the senses, and the order of nature perceived by the intellect in Aristotle can only have

⁶ Plato, *Timaeus*, 14

come originally from God. *Logos* and *Physis*, words and things, are ultimately inseparable, and realising this is the end of poetry and philosophy in every nuance of the word 'end'.

As Heidegger located the originary unity of words and things in pre-Socratic Greece, new historicism has located a version of it in the sixteenth century that constitutes the beginning of the world it is interested in. The *locus classicus* for postmodern thinking about the relationship between words and things in the renaissance is Foucault's *The Order of Things*. The second chapter describes the system of resemblances that held the premodern episteme together in an effort at finitude that never quite managed to close the circle of its own coherence. Since coherence depends on something's ability to be 'defined,' or set within limits, this lack of definition means that the episteme he describes is at once 'plethoric' and 'poverty-stricken.'

Plethoric because it is limitless. Resemblance never remains stable within itself; it can be fixed only if it refers back to another similitude, which then, in turn, refers to others; each resemblance, therefore, has value only from the accumulation of all the others, and the whole world must be explored if even the slightest of analogies is to be justified and finally take on the appearance of certainty. It is therefore a knowledge that can, and must, proceed by infinite accumulation of confirmations all dependent on one another. And for this reason, from its very foundation, this knowledge will be a thing of sand. The only possible link between elements of this knowledge is addition.⁷

In positing 'addition' as the only possible form of link between the elements of knowledge, Foucault characterises the period as one caught up in a nominalistic hell of 'individuals' that finally reduces to a single individual regarding itself in an endlessly regressing hall of distorting mirrors. It is a world devoid of meaningful difference. He imagines that to describe the relation between two objects is to add a third object to the

⁷ Foucault, *Order of Things*, 30

universe, and that to describe the relation between this and what it purports to describe is to add a fourth, and so on. The act of explanation undoes the finitude upon which the universality of an explanation depends. Foucault's sources for that essay were mainly taken from French neoplatonism, and though he refers in passing to Aristotle, he doesn't describe Aristotle's contribution to the episteme he claims to be describing, because, he implies, Aristotle belongs to the history of thought rather than to the unaccountable conditions of possibility for historical change.

Because she is focused on early modernity, Margreta De Grazia also omits Aristotle from her essay *Words as Things* (2000), where she says that "If sensible properties constitute thingness, then a word is certainly a thing. It exists either as a sound to be heard or a mark to be seen."⁸ She goes on to say that when words came to be thought of as representational in the seventeenth century, they needed to be transparent and so their materiality faded.⁹ She thus implies that the equivalence of words and things was metaphoric,¹⁰ which is to say grounded in discourse. Her project is self-consciously presentist in its orientation, starting from a new historicist recognition that our only access to the past is through discourses in the present. However, she doesn't register the fact that the equivalence between words and things was ontological, not metaphorical, in the sixteenth century. The metaphysical issue that is raised by making a distinction between metaphoric and ontological equivalencies has been summed up by Heidegger

⁸ I focus on this essay because Rayna Kalas cites it as the primary authority for her assertion of the equivalence of words and things in *Frame, Glass, Verse* (2006). DeGrazia's earlier work in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (1996) and her later work in *Hamlet Without Hamlet* (2007) do mention Aristotle, but think of him solely in terms of the form/matter distinction. She is concerned with critiquing romantic concepts of authorship and doesn't engage with many medieval sources.

⁹ De Grazia, 1 "There is a long tradition, however, of denying words the status of things. In the short essay that follows, I will suggest that this tradition begins when words are required to represent things or matter."

¹⁰ Joel Fineman, *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye*, 3, also makes this assumption.

and by Herbert McCabe in the single question: "Why is there something instead of nothing?" I will argue in subsequent chapters that this question means something different in the context of modern atheism than it meant in the context of sixteenth century Christianity, because in the first case it refers to the existence or otherwise of God, while in the latter case it is a question about the virtuousness or otherwise of a particular individual or society.

Building on de Grazia's work, in *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (2007) Rayna Kalas finds a basis for the equivalence of words and things by tracing the evolution of the term 'frame' towards its modern sense of an alienable quadrilateral placed around a work of art. She demonstrates that in the sixteenth century 'frame' referred to the immanent being of an object rather than to something that could be removed from it and that came to symbolize the instrumental reason of the modern subject. In order to give the ontology extrapolated from vernacular uses of 'frame' a pedigree, she traces its etymology back to the Anglo Saxon *framiam*, meaning 'to profit, to benefit, to advance or to make.'¹¹ Her etymological procedure is a Heideggerian strategy, and this meaning of 'frame' gives it an affinity with Heidegger's glossing of the presocratic meaning of the Greek *physis* as 'emerging sway.'¹² Her use of Heidegger implicitly connects the vernacular culture of sixteenth century England with the 'authentic' presocratic understanding of Being that Heidegger valorizes. Her book doesn't deal with the analytical vocabulary for talking about the immanent being of 'things' within the period. While not wishing to diminish the real achievement of

¹¹ Kalas, 29

¹² Martin Heidegger. *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Translated by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000),16, "*Physis*, means the emerging sway, and the enduring over which it thoroughly holds sway. This emerging, abiding sway includes both "becoming" as well as "Being" in the narrower sense of fixed continuity."

her work, I argue that this implicit lack of interest in premodern religion as anything other than a foil for Early Modernity is evidence of the same bias that inflects the work of many critics taking their lead from Foucault, who regards the specifics of pre-modern religious culture as so many oddities in a cabinet of wonders.¹³

The only work by Aristotle that Kalas mentions is the *De Anima*, which gives her the vocabulary of form and matter, but not the complementary terminology of genus and species or that of substance and accident.¹⁴ Like Gordon Teskey, whose work I will examine later, she habitually treats matter and substance as if they were synonyms. This omission is despite her citation of a usage of the term 'frame' in Thomas Wilson's 1551 Aristotelian logic book, *The Rule of Reason*, in which the terminology in question is ubiquitous. Her omission of substance and accident may derive in part from the fact that these words, taken as a pair, are not in the particular literary texts she is examining. They were not colloquial terms, being part of a subtle and complex philosophical language. However, the lack of consideration given to Aristotle may also stem from the disrepute into which metaphysics has fallen in the era of post-structuralism. Even an early-modernist like Michael Witmore, who is versed in pre-modern philosophy, omits 'substance and accident' from *The Culture of Accidents* (2001), because he is focussed on the modernity of the period. My reading of the period, by contrast, is driven by the fact that Aristotelian metaphysics suffuse the writings of Richard Hooker, the 'framer' of Anglicanism, and the logic books in both Latin and English that were studied by every

¹³ Foucault, *Order of Things*, xv: Describing the genesis of his work in a reading of a Borges story, Foucault says " In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*"

¹⁴ DeGrazia, Quilligan and Stallybrass, 5, do this also: "The form/matter relation of Aristotelian metaphysics is thereby provisionally reversed..."

university arts undergraduate. They fill the eucharistic debates that exercised English bishops from the 1530s. They also appear occasionally but prominently in the imaginative literature of England from Chaucer to Jonson and Tourneur.

By not considering Aristotle, early modernist critics show that in the equation of words and things they are interested in words rather than things, in epistemology rather than ontology, and in discourse rather than metaphysics, interests that can blind them to some of the concerns of premodern writers.¹⁵ Their analysis can be complicated by considering that the equivalence of words and things is neoplatonic in origin, but the language for talking about the physics and metaphysics of things in themselves is Aristotelian. Any attempt to address the equivalence of words and things should take into account the ways in which these philosophical traditions, which were not separate for Augustine, Aquinas or Hooker and have ceased to be separate for Heidegger, can complement one another, and are mostly inextricable from each other in the period we are examining. Therefore, I will read Augustine's *On the Teacher* to show how the equivalence of words and things, far from being an unreflecting mythos informing premodern thought, emerges dialectically from a consideration of the supposedly modern view that there is an instrumental relationship between language and matter, by means of which significance is imposed on an inchoate material realm. I then examine what Aristotelians meant by *form*, *matter*, *genus*, *species*, *substance* and *accident* in order to make the point that a thing is more than the set of physical properties that De Grazia's post-phenomenological perspective implies. I read Hooker because he is an exemplary

¹⁵ I should exempt Michael Witmore from this judgement in light of his book, *Shakespearean Metaphysics* (2008). However, while he is treating of metaphysics rather than discourse, his orientation is early modernist, and he sees Shakespeare as a kind of Spinoza avant la lettre.

syncretist representing a continuity between Catholic and Protestant traditions that continued into modernity, and to show the ways these philosophical discourses about words and things entered the lives of ordinary people through the Catholic sacrament of the eucharist and the Protestant sacraments of The Lord's Supper.¹⁶ I also look at the Ramist simplifications of Aristotelian logic that were adopted by a reformed Protestant like William Perkins. Ramism can be seen as symptomatic of a post Aristotelian materialism whose origins were complex and whose effects were pervasive in the literature that I will examine in subsequent chapters.

Augustine - *On The Teacher*

In *On the Teacher*, Augustine lays out a theory of signification that leads up to an exposition of his doctrine of illumination. Written shortly after his conversion to Christianity, and before he became intimately acquainted with scripture, it is presented in the form of a Socratic dialogue with his son Adeodatus. The dialogue proceeds by establishing certainty about propositions and then establishing certainty about an opposite proposition in order to move from these opposing certainties to change the parameters of the whole inquiry about teaching and language. He begins by asking whether the purpose of language is to teach something and whether it is possible to teach without language. The first part of the question is provisionally answered in the affirmative and the objections raised – singing and praying – are dismissed as belonging to different categories than speech. Singing doesn't count because melody is separable from the words used, and praying is excepted because God's reality is encountered without speech

¹⁶ Peter Lake, 248, argues that Hooker synthesised the opinions of fellow conformists like Whitgift, who nevertheless had in common with his puritan opponents that they were Calvinists. This reconciliation of Calvinism and Thomist Aristotelianism made him retrospectively suitable for canonization as the founder of Anglicanism by Izaak Walton in the mid seventeenth century.

in the innermost self. However words used in prayer may serve to remind or teach oneself or others of things, though obviously it is impossible to teach God anything he doesn't know. In this opening section the existence of a metalinguistic realm of self-present meaning that can be accessed in silent prayer and by melody, is invoked in passing as if it were irrelevant, though it will turn out to be the telos of the whole discussion.

The question arises whether it is possible to teach something without signs either by answering a question with an action, or when the action signified is itself a use of signs as in teaching and speaking. At first he concludes that it is not possible because of the room for mistakes about what aspect of the action is signified by the word: demonstrating the meaning of to walk as against to hasten or of walking and walking five yards would be hard to do by following a word with an action. In making this objection Augustine manifests a concern that 'things' should have a definite boundary. This part of the inquiry also raises the question of which is truly the signifier and which the signified. He notices that there is an ambiguity about whether signs always refer to something other than themselves, and concludes that some signs refer to things, some refer to other signs and of this latter group some signs are included in the category of signs to which they refer as in "Word" and "Name". "Word" signifies a word and is a word. "Conjunction" however is a word that refers to a word but is in a different category from the word it refers to. Within this taxonomy there is a hierarchy of inclusiveness from Sign to Word to Name to every particular name. Names refer to intelligible and sensible things - i.e. realities in the mind or in the world - and are the basic building block of language. By basing his theory of language on names for things, Augustine shows that, unlike Foucault, he has a fundamentally static view of human history, as a place rather than an

open-ended process, but also as a hierarchy in which universals and individuals are distinct orders of being.

The historical world's mutability places it at the bottom of the hierarchy of being. In an attempt to make his way out of the ontological basement, Augustine moves to discussing the relative importance of signs and things. Signs exist to indicate things and so things are more important than signs. However, he provisionally posits that some things are inherently bad, like filth, and in that case the sign is better than the thing, even if in the act of communication knowledge of the thing is more important than the sign. In stating that knowledge of things is more important than signs (even if not better than knowledge of the signs), he indicates that knowledge can come to us independently of signs, though it is not yet clear whether this is because knowledge of signs is knowledge of a thing. He seems to be separating a sign as a significable from a sign as a signifier. So, in answer to the initial inquiry

(a) whether anything can be taught without signs; (b) whether some signs are preferable to the things they signify; (c) whether the knowledge of things is better than the knowledge of their signs.

he establishes that

(a) nothing is taught without signs; (b) knowledge should be more precious to us than the signs by means of which we acquire it; though (c) possibly not all things which are signified are better than the signs which indicate them.

At this point in the argument, the place of language in the order of things being delineated is unclear. Therefore he adds a further inquiry as to whether these findings have been established with certainty. He now points to all that can be learned by

observation without the mediation of signs, undermining his former conclusions, and reversing the hierarchy of signs and things that has been established. He argues not only that we learn the meaning of signs from things but that knowledge of one comes to us independently of the other and they are placed together by that which transcends efficient causality:

"We learn nothing by means of these signs we call words. On the contrary, as I said, we learn the force of the word, that is the meaning which lies in the sound of the word, when we come to know the object signified.....Knowledge of words is completed by knowledge of things, and by the hearing of words not even words are learned"¹⁷

If things are there in order to reveal the meaning of signs, but signs are things, then we are momentarily presented with a proto-Foucauldian vision of a world of individual resemblances with no grounding principle, one that is both "plethoric and poverty stricken." Far from moving up the ladder of being, he has remained in the basement by moving from a consideration of signs to a consideration of things, because the two are the same.

To synthesise the poles of his dialectic, and transcend this materialism of the sign, in the last part of the dialogue Augustine distinguishes between believing and knowing. In the empirical realm we can only know that which we perceive through the senses and in every other case, such as a report of the empirical existence of an object, we believe or disbelieve. In the intelligible realm we know things a priori by the inner light of truth. Just as we are not taught sensible truths by means of words imposed on things, unless we first know the things in question by perceiving them, we are not taught intelligible truths by attaching things to them. The inner light of truth allows us to judge first whether

¹⁷ Augustine, 30-31

knowledge is possible or only belief; second, whether an ethical statement is true or false; and third whether belief or disbelief is appropriate in a particular case. In any case, nothing is learned from words, which are merely objects like any other in the sensible realm until they are matched with a sensible or intelligible object which is already known. In an act of communication between two people who both understand a reality signified, they perceive the same Truth through the inner light of reason, which is numerically one across the individuals who participate in it, rather than by individually being taught something by means of words. Their intentions, by being congruent with the will of God, become a single intention. The subject-object relationship that was implied in the first part of the treatise, which dealt with the merely empirical realm of the senses, resolves itself into a transcendent oneness of being. Music and silent prayerful contemplation, which were dismissed as irrelevant to the discussion, can be seen retrospectively as being closer to the Logos than the words that were first assumed to teach us about it. Augustine has resolved the distinction between words and things into a universe of material signs, whose physical matter evaporates in illumination as one makes contact with the Logos.

It should be emphasised again that this treatise was written when Augustine was newly converted to Christianity, and is more purely platonic and philosophical than his later thoughts about the relationship of words to things. When he wrote about the same subject in *De Doctrina Christiana* his account is conditioned by intimate knowledge of scripture and by his experience as a bishop fighting the political battles that consumed much of his life. In the later work he emphasises that most people are so fallen that they understand the relation between words and things by teaching, and don't achieve the level

of illumination that is presented now as an ideal rather than a routine situation. He also talks about language as contractual, as something agreed between humans in particular times and places for the purposes of getting their business done. One thing that is noticeable about Augustine's relationship to language as distinct from that of philosophical poets from Lucretius to Sidney, is that he is wary of the pleasures of beautiful language. He argues that God is the only thing that should be enjoyed, and that everything else is there to be used. Likewise, people are things just as words are, and should be enjoyed as the image of God. Enjoying words, people and things for their own sake is sinful. So Augustine, rather than constituting an alternative tradition to the materialist one, is a writer who is grounded in the material and the concrete, and the difference between his persona in *On the Teacher* and that in *De Doctrina Christiana* is one of emphasis.

Form and Matter

Augustine's initial assumption that you can teach by applying names to things, can be viewed as being symmetrical to the assumption, sometimes attributed to Aristotle, that form is imposed on matter. This assumption, combined with the tendency to gender form and matter as male and female, can be traced back to *De Generatione Animalium* where Aristotle says that

what the female would contribute to the semen of the male would not be semen but material for the semen to work upon. This is just what we find to be the case, for the catamenia have in their nature an affinity to the primitive matter.¹⁸

¹⁸ Aristotle. "De Generatione Animalium." This physiology was known to the sixteenth century through the apocryphal *The Problemes of Aristotle*, "The seede is the efficient beginning of the childe, as the builder is the efficient cause of the house, and therefore is not the materiall cause of the childe..." quoted in Montrose, 'Shaping Fantasies', 73

Here he makes an analogy between menstrual blood and the prime matter that is the substratum of the physical universe. He sees the male semen as something that imposes form on this matter without contributing any matter of its own. However, this is a secondary use of the terms form and matter, one that is qualified by his more expansive discussions of these key terms elsewhere in his corpus. To clarify the relationship of form and matter we can look to Book VIII of the *Metaphysics*:

those who define a house as stones, bricks, and timbers are speaking of the potential house, for these are the matter; but those who propose a receptacle to shelter chattels and living beings', ... speak of the actuality. Those who combine both of these speak of a third kind of substance, which is composed of matter and form...(VIII.2.1043a)¹⁹

The bricks are the matter and the house is the form imposed on this matter only in a manner of speaking. Just as a brick has its own inextricable form and matter, so the house once built is an individual substance with form and matter. Qua house its form and matter constitute an analytical rather than a real distinction, and the process of transition from bricks to house happens in the realm of accidents, of non being. Furthermore this discussion of the metaphysics of a house is seamlessly extended to include words and language :

If we examine we find that the syllable does not consist of the letter + juxtaposition, nor is the house bricks + juxtaposition.....For the juxtaposition or mixing does not consist of those things of which it is the juxtaposition or mixing (*Metaphysics* VIII.3.1043b)²⁰

Thus the mixing itself becomes a kind of circumscribed thing for Aristotle who thinks of the universe as being made up of things, as Augustine organized it in terms of names.

Physical forces and physical attributes are accidents that have no being outside the

¹⁹ Aristotle. "Metaphysics." In *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon, 689-926. (New York: Random House, 1941), 814.

²⁰ Aristotle. "Metaphysics.", 815.

'things' in which they inhere or which they impinge upon. The building of a house, by changing the accidents that inhere in a quantity of matter, is 'art' in the sense of craft or *techne*, but, in the *Metaphysics*, the emphasis is on the artifact rather than the artistry. Aristotle seems to think about the production of children in the womb as involving an originary act of artistic creation on the part of the male semen, though after this initial creative act form and matter grow together without any extrinsic agent taking part in the process, and this is more properly designated by the term *physis*. The development of form and matter in art (*techne*) and in nature (*physis*) takes place in time and can be designated under the term *poiesis* or 'bringing forth', but this bringing forth happens in relation to a preestablished pattern which is logically, if not empirically, first in the order of knowledge.

For Aristotle "no one makes or begets the form, but it is the individual that is made, i.e. the complex of form and matter that is generated" (*Metaphysics*, VIII.3.1043b).²¹ When we talk about form and matter we are talking about something perceived in individuals but not identical with those individuals in which they are perceived. The individual is a quantitative unit or a lump of designated matter that instantiates a form. The form can't exist independently of individuals, but it does not disappear when the individual does. Rather, through the process of generation the form remains immanent to the world: "so it remains not indeed as the self-same individual but continues its existence in something like itself - not numerically but specifically one" (*De Anima*, II.4.415b).²²

²¹ Aristotle. "Metaphysics." , 815.

²² Aristotle. "De Anima." In *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon, 533-603. (New York: Random House, 1941), 561.

Species and Genus

In order to talk about form across the individual units which instantiate it, we have to move to the concepts of species and genus i.e. from physics to logic, and from things to words. Species and genus are intellectual categories, immanent in nature, that allow us to make judgements about the objects we find in the world around us, saving us from the chaos that might ensue in a Foucauldian world made of radical individuals.

Thomas Wilson explains that

Species is a common woorde that is spoken of many, which differ only in number, as manne is spoken of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and of every propre name belongyng to any manne. As Socrates is a manne, Plato is a manne, Aristotle is a manne

Wilson tells us that the purpose of logic is to dispute well about probable matters i.e. those matters that are not given directly to the senses. However, both the builder's art and the logician's art involve putting 'things' together in artful ways to create new 'things':

This Arte is divided into two partes. The first parte standeth in framynge of thinges aptly together, and knittynge woordes for the purpose accordyngly, and in Latin is called Iudicium.

The seconde parte consisteth, in findyng out matter, and searchyng stuff, agreable to the cause, and in Latine is called Inventio.²³

He implies that framing 'things' involves knittying words together, and that knitting of words entails the framing of a 'thing' - i.e. a definition.²⁴ Wilson is interested in the intellectual essence of an object rather than in its physical accidents, and implies that the essences of an object and of an argument are equally 'definitions,' i.e. things possessing 'finitude' and therefore coherence. Objects are things found empirically in the world -

²³ Thomas Wilson. *The Rule of Reason Conteyning the Arte of Logique*. Edited by Catherine M. Dunne, (*Renaissance Editions*: San Fernando Valley State College, 1972), 9.

²⁴ Cf. Kalas, 54, "Framing defined any act of bringing matter into presence in conformity with a design or pattern. This patterning did not...imply the imposition of instrumental reason onto objective matter; rather, it demonstrated an accession to materiality"

knowledge as subject matter - while definitions are things found in the mind - knowledge as objective. We can see here the way in which subjective knowledge is knowledge of objects, and objective knowledge is knowledge possessed by a subject, and perhaps how this confusion of terminology indicates that subject and object are ultimately aspects of one substance for Aristotle as they were for Augustine.

For Wilson, whose Aristotelianism is inflected by the humanist rhetoric of Rudolf Agricola, *Iudicium* or "framing" comes before *Inventio* or "finding out matter, and searching stuff."²⁵ Although the finding out may come first in time, the knowledge of how things fit together is logically first, an order that is symmetrical with Augustine's dialectic in that the latter proceeded from the investigation of things to the Logos and realised that the Logos was first all along. The difference is that the Aristotelian dialectic is grounded in prime matter rather than transcendent substance. Yet both these ultimates are imperceptible, revealed to us by unreal accidents or by shadows. For Aristotle as for Augustine, history or mutability is the realm of individuals and lies at the bottom of the hierarchy of being.²⁶

Substance

Wilson gives us the following breakdown of the analytical composition of a substance:

Genus.	The general woorde.
Species.	The kinde, or Special.
Differentia.	The difference
Proprium.	The propertie

²⁵ McKim, 40, "Basically Wilson tried to render into English the main ideas and terms of Aristotle's *Organon* as these had been interpreted in the Renaissance. But while Wilson expounded the Aristotelian terminology: substance, accident, predicables or categories etc., there were also strong indications of the further influence of Agricola's logical theory -- especially in Wilson's treatment of the *loci*..."

²⁶ Cf. Heidegger, 84: "How are we supposed to discover the much-invoked particular, the individual trees as such, as trees - how are we supposed to be able even to look for such things as trees, unless the representation of what a tree is in general is already lighting our way in advance?"

Accidens. The thing chauncyng or cleavyng to the substaunce²⁷

Aristotelian Substance has three meanings, one corresponding to the individual composed of form and matter, another to the species and genus immanent in nature and grasped as such by the intellect, and a third to the underlying prime matter that is the principle of continuity between one substance and another into which it transforms over time, as the earth in which a seed is planted transforms into a tree. Having described the predicables listed in the table above - those things which are necessary components of every 'individual' substance - Wilson next sets forth the predicaments, or that which can contingently be said about such a substance without changing its nature. Substance itself is the first of these predicaments- e.g. John is a man - and the other nine are accidents, or things which may or may not be said about the man, but which determine the individual form in which he appears - e.g. John is a short, fat, angry man. The predicaments are Quantity, Quality, Relation, Action, Passion, When, Where, Situation and Habit.

Because for Augustine both the object and the subject of knowledge were ultimately identified with the Christian Logos, and matter lay at the bottom of the hierarchy of being, he didn't think it worthwhile to examine material objects this closely. Aristotle, by contrast, is interested in the nature of 'things,' and only secondarily in signs. However, throughout his discussion of the accidental predicaments the equivalence of words and things is implicit. This becomes clear in Wilson's translation when he says "The pithe of this woorde Habitus canne hardly bee uttred with one woorde in this our tounge, notwithstandyng it maie in mo wordes be opened for the better understandyng

²⁷ Wilson, 14

of it."²⁸ It is clear from his use of terms like 'pith' and 'opened' that a word is a thing in a way that is at once metaphorical and actual. In order to find out the meaning of a word you have to open it, using more words each of which is equally dissectable. This linguistic process of explication is closely akin to what happens when you dissect a non-verbal object, looking for its essence, and find only more accidents or surfaces. This kind of investigation allows one to describe the world scientifically but not to explain it or get any closer to its being. In this it fails to close the circle of its coherence and thus is both plethoric and poverty stricken.

Accidents

Having travelled from the physical concepts, form and matter, to the metaphysical concept of substance we find that we have not travelled in a straight line and that the immanent Substance we are describing is known to us as an individual instance of a species and genus i.e. as form and matter inextricably bound together and given to our senses through accidents. Heidegger speaks about this contradiction by saying that in looking for Being we are continually confronted with beings.²⁹ As I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, the material world can be the least substantial of things, and to the extent that we invest ourselves in it we participate in non-being. When we rely on our senses, as we must, the general turns into the particular, but efforts to understand the particular presuppose a knowledge of the general. In the absence of this kind of a priori general knowledge, the world for us would be composed only of accidents - efficient causes and physical attributes. It would be pure flux and have no real being.

²⁸ Wilson, 27

²⁹ Heidegger, 82

To briefly recapitulate the foregoing summary, prime matter or Substance subtends the flux of the material world. It is inaccessible to the senses, but accessible to the intellect, which can distinguish between substantial and accidental change. When a man gets a suntan, his accidents change but his substance does not. When a man dies and changes into the grass growing on his grave, there is a substantial change in the identity of the designated matter that was his individuality. The principle of continuity between the man and the grass is prime matter or Substance which has no single form, but takes many forms. The forms it takes, as we have seen, are given to our senses by accidents like whiteness, hardness, smoothness etc. These accidents have a borrowed being but no essence since they can't exist without inhering in some substance. Accidents in their infinite multiplicity are a kind of nothing in the final analysis, like the matter that gives body to an Augustinian sign. As with Augustine, we find the dualisms that Aristotle sets up for dialectical purposes dissolving into a monism in which there is only Substance. Form and matter are ultimately not things that interact in the way they were said to in *De Generatione Animalium*, but are functions of human knowing and doing that happen in time, and they turn out to be different facets of the same transcendent/immanent substance. Form is matter known, matter is form with the potential to be known. But for Aristotle the knower is formed of matter, and in trying to understand himself he is like a hand trying to grasp itself, a futile effort that must eventually lead either to despair of the scientific project, or back to the wonder from which the whole enterprise began. Wilson seems to be gesturing towards some such metaphor when he says that rhetoric is like a hand held open, and logic is the hand closed into a fist.³⁰

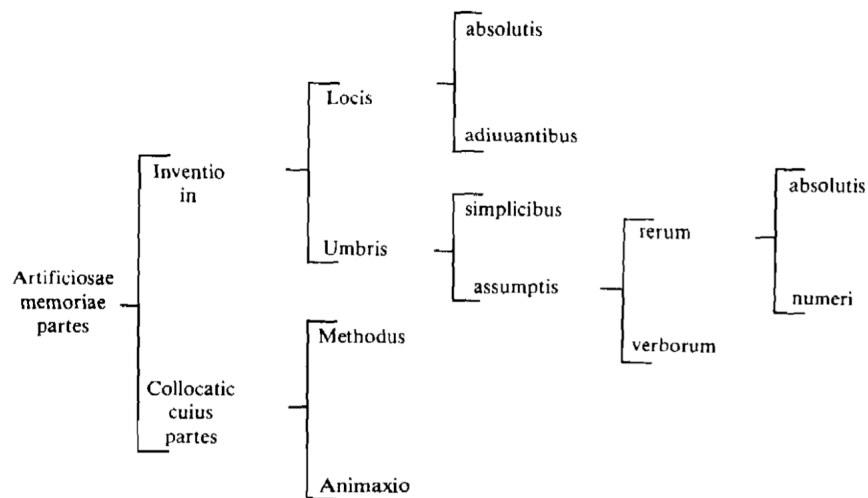
³⁰ Cf. Heidegger, 138: "What does the human inability to grasp consist in when they do hear words but do

Given the boundedness of substance as distinct from the unboundedness of accidents, it is easier to see why the word 'frame' which, as Kalas shows, began as something implying immanent being, came in the seventeenth century to have its modern sense of a border placed around a work of art. This development, which translates the invisible Aristotelian substance into a visual medium, can be seen as having a relation to the transformations of Aristotle that grew from Ramist adaptations of Aristotelian logic. As Walter Ong points out, Ramist logic was geared towards the pedagogical needs of university teachers teaching undergraduates in their early to middle teens. Ramus was translated into English in 1574 by Roland McIlmaine, from which time he challenged Aristotle's dominance in the universities there. However, Charles Schmitt has argued that Aristotle continued to flourish alongside Ramism until the seventeenth century, and later in this chapter I will read an Aristotelian and a Ramist Protestant thinker to see two different kinds of philosophical materialism that coexisted in the period when Spenser and Shakespeare were writing.

Both Ramus and Aristotle have deductive and inductive features. Aristotle as interpreted by Melanchthon thinks that teaching proceeds inductively, from that which is clearest to us, to that which is easiest to know in itself, and this is what Aristotelians call method. Ramus denies that this is a method, but sees it as merely a preliminary to method, which he thinks starts with universals and proceeds to particulars. He uses contraries to define terms that he analyzes from universals, and some of his followers carried this dichotomizing to absurd lengths. His method proceeds horizontally from

not take hold of logos? What are they amid and what are they away from? Human beings continually have to do with Being, and yet it is alien to them."

general to particular, and back again (Fig. 1):³¹



He thinks of understanding of particulars in terms of illumination, and his diagrams purport to lay bare the order found within "things themselves."³² He rejected memory systems based on the hermetic tradition that relied on emotionally potent images, in favour of abstract diagrams, but these were memory systems too, such that when the proper method was followed there would be no need to remember anything, which again alerts us to the fact that he is talking about a form of Platonic anamnesis.³³ Aristotelian and Thomist versions of logic, on the other hand are related to mnemonic systems employing images in the bodily imagination. Perkins, a Ramist, saw this as an inner idolatry.

³¹ McKim, 53

³² McKim, 34

³³ McKim, 34, "Ramus' logic with its heavy reliance on the topical tradition was actually a system of memory in itself....He like Aristotle and Aquinas stressed proper order. But he objected to the use of artificial mnemonic devices....Ramus' dialectic sought to lay bare "the order found within things themselves."....Not the emotionally exciting memory image, but the abstract order of dialectical analysis was what triggered the memory for Ramus."

McIlmaine's Ramus didn't think that ideas or forms had real existence: "The efficient is a cause from the which the thing hath his being. Of the which although that there be no true formes, yet a great abundance we find by some certain means distinct"³⁴. He was more of an empiricist than Aristotle in that while he thought teaching began with universals and proceeded to particulars, he thought invention in the first place, or finding out things, proceeded by empirical induction.³⁵ This process was aided by illumination, though it is questionable whether Ramus meant this in the full Augustinian sense or was closer to the Cartesian notion of the "clear and distinct idea."³⁶ The concept of a modal accident has been reduced to that of 'adjunct', and substance to that of 'subject': "The adioynt is that which hath a subjecte to the which it is adioined: as, vertue and vice are called the adioyntes of the bodye or soule: and to be shorte of all things that do chaunce to the subjecte, besyde the essence, is called the adioynted: as, tyme, qualitie..."³⁷ In this way accidents become the outward adornments of a particular person's body, rather than physical attributes by which invisible substance is manifest to the senses. This is a post-Aristotelian materialism in which matter has no immanent forms. It is indebted to Epicureanism, though he disavows the latter by saying "This ungodlie Epicure knewe not that God was able to make the worlde without any

³⁴ McIlmaine, 11

³⁵ McKim, 28, "Ramus argued that the Greek commentators on Aristotle had taught there were two scientific methods; analysis and genesis. Analysis was the true method; genesis the inverse or "method of discovery." ... "Analysis" said Ramus, "Descends from what is most complex and composite to what is simple; genesis on the other hand, arrives at the composite from the simple." Ramus charged the commentators of Aristotle with not knowing how to use logic. Ramus believed genesis was not a method. It was rather the introductory study prior to true method. The Commentators on Aristotle thought sciences were discovered by analysis and arranged and taught by the method of genesis. Ramus claimed the reverse was true."

³⁶ McKim, 30, "Ramus declared: "From the nature itself or proposition and assumption is furnished abundant light, as though some gleam, for illuminating the complexion of art." He meant that axioms appear to be true on sight. They do not need to be proved."

³⁷ McIlmaine, 19

instrumente, or other causes eyther material or adiuuante," yet his foremost source of examples is Ovid, and his model of the accident is Fortune.³⁸ Thus matter is substance for him, and if it gets coherence from God, a coherence made intelligible by illumination, it is nevertheless a reality that is firmly located beneath his feet rather than in the heavens.

Aristotle and Theology

Although for Aristotelian thinkers substantial change normally entails accidental change, one context in which this is not the case is in the Catholic sacrament of the eucharist. The language of substance and accident became central to the eucharistic theology developed in the 13th century by Thomas Aquinas, a theology that had become a widely established orthodoxy by the time of the reformation, and therefore a bone of contention throughout the 16th century. The doctrine of transubstantiation was fraught with difficulties from the outset, because it was incoherent in strictly Aristotelian terms to imagine that the accidents of the bread and wine could persist without inhering in any substance.³⁹ Duns Scotus believed in a version of consubstantiation, or the idea that the substance of the bread was co-present with that of Christ's body. Aquinas thought that the accident of quantity stood in for substance as that in which the accidents inhered after the bread had given way to Christ's body. Ockham thought that by a miracle the accident of Quality could persist on its own without substance.⁴⁰ Wyclif thought that the idea of accidents without substance was a cult of the sign that mistook the sign for what it signified, and his proto reformation stance was that faith was a kind of perceptive faculty

³⁸ McIlmaine, 13

³⁹ Penn, 256, says "transubstantiation (defined as a process of conversion) had become part of Catholic dogma with the assembly of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215" though Macy, *Treasures From the Storeroom*, Chapter 4, stressing the variety of interpretations of it that persisted, denies that transubstantiation was an established dogma before the Council of Trent.

⁴⁰ Penn, 267, "[Ockham] had assumed that quality - the only accident, for him, which could be regarded as a 'real' entity, - could be sustained by divine power... "

belonging to the heart that should not be confused with the ordinary senses, and that allowed us to perceive Christ's presence on the altar, not "dimensionally," but really. Wycliff was a realist, and even Ockham in his eucharistic theology, deviated from strict nominalism.⁴¹ Interestingly, for Wycliff, signification generally, and the sacrament as a particular kind of sign, were both understood within an ontological framework deriving from Augustine, so in a sense every encounter with a sign could be a sacrament that would bring one into unity with God.⁴² However, Augustine's *On the Teacher*, as I have already implied, was describing an ideal rather than an everyday situation, unlike his later work in *De Doctrina Christiana*. Because this ideal was not routinely available to people, the sacrament was a specially constituted sign whose purpose was to bring about spiritual improvement in the participant.⁴³

So, late medieval orthodoxy said that when the words of consecration were spoken over the eucharistic bread and wine, the substance changed into that of Christ's Galilean body, while the accidents remained those of bread and wine. It didn't say that Christ's flesh, understood as some kind of fungible commodity, was behind the accidents of the bread and wine, but that the body which had existed in Galilee thirteen hundred years earlier, was present on the altar, and was a kind of spiritual/material food for the congregation. (This however didn't mean that one could perceive Christ's flesh 'under' the

⁴¹ Penn, 267, " If anything this assumption marks a departure from nominalist metaphysics"

⁴² Penn, 247, quotes from Wycliff's *Triologus*: "For as long, indeed, as we live here we should attend to signs, since our Samaritan used signs with his apostles; both the sacraments and distinction of orders and of schools depend chiefly upon signs. It seems moreover, that a sign and its significate are convertible with being. For every creature is a sign of its creator, just as smoke naturally signifies fire. God, too, is a sign of any signifiable thing, since he is the Book of Life in which every signifiable is written. It follows likewise that anything is a sign."

⁴³ Penn, *Wycliff and the Sacraments*, 241-71.

species, as Calvin later implied.)⁴⁴ It was customary in the late medieval period for people to receive the sacrament as infrequently as once a year.⁴⁵ The efficacy of the sacrament did not consist primarily in consuming some kind of physical nourishment, and even Christians who weren't present at the mass could benefit from it. Its function was in large part a matter of producing unity in the mystical body of Christians who together made up the corporate 'body of Christ'. The spectacle of the priest raising the consecrated host to the congregation was central to this production of unity, and although sixteenth century polemicists implied that there was a proto-machiavellian theatricality in this, the intention of the celebrant mattered to the authenticity of the sacrament.⁴⁶ In this as in other ways Catholic individuals were implicated in the actions of their fellows, and there was an existential urgency in such collective ceremonies that wasn't just about the imposition of form on the inchoate matter of the congregation by a corrupt hierarchy.

Jewel and Hooker

Luther, Zwingli and Calvin all came up with different theories of how Christ was really present on the altar. Luther, who continued to think of himself as a Catholic for most of his life, and who hated Aristotle, carried on the doctrine of consubstantiation, or the idea that Christ was co-present with the substance of the bread and wine. Zwingli was a spiritualist who thought of the sacrament as a symbol of something absent. Hooker dismisses him by saying that "Zwinglius and Oecolampadius would bring to pass, that men should account of this sacrament but only as of a shadow, destitute, empty and void

⁴⁴ Calvin, 569, ".by adding *under* the bread, will have it that it lies hid under it"

⁴⁵ Cf. Calvin, 600, "What we have hitherto said of the sacrament, abundantly shows that it was not instituted to be received once a year and that perfunctorily"

⁴⁶ Calvin, 600, "I appeal to all who have the least zeal for piety, whether they do not evidently perceive both how much more brightly the glory of God is here displayed, and how much more abundant spiritual consolation is felt by believers than in these rigid and histrionic follies, which have no other use than to impose on the gazing populace."

of Christ."⁴⁷ Calvin, who also thought transubstantiation confused the sign with the thing signified, had a stronger sense of the real presence, and thought of himself as occupying a median position between Zwinglian spiritualism and Catholic superstition:

I hold then (as has always been received in the Church, and is still taught by those who feel aright), that the sacred mystery of the Supper consists of two things - the corporeal signs, which, presented to the eye, represent invisible things in a manner adapted to our weak capacity, and the spiritual truth, which is at once figured and exhibited by the signs. When attempting familiarly to explain its nature, I am accustomed to set down three things - the thing meant, the matter which depends on it, and the virtue or efficacy consequent upon both. The thing meant consists in the promises which are in a manner included in the sign. By the matter, or substance, I mean Christ with his death and resurrection. By the effect, I understand redemption, justification, sanctification, eternal life, and all other benefits which Christ bestows upon us. Moreover, though all these things have respect to faith, I leave no room for the cavil that when I say Christ is conceived by faith, I mean only that he is conceived by the intellect and imagination. He is offered by the promises, not that we may stop short at the sight or mere knowledge of him, but that we may enjoy true communion with him....I say then that in the mystery of the Supper, by the symbols of bread and wine, Christ, his body and his blood, are truly exhibited to us, that in them he fulfilled all obedience, in order to procure righteousness for us - first that we might become one body with him; and, secondly that being made partakers of his substance, we might feel the result of this fact in the participation of all his blessings

Calvinist theories of the sacrament can be seen to have origins in Patristic neoplatonism such as that exemplified by Augustine in *On the Teacher*, whereby when the communicant receives the sacramental bread, he participates in a symbolic activity that makes Christ present, not as flesh behind appearances to the contrary, but as an object of faith, a faith that is not the product of efficient causality, or 'teaching.' John Jewel describes it thus:

A Sacrament is an outward and visible signe, whereby God sealeth up his grace in our heartes, to the confirmation of our Faith. Saint Augustine saith, "Sacramentum est inuisibilis gratiae visibile signum." A Sacrament is a visible signe of grace inuisible. And yt we may the better understand him, hee telleth us what thing we should call a signe. A signe, is a thing that besides the sight itself,

⁴⁷ Hooker, 349

which it offreth to the senses, causeth of itself some other thing to come to knowledge.⁴⁸

A sacrament is a sign that is founded upon things, but without idolatrously mistaking them for what they signify. By insisting that only those sacraments instituted by Christ as recorded in the gospels are valid, Protestants reduce the number of sacraments from seven to two: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The other five sacraments are deficient, according to John Jewel, because they "wante either the worde, or the element, or both." (168) In the legitimate sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the interiority that changes is not the substance of the bread or water, but that of the communicants who are confirmed as members of Christ's body, and the change the individual undergoes is only change from a certain perspective within history. By participating in the sacrament individual perspectives participate in an absolute perspective that is in no way partial. The congregation is thus an interpretive community whose ontology depends on understanding the intention of its original author, and it is perhaps no accident that the English word under-standing and the latin word sub-stance imply something that stands under a text or a physical object. We have already seen how physics and semantics blur into one another in the discussion of words and things by Augustinian and Aristotelian thinkers.

When one that is unlearned, and can not reade, looketh upon a booke, be the booke never so true, never so wel written, yet because he knoweth not the letters, and cannot reade, hee looketh upon it in vayne..but another that can reade, & hath judgement to understand, considereth the whole story....So do the faithful receive the fruite & comfort by the Sacraments, which the wicked & ungodlie neither consider, nor receive.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Jewel, 130

⁴⁹ Jewel, 133

In Jewel's account, faith is a type of literacy which is dependent upon one's election rather than one's education. Indeed Calvin says that "I rather feel than understand it"⁵⁰

The intention of the person administering the sacrament is immaterial because the sacrament has been instituted by Christ in history, and their faith unifies the participants with both his historical and his eternal will. The latter redeems the efficient causality of the former from its involvement in matter. However, people's understanding can be muddled by the Pauline body of death, an image that gives the fallen 'understanding' a materiality that is at the same time insubstantial as Richard Hooker tells us:

Men cannot be gathered together to the profession of any religion, whether it be true or false: unlesse they be bound in the felowship of visible signes or sacraments. The first cause why they were ordeined, is, that thereby one should acknowledge another, as felowes of one household, & members of one body.....Even as wee take them that are not baptised, to be none of our brethren, to be children of God, nor members of his Church, because they will not take the Sacrament of Baptisme. An other cause, is, to move, instruct, and teach our dul and heauy hearts, by sensible creatures, that so our negligence in not heeding or marking the woorde of God spoken unto us, might be amended. For if any man have the outward seale, and have not the faith thereof sealed within his heart, it avayleth him not: hee is but an hypocrite and a dissembler.⁵¹

Hooker tells us that although ideally the sacrament transcends teaching, our fallenness makes teaching necessary to an extent. This is part of a contradiction between polity and community that runs through Hooker's work. That the sacrament involves 'gathering' a congregation, gives it a connection with Heidegger's glossing of the original meaning of *Logos* as 'gathering,' and of *physis* as what is 'gathered.' Heidegger thought of this gathering phenomenologically, as arising within the horizon of the authentic *Dasein*. Hooker, though an Aristotelian, is at once talking about what Heidegger might see as an ontology of objective presence, and also about something more 'subjective'. On the one

⁵⁰ Calvin, 587

⁵¹ Jewel, 132

hand he is prescribing good conduct for members of the Church of England that can be enforced upon them if they don't cooperate, and on the other hand both he and Heidegger are talking about a cohesive unity within a horizon of being whose boundary is death.

The congregation at church are members of one body aiming at a kind of absolute subjectivity:

Our wisdom in this case must be such as doth not propose to itself... our own particular, the partial and immoderate desire whereof poisoneth wheresoever it taketh place; but the scope and mark which we are to aim at is ... the public and common good of all;

Yet for Hooker as for Aquinas the Christian congregation doesn't coincide with the people objectively present in the church on a given day, some of whom will turn out to be empty vessels. Since it is impossible to tell empirically who is saved and damned, it is necessary to treat everyone as if they are saved, and there needs to be an objectively present gathering that serves the needs of the state. The corporate body constituted by the sacrament takes place in the context of a public identified with the body politic. Christ is the head of the body of the church as the monarch is at the head of the state, and ideally these two bodies would coincide, except for the problem of sin, which leads us to experience law as violence, as the imposition of form on matter. In Hooker's *Laws* Christ provides the chief model for two different ways of thinking about the relationship of form and matter. His request that the cup be taken from him in the Garden of Gethsemane and yet his acceptance that God's will be done, represents his divided human will.⁵² The first part of the request came from his human nature which suffers under the Roman law, but

⁵² Hooker, 206, " the Person of our Saviour Christ being but one there are in him two wills, because two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man, which both do imply this faculty and power. so that in Christ there is a divine and there is a human will, otherwise he were not both God and man."

the second part was deliberative, and expressed his unity with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and for which temporal and modal accidents have no intrinsic being.⁵³

Jewel and Hooker come close to recognizing the historical contingency of the communal identity based around the sacrament, that they nevertheless think is sacred.⁵⁴ It may be argued that a different kind of accident is thus central to their understanding of the sacrament. The accidents of history conceal and reveal the substance that is gathered from the multitude of people, like grain from chaff. Sin makes the spirit drown in the body, and they experience their lack of substance as an excess of materiality.⁵⁵ For this reason knowledge of the sacraments is conveyed through the generations by means of teaching. The value of rituals for Hooker is that in their repetition they slowly instill a lesson in us that eventually ceases to be experienced as an imposition and becomes a remembering like that described by Augustine in *On The Teacher*. In this relationship between time and eternity, temporal and modal accidents are one.⁵⁶

Hooker frequently uses the concept of accident in ways that make it hard to tell whether he intends the word in a temporal or modal sense.⁵⁷ In book five he is concerned with the outward forms and the inward substance of the Anglican church, and his chief interlocutors are nonconformists, who emphasise preaching as a means of spreading

⁵³ Cf. Kaske, 122, on how Beza describes this in terms of the rhetorical trope of *correctio* signalling a shift from the physical to the spiritual.

⁵⁴ Jewel, 161, "The Saraments are altered according to the diversitie of times: but the faith whereby wee live, was ever in all ages one."

⁵⁵ Jewel, 4, "but seeing our spirite is drowned in our bodie, and our fleshe doeth make our understanding dul: therefore we recieve his grace by sensible things"

⁵⁶ In this Hooker departs from Calvin, who says on 596, "Whether we are to be confirmed in faith, or exercised in confession or aroused to duty, there is need of preaching. Nothing therefore, can be more preposterous than to convert the Supper into a dumb action."

⁵⁷ Hooker, 84/5: "For this cause to avoid ambiguities wherewith they often entangle themselves, not marking what doth agree to the word of God in itself, and what in regard of outward accidents which may befall it, we are to know that the word of God is his heavenly truth touching matters of eternal life revealed unto men"

God's word, and object to elements of the Anglican liturgy, including reading aloud, wearing of vestments, use of ornate buildings, as idolatries that distract from the substance of God's word.⁵⁸ We can see that both Anglicans and nonconformists claim to have access to substance in a way that their opponents don't. Hooker argues that because matters of outward ceremony are subject to change, they should be the object of men's obedience even more than matters of substantial doctrine. At the same time as he is willing to bow to older authorities, he does not do so to the complete exclusion of novelty, which he allows is sometimes necessary and says that generalities and laws must be tempered by equity. In the same way that God violates the uniform order of nature with miracles, sometimes a man has to deviate from the perfection of his purpose because of the nature of the matter he has to work with. Yet he also denigrates miracles as things which are necessitated by the shortcomings of matter and of sin, and in this he may be influenced by Oxford nominalism, since nominalism, while asserting the priority of God's will over his reason, nevertheless diminished his tendency to use this power to intervene in nature.⁵⁹

Such diminished interventionism can be related to Hooker's argument that scripture and tradition should be allowed to speak for themselves. Conflicting translations of the bible don't necessarily conflict with one another in an absolute way, and the

⁵⁸ Hooker, 35: "[by the] removal of one extremity with another, the world seeking to procure a remedy, hath purchased a mere exchange of the evil which before was felt". Peter Lake, 176, says that his was a via media between Catholicism and Calvinism, and not just between Conformism and Non Conformism, both of which claimed to be Calvinist: " C.W. Dugmore has argued that Hooker's view of the sacrament represented a clear break from the 'virtualism' of early Elizabethan divines like Jewel, Grindal or Sandys." Cf also 172, " the denunciatory style of preaching favoured by both conformists like Bridges and puritans like Perkins, [was] attacked as inherently divisive and conducive to spiritual pride and vainglory rather than true piety and virtue. Central to this polemical manoeuvre was an assault on the word-centered style of piety which dominated Elizabethan protestantism and a revaluation of public prayer which set Hooker as much apart from Whitgift and Bridges as it did from Cartwright and Travers."

⁵⁹ Cf. Oberman Chapter 2, where he discusses the historical nature of God's revelation, and the idea that to the unbeliever the truths of this revelation can only be given by probable arguments.

'matter' will often "suffer" either translation.⁶⁰ So he thinks of translations of the bible as an imposition of form on matter within history, but says that the substance is unaffected. Indeed the imposition of form on matter is a means of bringing substance out of accident. At the same time as he recognises the shortcomings of a perspective from within history, he thinks redemption is possible because the substance of the scripture whose matter "suffers" different forms in history, is the faith that comes directly from God by grace. Faith is 'directed' at something that can't be known by means of the senses, yet faith is sometimes figured as a sensory faculty,⁶¹ and it has a physical object in these same accidents of textual transmission of the Word. Hooker says that sermons need to be 'framed' according to God's word, using dialectic and logic.⁶² From Wilson's logic book we have seen how the framing of an argument and of a physical substance are equivalent, but that ultimately this framing of words and arguments never arrives at the being of the substance it aims at. So despite the constant movement from history to eternity and back, Hooker doesn't believe, as his opponent Cartwright did, that the church can be perfected in history. On the other hand Hooker says that it is impossible that God should withdraw his presence from any thing because the very substance of God is infinite, and immaterial, "pure, and of us in this world so incomprehensible that albeit no part of us be ever absent from him who is present whole unto every particular thing, yet his presence with us we no way discern farther than only that God is present which partly by reason and more perfectly by faith we know to be firm and certain// Seeing that presence every

⁶⁰ Hooker, 68

⁶¹ Cf. Perkins, 37, on faith as a passive perceptual faculty.

⁶² Hooker, 100/101. Cf also Lake, 15, about the importance of logic as a weapon in scholastic debates at Cambridge between presbyterians and conformists.

where is the sequel of an infinite and incomprehensible substance..."⁶³ The Aristotelian Prime Matter underlying the form and matter of the liturgy and sacraments becomes cognate with the Augustinian Logos, which for Jewel gathers the elect together in the sacramental understanding of Christ's real presence. The phenomenological or material space between the Aristotelian and Augustinian substances, between earth and heaven, is the space in which history unfolds its ambiguous being.

Puritans think that without preaching, the word of God is dark,⁶⁴ but Hooker objects that this makes the accidents of the preacher's sermonizing more important than the substance that is presented when the word is read plainly. The puritan belief that the "substance of the matter"⁶⁵ can be reached by means of extempore exegesis is akin to the scientist's belief that the essence of an object can be found by cutting it open and describing what is found there. What is least real to a thinker like Hooker is exactly where Puritans look for reality: in time. He is impatient with quibbles about the nature of real presence, and thinks that the fine points of dogma upon which schism in the church has occurred are due to people being too nice in their interpretations of things that should be left mysterious. He says that the Anglican *via media* takes the "pith" of the doctrine of the Lutherans and Papists, that which they all agree, namely the presence of Christ. He prefers to remain at this level of generality, which the word 'pith' implies is also the level of prime matter, and to do anything else is to mistake accidents for substance. For him, as

⁶³ Hooker, 239. Cf. also 249: "God hath his influence into the very essence of all things without which influence of Deity supporting them their utter annihilation could not choose but follow."

⁶⁴ Hooker, 104: "... the most we can learn at their hand is, that sermons are the "ordinance of God," The Scriptures "Dark," and the labour of reading "easy".

⁶⁵ Hooker, 113, "Whereupon it must of necessity follow that the vigour and vital efficacy of sermons doth grow from certain accidents which are not in them but in their maker: his virtue, his gesture, his countenance, his zeal, the motion of his body, and the inflection of his voice who first uttereth them as his own, is that which giveth them the form, the nature, the very essence of instruments available to eternal life."

for Calvin, communion is a means of "communicating," but scholastic complexities are hard to communicate to the public, and so what Calvin dismisses as a dumb show is a valuable pedagogical tool for Hooker. So the sacrament is a sign, it is food, it is communication, it is membership of the body politic, and those who don't participate are 'strangers' who fall outside the borders of the imaginary polis that is the pilgrim city of God, and that for Hooker was increasingly identified with England. Christ, as the substance of this communication becomes the ultimate referent of all linguistic communication within the early modern polis, as well as what lies 'behind' the accidents of material existence.

Hooker, because of his loyalty to wonder and wondering, to unknowing, has a Christian tolerance for human imperfection and its material basis. In a way he thinks that perfection can be brought about by suffering or by teaching in history,⁶⁶ but its telos is in the next world, and he goes so far as to say that for the individual the ideal death is a moderately lingering one whose work is to bring us to a relative perfection before the transition to the next life.⁶⁷ At the same time as he thinks about death in these terms, he also talks about death as a 'thing' that represents the ultimate perfection or imperfection of the individual.⁶⁸ Janel Mueller has seen the martyrdom of Protestants who refused to recant their heretical views under torture as achieving a kind of Protestant real presence, a

⁶⁶ Hooker, 86: "We bring not the knowledge of God with us into the world. And the less our own opportunity or ability is that way, the more we need the help of other men's judgements to be our direction herein. Nor doth any man ever believe, into whom the doctrine of belief is not instilled by instruction some way received at the first from others."

⁶⁷ Hooker, 197/8

⁶⁸ Hooker 197: " And besides forasmuch as death howsoever is a general effect of the wrath of God against sin, and the suddenness thereof a thing which happeneth but to few; the world in this respect feareth it the more as being subject to doubtful constructions, which as no man willingly would incur, so they whose happy estate after life is of all men's the most certain should especially wish that no such accident in their death may give uncharitable minds occasion of rash, sinister, and suspicious verdicts; [we pray] that although it be sudden in itself, nevertheless in regard of our prepared minds it may not be sudden"

kind of certainty that in normal circumstances is unavailable to them.⁶⁹ For Hooker, the absolute distinction between the elect and the reprobate is something we understand imperfectly with our human intellects, and since we can't know it, he thinks it better to place it on one side, and to pray for universal salvation, since there is hope for everyone. This implies that at the individual level there is a constitutive uncertainty about one's being. The ontology of the individual and that of the body politic are bound together, though it is implied that the salvation of the body politic is certain in a way that that of the individual is not. He doesn't advocate praying for the dead, preserving death as an epistemological impasse for the individual, and avoiding saying whether this implicates the state, since the number if not the particular identity of the elect is supposed to be known by God from Eternity. Yet both individual and church ambiguously partake of substantial being through the sacraments, and of non-being through the accidents of history. His use of the metaphor of a coin for the individual Christian makes it clear that he is somebody who is rendered unto Caesar in that he bears the mark of the sovereign.⁷⁰ This metaphor, however, is qualified by another in which he thinks of God being in the elect as the artificer is in the art which his hand doth presently frame.⁷¹ So while all people bear the stamp of the sovereign within history, not all of them have substance in the way that an individual instance of form and matter entails substance for Aristotle, and

⁶⁹ Mueller, 165, "In these burnings, Catholic enactment of authority serves protestant truth - to the extent that the condemned maintain, during their torture, the integrity of self possession that signifies the truth of their being"

⁷⁰ Hooker, "In reference to other creatures of this inferior world man's worth and excellency is admired. Compared with God, the truest inscription wherewith we can circle so base a coin is that of David, *Universa vanitas est omnis homo*: "Whosoever hath the name of a mortal man, there is in him whatsoever the name of vanity doth comprehend."

⁷¹ Hooker, 249: "They which thus were in God eternally by their intended admission to life, have by vocation or adoption God actually now in them, as the artificer is in the work which his hand doth presently frame."

this ambiguity affects the sovereign herself qua individual.⁷² In lacking substance the reprobate therefore belong to the realm of accidents, which are infinite in number, a fact which has implications for interpretive practice: in any situation where there is doubt about how to interpret an individual one should follow the literal interpretation.⁷³ He thus makes a connection across the sweep of his narrative between individual human beings and signs, but allows that signs can be deceptive. Therefore it is not just words and things that are equivalent in the sixteenth century, but people, words and things.

As we have seen, in the thought of Aristotle accidental change doesn't necessarily entail substantial change, but substantial change almost always entails accidental change. I say "almost always" because there are two notable exceptions to this rule. The first, as we have seen, is in the sacrament of the eucharist. The second is in the realm of language, when a change in context changes the meaning of a sentence. Aristotle thinks about this in chapter five of the *Categories* when he defines an individual substance like a man as something that can admit contraries while maintaining its identity i.e. John can be both white and black in successive moments through a process of change. He says this is true only of substances and not of those things which are present in substances like colour or size. He points out that somebody might object that this is also true of statements. The statement "John is sitting" can be true at five o'clock and not true at five fifteen. Aristotle says that this is due to a change in circumstances, and not to a change in the meaning of the statement. The substance "John" however, in changing from white to black, has changed while still remaining itself. The change that John has undergone is a change in

⁷² Cf. Lake, 200, on how Hooker thought monarchy the best form of government, even though he located sovereignty in the people, which is to say in the body politic. On 206 talks about how the visible church was a politic society constructed on exactly the same lines as the state.

⁷³ Hooker, 263

the accidents by which he is perceptible to our senses. The change that the sentence undergoes is due to temporal accidents that change the statement's frame of reference so that where once it was true, now it is false, without any change in the appearance of the words and the structure of the sentence. In one case we are dealing with meaning as inhering in an object, in the second case it inheres in the context. A change in either the substance or the context changes both substance and context but there is assumed to be a stable order underlying all this change, an author who guarantees its meaning from outside the accidental realm. However a context can be brought about by force that does violence to the meaning of a word, and forces stability on meaning, not from within, but from without. Hooker implies that this is what happens in the Catholic eucharist: "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words, as alchymy doth or would do the substance of metals, maketh of any thing what it listeth, and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing"⁷⁴

Like Christ, the Word himself, words have a dual nature, deriving meanings synchronically and diachronically from 'difference,' and deriving a transcendent meaning from God in eternity. In order to get at the relation between time and eternity, Hooker talks about circular motion of the heavens, and its repetitiveness which produces moments. He says time is nothing but the quantity of continuance which all things have which are not as God is without beginning, and implies that the continuance is circular in its motion. He again reduces temporal to modal accidents when he says, "The very

⁷⁴ Hooker, 263

opportunities which we ascribe to time do in truth cleave to the things themselves whereewith time is joined."⁷⁵ Then he says that just as things have different values even though God is equally present in them all, so do times have different values, and this leads to a discussion of holy days commemorating great men. The times of God coincide with the persons of men, so that even if all are of one substance, they have been divided by God hierarchically. "Because time in itself as hath already been proved can receive no alteration, the hallowing of festival days must consist in the shape or countenance which we put upon the affairs that are incident into those days." (386) These things lead from humble to more exalted things, and by their repetition custom becomes habit, and accidents become substance. Virtue doesn't cease to be present in a virtuous person when they are not actively practicing it and some things can be made sacred by the positive law of men, otherwise we overturn the world and make every man his own commander.⁷⁶ Here we can see how, from an historical perspective, virtues are habitual, which is to say they are accidents repeated over time, abstracted and reified. The meaning of a word, which changes though the appearance remains unchanged, and which, on the other hand, can remain constant through changes in the words appearance, is a ghostly entity that may be identified with our sense of Time as something that varies, even though "Time itself" is a substance that transcends change, and the Word itself is something that transcends efficient causes. So as people become virtuous by habit, words acquire meaning by usage, and yet at some indeterminate point time moves into eternity and the

⁷⁵ Hooker, 383

⁷⁶ Hooker, 397

perspective from which they are framed by instrumental means becomes a perspective from which they were always already in being.⁷⁷

Hooker thinks that festival days are like planets circling our lives, and as each revolution of a year or a week is a closed off moment, and an individual substance, the punctualism of his notion of time is lifted upward into unity through the common reference to God, who is outside time, of these moments.⁷⁸ He calls these days the "shadows of our endless felicity in heaven,"⁷⁹ and we see again that shadows and accidents are almost the same for him, but where shadows tell us about a transcendent reality, accidents tell us about the immanent realities that our intellect knows by empirical deductions. Mental concepts and physical objects are equally shadows of the transcendent, and equally accidents by which we know the immanent reality. He allows that within the temporal world meaning depends on difference when he says the matching of contrary things together is a kind of illustration to both and goes on to talk about days of penitence, and how both kinds of day "frame" one affection (joy) and "perfect" the other (grief). So framing and perfecting are set up as synonyms, while the opposites of grief and joy become intermingled, as the possibility of perfection, and the imperfection of our efforts to get there are both understood. This indeterminacy or mingling of joy and grief can be related to what *The Book of Common Prayer* thought of as the presence of

⁷⁷ This discussion can be related to Hooker's understanding of predestination, which was not Calvinist, and remained open to the charge of the pelagianism in that he seemed to think that grace met human endeavour part way.

⁷⁸ Hooker, 382-4, "Again forasmuch as that motion is circular whereby we make our divisions of time, and the compass of that circuit such, that the heavens which are therein continually moved and keep in their motions uniform celerity must needs touch often the same points, they cannot choose but bring unto us by equal distances further returns of those times...No doubt as God's extraordinary presence hath hallowed an sanctified certain places, so they are his extraordinary works that have truly and worthily advanced certain times....The wise man therefore compareth herein not unfitly the times of God with the persons of men..even as Adam and all other men are of one substance, all created of the earth, "but the Lord hath divided them by great knowledge and made their ways divers"

⁷⁹ Hooker, 407

death in life. In *The Winter's Tale* Shakespeare will associate the mingling of these emotions with wonder. The perception of the presence of death in life is the knowledge of one's own mortality and the lack of knowledge about what follows it. It is the perception of time that perfects the circle of one's existence, and gives one being or deprives one of it. Yet the achievement of being can be experienced as the loss of temporal joys.

The secular solution to the possibility of non-being is Honour. Hooker says that "Honour is commonly presumed a sign of more than ordinary virtue and merit, by means whereof when ambitious minds thirst after it, their endeavours are testimonies how much it is in the eye of nature to possess that body the very shadow whereof is set at so high a rate." So honour too is accident that implies a substance. Intriguingly, he says that "If any think that iniquity and peace, sin and prosperity can dwell together they err because they distinguish not aright between the matter and that which giveth it the form of happiness, between possession and fruition, between the having and the enjoying of good things"⁸⁰ In spite of his tolerance for the imperfection of our efforts in this world, he makes it clear in this statement that accidents and substance are ontologically irreconcilable. Yet the different sets of binaries he uses to talk about them don't map onto each other in a clear way, as was the case with the Aristotelian pairings of form/matter, genus/species, substance/accident, that we examined earlier. *Iniquity, sin, matter, possession, having* are opposed to *peace, prosperity, form, fruition* and *enjoying*. The words that imply stasis are connected to sin, while those that are connected with salvation combine stasis and motion.

⁸⁰ Hooker, 447

It will be pertinent to our reading of Spenser that the stasis of sin is connected by Hooker to infinite wandering motion, rather than eternal circular motion, when he talks about priesthood and the ministry of things divine without which we must needs have wandered in darkness to our endless perdition. Priests are Christ's ambassadors and his labourers.⁸¹ "The power of the ministry of God translath out of darkness into glory, it raiseth men from the earth and bringeth God himself down from heaven. By blessing visible elements it maketh them invisible grace"⁸² positing a kind of translation that doesn't impose form on matter but that elevates accidents into substance. Aware of the potential for grandiosity in such an enterprise, he goes on to talk of the necessity for modesty and ambition in moderate amounts as a motivation to the priesthood. The word priest seems, etymologically, to imply a sacrificer, one who does symbolic violence to matter, but there is no need to get rid of it on that account, as say the people who insist that Christ was the last priest. This is because things are distinguished from one another by their essential forms [i.e. species].⁸³ We must find out the intentions of those who first named them to discover what they most properly are, as Christ's intention recorded in scripture tells us the meaning of the sacrament, but at the same time he says vulgar people when asked the definition of something will point to an example, so to them the meaning is the sum of the particulars named by the word, and therefore evolves in history and is abstracted from it.⁸⁴ While a form may appear to be the sum of particular instances, in fact particular instances are deviations from the form, or original intention. He goes on

⁸¹ Hooker, 455

⁸² Hooker, 456

⁸³ Hooker, 470

⁸⁴ For Hooker as for Spenser, the distinction between substance and accident is reflected in the differences of rank that, as we will see in Chapter 3, Margreta De Grazia has argued were the most radical form of alterity in England in the 1590s. This historical errancy is why priest has come to have connotations of pagan sacrifice.

to talk about whether an individual person can exercise different functions and he says that he can, and implies that offices are accidents and they make a mistake who surmise 'incompatible offices where nothing is meant but sundry graces gifts and abilities which Christ bestowed."⁸⁵ This is in contrast to his discussion of honour which acquires a kind of substance from habitude. He talks about a hierarchy of Church offices from Apostle to disciple to prophet to evangelist to teacher. A teacher, as he who imprints form on matter, is the lowliest functionary, and teaching a necessary evil in a fallen world.⁸⁶

From the foregoing reading of Hooker we can see that the national English church for whom he is perhaps the most important, and certainly the most prolix, originary spokesman, is firmly grounded on Aristotelian principles. The principles are not only derived from those Aristotelian works that were part of the classical tradition rediscovered by humanism, but also from the logic and the metaphysics. Through them Hooker shows that his political theory, while applicable to an English context, has universalist ambitions, and at the same time that the universal is being assimilated to the English.

Perkins

Hooker dedicated the first edition of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* to Archbishop Whitgift, whom he was anxious to placate, since his Laws could be taken as being as offensive to the latter's Calvinism as to that of Cartwright or Perkins. Perkins was a Ramist, and reacted against Aristotle both for being a Catholic and an Atheist. However,

⁸⁵ Hooker, 478

⁸⁶ This is true despite the fact that Christ was a teacher. According to Cartwright he was a teacher in a Golden Age when it was presumably possible for Christ if not for the Romans to teach without violence, and by distinguishing between the invisible and visible churches but also eliding that distinction he is able to argue that teaching or preaching is not violent. Cf. Lake 31

from the outset he demonstrates that the philosophical question of substance is an implicit and explicit context for his thought. He asks whether Catholike and reformed Christianity are circumstantially different interpretations of the same substance, as Hooker had implied they were, or are different substances - ie. whether they are accidentally or substantially different - and tends towards the latter option.⁸⁷ He conflates the Roman church with the Roman Empire as the whore of Babylon,⁸⁸ thereby gendering the difference between substances and making gender a substantial difference rather than an accidental one as it was for Aristotle. To Perkins all our righteousness "is as a menstruous cloath."⁸⁹ Menses, we may remember was the fundamental 'matter' on which our human form is printed, according to Aristotle in a minor work that has been tendentiously used as comprehensively expressive of his views on form and matter.⁹⁰

In discussing free will Perkins says that the Papists think a sinner is in prison and when God takes off the shackles he emerges from prison of his own accord. But Perkins says the prisoner is stark dead and has to be brought back to life.⁹¹ This is a quite different sense of being dead in the midst of life from Hooker's or Cranmer's sense of it, and seems to give being to Death as matter, an impression that is backed up by his using the words frame and understanding in a way that makes this matter a substance: "The frame of man's heart (saith the Lord,) is evill even from his childhood: that is, the disposition of the understanding, will, affectiones, with all that the heart of man deviseth,

⁸⁷ Perkins, 1, "It is a notable pollicie of the devil, which he hath put into the heades of sundrie men in this age to thinke that our religion and the religion of the present Church of Rome are all one substance"

⁸⁸ Perkins, 2/3, " the whore of Babylon is the state or regiment of a people that are the inhabitants of Rome and appertaine thereto"

⁸⁹ Perkins, 26

⁹⁰ Cf. Becon, 119, "All our righteousness is as a cloath defiled with menstrie"

⁹¹ Perkins, 18, "We in like manner graunt, that a prisoner fitly resembleth a naturall man, but yet such a prisoner must he be, as is not onely sicke and weake, but even starke dead"

formeth, or imagineth, is wholly evil....even enmitie it selfe."⁹² On the other hand he describes this being as "a want, absence, or deprivation of originall righteousness,"⁹³ thereby seeming to adhere to an Augustinian sense of the non being evil. He thinks that despair is our natural condition, and though we may do good works they are not good until God redeems us from our sin. Perkins thinks that we are redeemed from guilt by baptism but the sin remains in us and is still guilty in itself, still has its being as sin. He says that good works may be good in their substance as good works, but bad in the manner in which we do them,⁹⁴ making the doer accidental to the substance of a good work, but implying that the doer should be substantial.⁹⁵ He says that the Catholics think that by taking away the form of original sin, ie. the guilt, then the sin is removed too.

Where the forme of any thing is taken away, there the thing it selfe ceaseth also: but after baptisme in the regenerate, the forme of originall sinne, that is, the guilt is quite remooved: and therefore sinne ceaseth to be sinne.

And he answers that:

The guilt or obligation to punishment is not the forme of originall corruption, but (as wee say in the schooles) an accident or necessarie companion thereof. The true forme of originall sinne is a defect and deprivation of that which the law requireth at our hands in our minde, will, affections, and in all the powers both of soule and body"⁹⁶

Perkins thinks the guilt is not the form but an accident and the true form of originall sin is a defect and deprivation of the law. So he implies that sin is privation of good, but also that sin inheres in matter as a kind of formlessness which is recognisable to us by means of the accident of guilt. While upholding the Augustinian sense of evil as privation he

⁹² Perkins, 19

⁹³ Perkins, 20

⁹⁴ Perkins, 25

⁹⁵ Perkins 25, "A man may do good workes for the substance of the outwarde work: but not in regard of the goodnes of the manner: these are two divers things."

⁹⁶ Perkins, 35.

manages to give accidents a kind of being. He says that actual guilt is what makes us stand guilty before God but is removed in the regenerate. Potential guilt or aptness to sin is not removed, and is called concupiscence.⁹⁷ So defect of good is the form, and concupiscence the matter of evil, while guilt is its accidental quality. It has no substance, or its substance is not to be distinguished from matter without form. His view of sin can be read as a materialism for which there are no immanent or transcendent forms, and though he doesn't go so far as to say so, it opens the door to the idea of *ex deo* creation, giving his theistic determinism an affinity with the atheism of a Spinoza a few years later.

Perkins denies all human agency when he says that no good work is perfect but evil works are perfectly evil,⁹⁸ and that it is figurative speech to say we are justified by faith, because really we are justified by Christ's merit. He says in response to Old Testament instances of people being asked to do things in penance that these are signs rather than causes of redemption, that man must be considered under two estates, that of the law and that of grace, and while under the first he may be made to produce satisfaction for his crimes, under the latter these works are signs. There is no metalinguistic realm of self present meaning here. Perkins reproduces Hooker's sense that history and eternity represent opposite perspectives but Perkins calls them law and grace.⁹⁹ Instrumental meaning is the prerogative of law and of faith within history, but this kind of instrumentality is merely a sign of grace whose otherness is so great as to be an identity with its opposite.¹⁰⁰ Carol Kaske has shown how premodern Biblical poetics recognised that the old testament law is corrected by the new testament gospel, but says

⁹⁷ Perkins, 36

⁹⁸ Perkins, 101.

⁹⁹ Perkins, 127, "Man must be considered in a twofold estate, as he is under the law, and as he is under grace"

¹⁰⁰ Perkins, 101/2

that commentators seldom use the word 'correct' because it implied physical punishment.¹⁰¹ So while the law corrects by means of discipline, the truth corrects without discipline, just by being the truth.

On the subject of traditions Perkins says that there are oral and written traditions, and while he doesn't dismiss the oral ones, he takes them with a grain of salt.¹⁰² The papists say that scripture is supplemented with apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions, but he says scripture is all sufficient and is evident as such to the conscience of the elect person. In cases where there is difficulty or ambiguity it can be resolved by faith, by looking at the context or by looking elsewhere in scripture for help. Addressing the Papist claim that there is both milk and strong meat in the word of God, the first being the written scripture and the latter being oral traditions, he says the milk and strong meat are just the literal sense and the depth of the same once thoroughly opened.¹⁰³ Perkins' championing of *sola scriptura* goes hand in hand with advocacy of preaching to 'open' a text and get at its substance according to the guidelines put forward by Augustine in *De Doctrina Christiana*. Hooker as we saw had regard for traditions and thought scripture and traditions were 'things' that could speak for themselves, without being opened, reflecting an interest in Being rather its explication, and a sense of substance as ineffable rather than as an inwardness that can be probed. Interestingly, Thomas Fuller, describing Perkins' youthful libertinism says that "he dug so deep in nature's mine, to know the hidden causes and sacred qualities of things that some conceive he bordered on hell itself

¹⁰¹ Kaske, 127

¹⁰² Perkins, 134ff

¹⁰³ Perkins, 149

in his curiosity,"¹⁰⁴ an observation that can be adduced in support of the contention that devotion to the source of Being, and despair of its existence are close together rather than existing at opposite ends of a spectrum.

Perkins says that Christ is really present in the Lord's Supper, arising from the institution of the sacrament by Christ when he made the bread and wine signs that are to put us in mind of his death and resurrection and give us hope of his coming again. God's grace by which Christ's righteousness is imputed to us is present in the sacrament, and also there is a kind of propagation, like lighting a candle from another, by which Christ's influence in history is conveyed to us. There can be no nearer union than that between Christ and the receiver. However it is a spiritual and mystical union, not a bodily one. Christ was made from the pure substance of the Virgin Mary and can't be made of bread and wine.¹⁰⁵ His historical being is past and his local body is in heaven and Perkins argues that Aristotle says that for it to be otherwise is nonsense.¹⁰⁶ He says that because God is omnipotent there are some things he can't do, like contradict himself or lie, because this would be impotency rather than power.¹⁰⁷ Transubstantiation makes God impotent because it makes accidents bely their substance. He mocks the Papists who have a whole series of miracles in their account of the eucharist and would have us nourished by qualities without substance. He says that to make the eucharist a real sacrifice is to diminish it as a memorial. A memorial implies the absence of the thing memorialized,

¹⁰⁴ McKim, 6

¹⁰⁵ Perkins, 190

¹⁰⁶ Perkins, 191, "This bodily presence overturns the nature of a true body, whose common nature or essential propertie it is, to have length, breadth, and theicknes, which beeing taken away a bodie is no more a bodie. And by reason of these three dimensions, a bodie can occupie but one place at once, as Aristotle said."

¹⁰⁷ Perkins, 192

and it is the property of faith to give being to things which are not.¹⁰⁸ The Catholics have travestied this giving being to what is not by the fact that

they have framed a Christ, to whom they ascribed two kinds of existing, one naturall, whereby he is visible, touchable, and circumscribed in heaven: the other not onely above, but also against nature; by which, he is substantially according to his flesh in the hands of every priest, in every host, and in the mouth of every communicant, invisible, untouchable, uncircumscribed. And thus in effect they abolish his manhood"¹⁰⁹

Perkins fears the Catholic sacrament as something that subverts being in the name of an idolatrous travesty of it, and so he thinks it originates something in a profane sense of the word 'inventio.' He concludes that not only are catholicism and protestantism like two substances, but that the existence of two substances is impossible. Having separated them as substances, and then denied the possibility of one of them, simultaneously gendering it as female, and reducing it to the formless matter of the Aristotelean menses, he reduces all to the substance of scripture, and of the two sacramental signs authorized by it. He says that any marriage bond between a catholic and a protestant is a matter of trying to do what Descartes later did, which was to marry two substances, but he implies that in practice this always means assimilating one to the other, and since our evil deeds are perfectly evil, but our good deeds imperfectly good, to marry a Catholic would be a perfectly evil deed that would involve one in the non-being of evil, whose lack of substance is a lack of lawful form.

Perkins thinks that Catholicism is a type of atheism because the pope would supplant Christ as the imperial presence in human affairs. In this we can see how his doctrine might authorize Tudor absolutist monarchy in that it seems to allow for the civil

¹⁰⁸ Perkins, 194

¹⁰⁹ Perkins, 340

and ecclesiastical laws to be confined in one person. However, Perkins is against generalities, and the only general category he really allows is Christ, dwelling in the heart of each faithful individual. He doesn't arrive at substance dialectically, like Aristotle, Augustine and Hooker, but posits a binary universe of good and evil as forms imprinted on matter. In so far as evil is a type of non being, it is an errant form, or a formlessness composed of accidents without coherence, but as it still inheres in matter, it has being. This is not a manichean opposition of different substances, he would presumably maintain, but a difference in value. There is only one true form, Christ, and many errant forms of evil. He almost makes being a matter of political edict rather than substance in the Aristotelian sense, something that we will see Elizabeth's handlers doing on her behalf in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Andrewes

Lancelot Andrewes was a fellow of Pembroke College Cambridge under Whitgift, and after Hooker became the chief spokesperson for the Anglican Church's *via media* in the seventeenth century. Described by TS Eliot as a contemplative in the medieval tradition, he nevertheless demonstrates *par excellence*, what it means to 'open' a text as if it were a material object, and to explicate the Word within a word, that would otherwise be unable to speak a word. In doing so however he doesn't espouse a Ramist materialism, but produces a kind of discourse analysis that turns the infinite play of signs, the valorization of accidents over substance that Hooker warned against, back into the substance of Christ. In his Sermon on Isaiah, he examines the name given to Jesus before his birth - Immanuel - meaning "God with us." He unpacks its three component words, examining them, and putting them back together. In doing so he offers a discussion about signs as

wonders, arguing that unless Christ was born of a virgin, she wouldn't have been a sign because there would have been nothing wonderful about his birth, and then it would not have been an intervention in nature by a miracle-working God. Andrewes demonstrates an Augustinian sense of the platonic hierarchy of being, turned on its side and transposed onto Christian history, when he talks about the proleptic signs of the old testament as shadows, and the signified of the New Testament as the substance. We already saw how for Hooker shadow and accident came to be almost synonyms. In Andrewes' use of the term shadow to mean fore shadowing we can see how history moves from sign to signified, as the intellect moves from accident to substance, and then back to accident, and as logical method brings us from *inventio* to *iudicio* and finds that *iudicio* was ontologically first all along. Andrewes also has a sense of our intellectual shortcomings as being due to our involvement in matter, and he says that in understanding Christ through signs, we must "incorporate" him physically in the sacrament. Understanding and eating are given a metaphoric equivalence that raises the physical activity into a semiotic one, but gives the semiotic one a corporeality that foreshadows our transformed bodies in the resurrection when Christ will be with us in a new way. The figural allegory that subtends Andrewes' sermon, and its relation to Hooker's accidents through the equivalence of accidents and shadows, tells us that not only are words things, and things words, but that things/words are aspects of a single substance through Christ. The naming of Christ as Immanuel by the angel of God, turns this name from an empty label into a real thing. The process of abstraction in this sense, doesn't empty out the meaning by reifying it, as Heidegger would have it, but brings it from the realm of accidents into the realm of being, and thus provides a way for us to understand all allegorical

personifications. Personification allegory is not completely different from figural allegory or from the reading practice known as allegoresis, but they are both means by which shadows/accidents are turned into substance. One is performed by God and the other by the reader, yet there is a connection between the 'One' and the individual 'one's' who seek to know him.

2. Spenser's Knights of Dialectical Reason

The medieval and renaissance literary genre known as Allegory has been sharply differentiated from figural allegory, or typology, by literary critics concerned to define a discrete object for their investigations. Without wishing to refute them, I have begun to argue at the end of the last chapter that figural allegory is closely related to personification allegory. The term *figura*, as delineated by Erich Auerbach, came to describe the idea that the events of the old testament are not just prophetic of those in the new testament, but are proleptic. They make direct reference to each other across the space of history, in the same way that a finger pointing at an object makes reference to what it points at. Yet as Augustine showed in *On the Teacher* the apparently obvious referentiality of the act of ostention is no more natural than the reference of an ancient event to a recent one. Our perception of the connection between finger and object must come from somewhere else. To see this connection is not only to 'understand' a text, but it is to perceive 'substance'.¹ Just as the subject and object of Aristotelian logic can be troped as a hand trying to grasp itself, understanding and substance are subjective and objective accounts of the same transcendent absolute in figural allegory. However, Augustine's *On The Teacher* taken as an example of his views on typology might give the mistaken impression that he was not interested in history, when most of his work shows him to be passionately engaged with the politics of his time and place, and to be intent on teaching Christianity to his society. Auerbach explains the importance of history like this:

Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses or fulfills the first. The two poles of the figure are separate in time,

¹ Auerbach, 37. Cf also Freinkel, 7

but both, being real events or figures, are within time, within the stream of historical life. Only the understanding of the two persons or events is a spiritual act, but this spiritual act deals with concrete events whether past, present or future, and not with concepts or abstractions; these are quite secondary, since promise and fulfillment are real historical events, which have either happened in the incarnation of the Word, or will happen in the second coming. Of course purely spiritual elements enter into the conceptions of the ultimate fulfillment, since "my kingdom is not of this world"; yet it will be a real kingdom, not an immaterial abstraction"²

The philological history of *figura*, as Auerbach explicates it, refers to plasticity, or to form born by matter, either as an imprint or as something that animates it from within. It is sometimes used as a synonym for the Platonic 'copy', or for the Aristotelian term 'species' and was taken up by Lucretius again in the notion of 'copy'. The prime example of Lucretian *figura* in the renaissance is in Ovid's *metamorphoses*, but since the changes that characters in this work undergo are equivocal ones, not bound by logic, I will argue that they can only be taken as a model for allegorical personifications in local instances: in parts of Book III of *The Faerie Queene* or in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, the whole point of which is the insufficiency of this kind of figuration for Christian soteriological purposes. *Figura* occupies an intermediate position between the eternal substance that was the telos of *On the Teacher* and the history which is the locus of Augustine's *City of God*. The notion of God that exists at the end of figural history is not one that transcends the body, however, but one in which the body is transfigured.

Most recent theorizations of allegory, beginning with Angus Fletcher's *Allegory: Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (1964) have assumed that allegorical personifications are to be understood within a narrow neoplatonic context. This may spring in part from the fact that Henri de Lubac traces the genealogy of the four senses of allegorical exegesis back to Origen and his pervasive influence on medieval thought. Auerbach says that the 'four

² Auerbach, 53

senses' tradition is the means by which the idealist rather than the material sense of figura was preserved. The neoplatonism attached to allegory also has to do with mnemonic systems in the hermetic tradition that used striking visual images, something that Spenser's Cambridge coeval, William Perkins, thought of as an inner idolatry that compromised the abstract purity of the Ramist system. Fletcher sees allegorical personifications as daemons intermediate between men and angels. He says that "it may help, in the case of moral allegory, to think of each virtue acquired or lacked, as a kind of moral energy, not, as Aristotle's *Ethics* would define virtue, a state of being, but an equivalent in the moral world of a tuned-up muscle in the physical world."³ He goes on to say in reference to the knights in *The Faerie Queene* that their "daemoniac agency implies a *manie de perfection*, an impossible desire to become one with an image of unchanging purity. The agent seeks to become isolated within himself, frozen into an eternally fixed form, an "idea" in the Platonic sense of the term."⁴ He dismisses Aristotle as a source for Allegory by saying that the genre does not fit the pattern of Aristotelian mimesis, which involves deliberation rather than the sort of compulsive teleology he ascribes to allegory.⁵

Fletcher's paradigm for the allegorical personification of vice is Malbecco, whose jealousy is so consuming that ultimately he becomes jealousy itself. While I agree up to a point with Fletcher, that Allegory as a didactic mode accords with Plato's view of poetry in *The Republic* rather than with Aristotle's in *The Poetics*, I argue that Aristotelian

³ Fletcher, 47

⁴ Fletcher, 65

⁵ The *Faerie Queene* does have something to say about mimesis however, associating it with Catholicism and idolatry, as when Archimago creates an image of Truth "And that new creature borne without her dew, Full of the makers guile, with usage sly, He taught to imitate that Lady trew, Whose semblance she did carrie under feigned hew."(I.i.46) He returns to the subject in describing the Bower of Bliss at the end of Book II.

metaphysics can help us understand this quintessentially medieval artform as both a psychomachia populated by abstracted accidents, and as mimetic in the Christian sense described by Gaudentius of Brescia when he says that "the figura (preceding in time) is not *veritas*, but *imitatio veritatis*."⁶ How can something that precedes in time imitate that which comes after it? Only if that which comes after is also in some sense prior, as *inventio*, which seems to come first turns out to be logically secondary to *iudicio* in Renaissance Aristotelian logic. Indeed Fletcher's reading of Malbecco and the Knights supports this reading, because if virtue and vice are habits that come to define their subjects, then they derive from many particular instances of virtuous or vicious action, like accidents that have been abstracted into universals by a fallen human understanding. Yet once this abstraction has taken place virtues and vices cease to be existential trajectories, but are part of a fixed pattern of events.⁷ Allegory is an attempt to depict what history looks like to the God who sees its overarching logic, a logic that we can only follow by means of a method that is understood one step at a time. In his description of Gabriel Biel's influence on Martin Luther, Heiko Oberman describes the difference between God's knowledge and man's knowledge like this:

God knows, but he knows everything at once; God wills, but with an undisturbable immutability. Most basic is the epistemological difference: while God grasps immediately and without deliberation the essence of things, man does not go further than forming *phantasmata*, images of the objects under consideration.⁸

⁶ Auerbach, 44

⁷ Cf Kantorowicz, 111, n70, on the subject of Justice as an abstract idea. He says sixteenth century jurists argued about whether to interpret her as a *habitus*, and on the other to interpret her as equal with God or the divine *voluntas*, which is to say as a virtue or a God and decided on the latter. The fact that she could be both or either, is my point.

⁸ Oberman, 67

In discussing the visual nature of the allegorical image, Fletcher talks about Aristotle's sense of 'liveliness' as involving a visually sharp image, and makes reference to the fact that that which transcends the senses nevertheless requires the senses to become accessible to our human intelligence. In its visuality the image is geometric and diagrammatic, which he describes as "abstractive means"⁹ of isolating the forms of nature in order to subject them to analysis. The emphasis on discrete, well defined images gives allegorical writing/imagery, a discontinuous nature.¹⁰ The visual absurdity of the imagery has its own ideal reality, and is under strong logical control.¹¹ However he doesn't define what he means by logic, and his references are to Aristotle's rhetoric, poetics and ethics rather than to his logic or metaphysics. Like most other commentators on the genre his thinking is inflected by the terms of naturalistic fiction rather than by medieval and renaissance accounts of the workings of the mind and the cosmos. The logic, physics and metaphysics of Aristotle give us the terminology by which we might imagine these abstractive means taking place.

Intriguingly, Fletcher says that "the silences in allegory mean as much as the filled-in spaces, because by bridging the silent gaps between oddly unrelated images we reach the sunken understructure of thought."¹² There is a curious confusion of senses in this quotation, as he describes the space between visual images as a silence. Fletcher is pointing to a punctualist metaphysics that understands the world in terms of things rather than dynamics, and yet his sense that these abstractions are energies rather than beings seems to imply, as Gordon Teskey will later openly state, that allegory tyrannically

⁹ Fletcher, 99

¹⁰ Fletcher, 103

¹¹ Fletcher, 105

¹² Fletcher, 107

imposes form on social and historical dynamics. At the same time Fletcher's juxtaposition of visual images and silent spaces seems to ignore the dialogic nature of Langlandian Allegory, the aural component of the system of predication that is central to Aristotle's logic,¹³ and the meaningful similarity between Langland's personification allegory and scholastic dialectic. Fletcher goes on to describe the detailed 'ornamentation' of allegorical figures as 'surrealism' rather than realism.¹⁴ With this emphasis on rhetorical ornamentation, he pays little attention to the material and logical substrate of ornamentation or to the fact, alluded to in passing, that these personifications represent 'real' things, in the Platonic and Aristotelian sense of 'realism' as referring to a species or an idea. A clue to the influences bearing upon his interpretation of allegory as surrealism might be detected in his comparison of the eidetic nature of these images to the appearance of objects under the influence of LSD. His book was written in California in 1964.

We saw in the previous chapter how Thomas Wilson in *The Rule of Reason* thinks of arguments as things which must be "framed" by "knitting" words together. In I.ii.4 of *The Faerie Queene* we see Archimago's attempts to delude Red Cross Knight couched in similar language when he has the two spirits he has framed to represent Truth and a lusty squire "knit themselves in Venus shamefull chaine". The result is that "The eye of reason was with rage yblent" in Red Cross Knight and he has to be restrained from slaying 'Una,' an action which would have shown the idol's insubstantiality, but perhaps not in a way that would be morally beneficial. Spenser here is thinking about logical conjunctions of ideas. Redcross sees Truth in an adulterous embrace that clouds his own reason. The telos

¹³ Ong discusses this in detail in *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (1958).

¹⁴ Fletcher, 108

of the book will be his own marriage with Truth. If Truth is the end of his journey we may suppose that the "goodly golden chain" of this narrative is intended to be a logically meaningful one, that will teach a moral and spiritual lesson. That Spenser may have had Wilson's logic book in mind when writing this sentence is supported by the later argument between Redcross and Sansioy, who are prevented from fighting by Lucifera. Sansioy excuses his rashness in wanting to ignore the protocols of combat in her court by saying that grief over the death of his brother made him "forget the raines to hold/ of reason's rule" (I.iv.41).¹⁵ The concept of method which became popular in the renaissance has already been invoked by Spenser in the Letter to Raleigh, when he contrasts his poetic "Method" to that of an historiographer. Method can be read etymologically as meaning 'a road' or 'a way.' Michael J. Buckley talks about it as a metaphor taken from hunting, and says "Liddell and Scott give the "pursuit of a nymph" as one example of this sense."¹⁶ When various knights chase maidens across the landscape of *The Faerie Queene*, it may be inferred that these personified abstractions are elements in the dialectical logic that he learned at Cambridge from Aristotelian and/or Ramist sources.¹⁷

Spenser makes passing reference in the *Letter to Raleigh* to "Aristotle and the rest," warning us that this poem is a gallimaufry coming from a variety of sources. We might ask which Aristotelian works he is referring to. The *Ethics* is the most obvious of his sources, and I have just argued that the logic is also present, even if not in a systematic way. Frances Yates gives us some further possible clues in the *The Art of*

¹⁵ Cf De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis, Vol 1.*, 69, where he talks about a characterisation of Peter Lombard as a "Knight who wears the armour of dialectical reason"

¹⁶ Buckley, *Origins of Modern Atheism*, 22

¹⁷ Cf. also De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis, Vol 1.*, 69, describing the impact of Aristotle on medieval philosophy in the 12th century where he quotes a description of Peter Abelard as a "shining knight of dialectic" and "wearing the armour of dialectical reason.:"

Memory (1964), where she traces the classical memory tradition through the middle ages to the renaissance. Interestingly, she says the scholastics approved of outlandish imagery for the purposes of memorizing the virtues and vices as well as their places in heaven and hell. She argues persuasively that Aristotle's *De Reminiscentia* is a major source for Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Giordano Bruno was in England in the 1580s and producing memory systems that both derive and depart from this Dominican *ars memorativa* tradition.¹⁸ Bruno, somewhat perversely, wrote a book on how to memorize Aristotle's *Physics* which he regarded as a dry and dusty system. The mnemonic imagery takes over from that which it is supposed to serve, imposing a system of resemblances such as the one Foucault describes in *The Order of Things* on an underlying Aristotelian scientific discourse.¹⁹ Bruno's subversive act of allegorizing the *Physics* may be understood in the context of a later allegorist, William Blake, who talked about subjecting the mechanistic science of his own age to the alternative logic of poetry, in this fragment: "The atoms of Democritus/ And Newton's particles of light/ Are sands upon the Red Sea shore/ Where Israel's tents do shine so bright."²⁰ The difference between this and figural allegory is arguably that in this kind of allegoresis the text being interpreted loses its own significance while in figural allegory the old testament events that are fulfilled in the new, keep their historical weight.²¹ In literary Allegories we can see a mirror image of the

¹⁸ Cf. McKim, 34/5, "Bruno sought a vivid use of the imagination to enhance occult memory. It was for him a "magico-religious technique." Ramus on the other hand, sought a simplified teaching method. He found it in the natural dialectical order by which an art is arranged. Once proper method was followed, the art of memory "naturally" followed."

¹⁹ Yates, 280, "The memory system by which the physics are 'figured' are themselves a contradiction of the physics."

²⁰ Blake, 133, 'Mock on, Mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau'

²¹ Cf. Auerbach, 55: "despite the existence of numerous hybrid forms [allegoresis] is very different from figural interpretation....And yet I believe, though I can offer no strict proof of it, that independently, that is to say, without the support of the figural method, it would have had little influence on the freshly converted peoples."

reading practice known as allegoresis, a snapshot of the mind of a typical reader encountering the texts written by men and by God. As Auerbach says:

The question of the imitation of nature in art aroused little theoretical interest in the Middle Ages; but all the more attention was accorded to the notion that the artist, as a kind of figure for God the Creator, realized an archetype that was alive in his spirit"²²

The earliest such Christian allegory was Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, which describes a battle within the psyche between virtues and vices. The concept of "mental fight" was still an important one to Blake, who stands at the far end of this tradition, and who saw his mental fight as having national implications when he said "I will not cease from mental fight/ nor shall my sword sleep in my hand/ Till we have built Jerusalem/ In England's green and pleasant land."²³ This is not just about Blake's own moment, but arguably a reference to Spenser and his knights, and the allegorical tradition leading up to him. Frances Yates has described the tumult among Cambridge intellectuals in the 1580s about the art of memory and its relation to logic and to poetic imagery as a battle within the psyche of England.²⁴ Cyril Tourneur, who seems to have moved in these circles, and certainly to have read Spenser, Sidney et al, turns the battle of Zutphen at which Sidney was fatally wounded into a psychomachia in his poem *The Transformed Metamorphosis*. The title of the poem itself suggests what allegory does with Lucretian figura or Ovidian metamorphosis, transforming the chaotic energy of picaresque narrative into the moral logic of Christian ethics.

²² Auerbach, 62

²³ Blake, 370, Song from 'Milton.'

²⁴ Yates, 271: ""Thus in England a battle was joined within memory. There was a war in the psyche and the issues at stake were vast."

So how are we to understand the psyche in which this battle takes place? In its advocacy of the *ars memorativa*, the Dominican tradition differentiates between corporeal images which the imagination receives from nature and the intellectual abstractions that we seem to derive from the accidents of this secondary narrative for the purposes of arriving at logical conclusions, but which are most fully known through illumination or grace.²⁵ Aquinas arrays the virtues and vices according to the rules of syllogistic logic, according to Yates.²⁶ She makes clear that his personifications are 'things' and not "energies" as Fletcher has argued. They were not thought of fundamentally as visual forms, but as invisible intellectual essences which are given bodily form for didactic and mnemonic reasons. Thus we can see the connection between imagination, understood as a bodily process, and intellection which abstracts from it: that is to say, between what Fletcher calls 'ornamentation' and the logic that gives it coherence.

Yates' analysis also helps us to understand the relationship between imagination as an aid to memory, and the platonic concept of anamnesis. Mnemonics and Anamnesis can be seen as complementary explanations, describing two hierarchically different ways of experiencing the world. These ways are analogous to the distinction made in humanistic logic between *inventio* and *iudicio*. Mnemonic imagery is a bodily process grounded in the imagination that helps us to remember particulars, while anamnesis

²⁵ Summa Theologica, II.II.49.1 "we need experience to discover what is true in the majority of cases: wherefore the Philosopher says (Ethic. ii, 1) that "intellectual virtue is engendered and fostered by experience and time." Now experience is the result of many memories as stated in Metaph. i, 1, and therefore prudence requires the memory of many things. Hence memory is fittingly accounted a part of prudence..... just as aptitude for prudence is in our nature, while its perfection comes through practice or grace, so too, as Tully says in his Rhetoric [Ad Herenn. de Arte Rhet. iii, 16,24, memory not only arises from nature, but is also aided by art and diligence". Cf Yates, 46.

²⁶ Yates, 108, "The emphasis of the Thomist rules [for memorizing the virtues and vices] is on order, and this order is really the order of the argument."

raises this knowledge that seems to come to us through the senses to a level at which it comes to seem like something we are remembering rather than learning experientially. Spenser indicates as much in Book II.9 of the *The Faerie Queene* when he has the room of memory inhabited by two agents, one called Anamnestes and the other Eumnestes. Anamnestes, as a faculty that is outside time, is a young boy, while Eumnestes is associated with history, and is an old man. Of the material memory and its counterpart, spiritual anamnesis, it may be said that one proceeds horizontally by means of a method, while the other is raised vertically by means of illumination. The two are both different and mutually inclusive as were the material and spiritual senses of Christian allegoresis in the four senses tradition described by De Lubac, or the old and new testaments in the figural method described by Auerbach.

In light of the foregoing argument, Fletcher's psychedelic theory of allegory, which is also deeply psychoanalytical, can be said to be on the right track, but using an anachronistic vocabulary. It was moderated by subsequent critics, who continue, quite rightly, to emphasise the radically mutable nature of allegory as it strives for a perfection that eludes it. Maureen Quilligan defines the genre as being one obsessed with words, and sees the pun as its signature trope. She sees the plot of book one of *The Faerie Queene* as revolving around the notion of error, meaning 'to wander' and to make 'a mistake,' and, as we will see, makes compelling observations about the meaning of despair as a dis-pairing of truth and holiness. 'Holiness' itself punningly evokes the genre's concern with wholeness. Central to Quilligan's delineation of the genre's boundaries is the distinction of it from allegoresis, or "the reading practice that detects vertically arranged levels of meaning in scriptural texts." She is more interested in the horizontal relations across these

levels than in the vertical relation to a divine Other. She quotes disapprovingly D.W. Robertson's contention that the otherness of allegory's referent is signalled above all by the absurdity of its narrative surface, because she sees this 'absurdity' as the source of its literary value, an opinion Spenser might both agree with and feel uneasy about.²⁷ Her investment in process rather than ontology means that Quilligan pays less attention than Carol Kaske to the difference between *distributio* and *distinctio*. *Distinctio* according to Kaske is the existential process of reading and coming up against apparent contradictions in a text, while *distributio* is the bird's eye view of the text one has at the end in which these contradictions add up to a coherent pattern. Where Quilligan stresses the pun, Kaske sees the contradiction as the defining trope of allegory, suggesting an 'upward' dialectical movement of its thought. Although they don't go so far as to express faith in the poem's *a priori* authorization by God both these critics are committed to its coherence amid all the complexities they find in the text.

Jonathan Goldberg, in the preface to a book written simultaneously with Quilligan's differentiates himself from her by implying that, despite her emphasis on polysemy, she espouses a metaphysical interpretation of allegory in contrast to his 'structuralist' one which borrows its terms from Barthes' S/Z. "Barthes' terms suit no text so well as *The Faerie Queene*: "Writing extenuates ...the hallucination of the inside, for it has no other substance than the interstice"(p208)."²⁸ The title of Goldberg's book is 'Endlesse work' signalling that he reads *The Faerie Queene* as a poem that continually disrupts its own impulses towards closure: "failed endings are part of the design of the

²⁷ Quilligan, 28

²⁸ Goldberg, 21

poem."²⁹ He is struck by the fact that allegorical heroes are not 'individuals' in the modern sense, or in the sense that Fletcher seemed to indicate, and that "any hero is all heroes, that all heroes are the same hero". The semantic excess of the poem covers a lack, and in this it mirrors the world as text which can only be elucidated by reference to other texts, a theory that he attributes to Foucault in *The Order of Things*.³⁰ In his perception that its excess of signification covers a lack, Goldberg notices something that could be described as easily, and less anachronistically, in Aristotelian terms as it is in Foucauldian or Derridean terms: that the accidents of event and description making up the poem's surface tend towards infinity. In quoting Barthes' on the poem's lack of substance, he doesn't consider that the poem is a document of faith, and that the lack of substance it at times evinces has to do not with its being unconsciously postmodern, but with its consciousness of its own inherent sinfulness. In making this clear Spenser was giving his poem a kind of polysemous energy, but far from taking the position, as Goldberg does, that polysemy is good and metaphysics bad, Spenser's position is hard to pin down. Accidents signal substance, but they also conceal substance if they are treated as an end in themselves, which is arguably why Guyon destroys the Bower of Bliss at the end of Book II. In noticing that the characters are not important embodiments of plot, and that each is all, Goldberg arguably signifies that they are not characters in themselves, but aspects of the character that is the poem itself. Describing the 'I' of the first stanza as a signifier without a signified, Goldberg assumes that the poem has no 'substance,' because as an enlightened postmodern critic he knows better than the naive reader of Spenser's own time. Goldberg is scarcely refuted by saying that this is not a poem about characters, but a poem who is a

²⁹ Goldberg, 2

³⁰ Goldberg, 10

character, because for him there is nothing outside the text. In holding this view he is the natural successor of the sixteenth century puritan.

If the question of polysemy is crucial to the readings of Quilligan and Goldberg, for Quilligan it is in the service of generic coherence, and for Goldberg it signals an ultimate lack of coherence. It may be argued that they are both right. Henri de Lubac's encyclopedic account of medieval exegesis describes how for medieval exegetes the limitations of the literal sense were the limitations of "things" that nevertheless contain infinite matter for contemplation by a virtuous reader. This infinity is inside that which contains it, and is akin to the kind of polysemy Quilligan's work celebrates. The endless work that Goldberg reads in the text on the other hand is the ever receding horizon of discourse which has no outside. It is not contained, and mirrors in a parodic way the infinity of the God who is the ultimate referent of allegory. Although Quilligan makes a worthwhile distinction between Allegory as a genre and allegoresis as a reading practice, I have argued that personification allegory, understood as psychomachia, is a mirror image of the texts that allegoresis is employed upon. It shows us the mind of one who reads and abstracts from the books of the bible and the cosmos, subjecting these abstractions to the processes of a flawed human logic - symbolised by the Dwarf and the Palmer - that is ultimately rescued by faith rather than by reason. This may be too schematic a notion to be applied routinely to the complexities of the classics of this genre, but it can be seen in Book I of *The Faerie Queen* as Red Cross Knight at first reads things too literally, before proceeding to the allegorical stage under the tutelage of Dame Coelia, followed by the moral stage in his encounter with the Dragon, and the anagogical stage in his marriage to Truth. In this way, as Quilligan's argument suggests, the four levels

become successive stages on one level which is that of the poem's narrative.³¹ Goldberg goes beyond this flattening of the text, beating it out to an airy thinness until the boundaries that give it substance are lost sight of, and it atomizes.

Allegory, as Gordon Teskey tells us on the first page of *Allegory and Violence* (2004), means 'speaking other.' The other that allegory points towards is God. However, Teskey's book argues that there is an other 'other,' namely the material world in which the masses strive for their daily bread against the forces of greed and corruption that power gathers around itself. They are the denizens of the 'agora' or marketplace which is etymologically connected to the word 'allegory'. He sees the allegorist as in league with the forces repressing them: as the logocentric genre par excellence, allegory is involved in the business of imposing meaning on matter and on people in a kind of symbolic violence. Teskey reflects a widespread view that philosophical idealism is inherently totalitarian.³² I argue in this chapter that Teskey has an inherently presentist view of allegory, and that the kind of symbolic violence suffered by the individual in his reading, as in Goldberg's, depends upon a modern view of the individual. Spenser was a card-carrying imperialist, and it would be wrong to deny this, but he was also a poet, a maker of objects according to established patterns. He brought individuality to this work, which is what we value about them today, but he also brought assumptions about the place of an

³¹ Quilligan, *Language of Allegory*, 28, "this vertical conceptualization of allegory and its emphasis upon disjunct "levels" is absolutely wrong as a matter of practical fact. All reading proceeds linearly, in a word-by-word fashion, ...It would be more precise to say therefore that allegory works horizontally, rather than vertically, so that meaning accretes serially, interconnecting and criss-crossing the verbal surface long before one can accurately speak of moving to another level "beyond" the literal. And that "level" is not above the literal one in a vertically organized fictional space, but is located in the self-consciousness of the reader"

³² Cf. Levinas, *Transcendence and Height*, 14: " the myth of a legislative consciousness of things, where difference and identity are reconciled, is the great myth of philosophy. It rests upon the totalitarianism or imperialism of the Same. Defined by the universality of the Same, Idealism is found precisely in the philosophers who denounce it most harshly....idealism is an egoism"

individual in relation to the universe that are different from ours. By not reading allegory suspiciously, I attempt to delineate some of the conditions of possibility for modern individuality, and for its critique of premodernity, but I also try to show how premodernity might be critiquing us.

In the *Letter to Raleigh* Spenser purports to elucidate his dark conceit in order to forestall potential misconstructions by giving his friend the gist of his 'whole' intention in the course of this great work. The idea of it being a 'whole intention,' suggests that it is already in some sense finished, and the volition that propels the reader and writer from beginning to end describes a circle. This is confirmed when we realise that the projected final episode brings us back to the beginning of the story, and we may remember Hooker's description of moments as circles, each one a discrete 'thing'.³³ The odd locution "without expressing of any particular purposes or by accidents therein occasioned" is clarified when he says later that "many other adventures are intermedled, but rather as Accidents, then intendments". He is clearly opposing accidents and intention, rather than accidents and substance here, yet he does talk of how Aristotle has encouraged him "to frame" the moral virtues that made Arthur king, and the politic virtues that sustained him as king. As Rayna Kalas has shown, the word 'frame' implies the immanent being of an object, and Spenser's sense that his intention describes a circle gives it the sort of circumscription possessed by things rather than by their accidents. Spenser's use of the word 'frame' implies that this work is a material object with an intellectual essence that he can convey to Raleigh, without giving away the accidents that

³³ Spenser of course couldn't have read the Laws which were being written simultaneously with *The Faerie Queene*, but the account of time and times in Hooker is based on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which Spenser could have read.

constitute it for the senses, and that make it a good story. The temporal accidents of the narrative, and the modal accidents that make up the physical artefact are both signs of an invisible substance whose reality must be sought indeterminately in the object and in the mind of the reader. If it appears didactic, and therefore violent in Teskey's view, there is a sense in which teaching is an illusion occasioned by our involvement in material history, one that disappears when higher levels of understanding are reached, when immanent substance becomes transcendent Substance. From this perspective the didacticism of allegory turns into something else. It is "speaking other."

This difference can be seen in the distinction made in the *Timaeus* between Reason and Necessity. Necessity describes the aleatory processes of nature that make up the superficial narrative of this poem, while Reason is the circular movement of the Uniform and the Same. Reason is not imposed on nature, but rescued from it. Far from involving an imposition of abstract form on heterogeneous matter, the Platonic soul is something that is imprisoned by matter and longs to be released.³⁴ The primordial *materia* of the universe is composed of triangular atoms, and their receptacle is empty space. So if Plato is a gender-polarist, the femininity existing in opposition to masculine Form is emptiness or Nothing. Even at the atomic level there are only triangles, and so form and matter are one. The idea of the soul imprisoned by the body can be related to the idea of truth captured by pagan discourse, described by De Lubac in a chapter entitled 'The Beautiful Captive Woman'. Spenser seemingly alludes to one or both of these traditions in I.vii.21 when Una faints at the sight of the dwarf carrying Redcross Knight's armour, a sign which seems to announce his death. The dwarf revives her: "So hardly he

³⁴ We already saw John Jewel displaying this assumption in his treatise of the sacraments in chapter 1.

the flitted life does win/ Unto her native prison to return." Her body is a prison in which Truth is temporarily housed. To convert this argument into an Aristotelian register, we might also note that at the end of Book II Guyon destroys the bower of bliss and returns the monstrous inhabitants to their rightful species. He throws a subtle net over Verdant and Acrasia, an action which is not really violent, since it doesn't hurt them. His destruction of the bower is destruction of inanimate objects. He does it, not to violently impose form on matter, but to bring substance out of accident. All are restored to substance with the exception of Grille, who is naturally beastly (like Aristotle, Spenser seems to have thought that some people were born to be slaves). Book III which deals with romantic love and with the scheme of generation is all about individuals rather than species, and in the Garden of Adonis we see them being produced from Nile mud in their millions by action of the sun. Yet here we can see that matter is imposing itself on form rather than vice versa, because Adonis who is the father of all forms is effectively imprisoned by Venus as a sexual slave in the garden.

The Faerie Queene is a sensory and imaginative construct that points beyond its own accidents to that which transcends accident: substance. A substance, as Spinoza later argued, is something of which there can be only one in the universe. This fact should help us to interpret the events surrounding Una's encounter with Abessa in Book I, Canto III. Abessa's name, apart from implying that she is a Catholic clergywoman, means 'non-being'. Words relating to accident, chance, fortune and error, suffuse this episode. One example will suffice:

His fearfull friends weare out the wofull night
Ne dare to weepe, nor seeme to understand
The heaue hap that on them is alight,
Affraide, leaſt to themſelves the like mishappen might (I.iii.20)

These lines describing the aftermath of Kirkrapine's death-by-lion, are followed by a description of Una continuing on her journey. Substance and accident, being and nonbeing are at issue here. That Spenser is thinking along Aristotelian lines about the relation of substance/being to accident/non-being is supported by the imagery of fragmentation and multiplicity that also occurs in this episode. Abessa is characterised by the daily recitation of thousands of paternosters and aves, while the lion rends Kirkrapine in thousands of pieces. If we ask, with the false Redcross, "what the lion ment" we can only reply by giving an historical account of his entry into the narrative and subsequent deeds. He is a sign whose meaning has not been given to us by the narrative, and who therefore seems the exception that proves Maureen Quilligan's rule that allegory is a genre that tells us how to read it.

In telling us how to read it Allegory is akin to the way the sacraments were understood in the reformation, as signs which God has established for us in scripture. Paradoxically Redcross Knight's baptism happens as a result of being 'accidentally' propelled backwards into a sacred stream by a dragon's breath, demonstrating that there is nothing really contingent about the contingencies of this narrative, and that his salvation is not entirely volitional: "into the same the knight back overthrown, fell"(I.11.30). The word accident itself comes from the Latin *accidere*, meaning 'to fall'. In this sense his inclusion in the Christian community is like that of an infant in the pre-reformation church, but also different from it because he is an adult with the illusion of

being in control of his fate, even as he is being manipulated by a divine artist.³⁵ Yet from an historical point of view the establishment of these particular sacraments seems to be accidental rather than providential, and it is only through blind faith that Spenser, like Jewel and Hooker, can claim that the English church is true where the Roman church isn't.

The diachronic progress of texts like *The Divine Comedy*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and *Piers Plowman* might best be seen, as Larry Scanlon argues, in terms of the sacrament of penance, as a penitential pilgrimage towards God, rather than a hieratic transformation of one kind of substance into another such as happens in the sacrament of the eucharist, or indeed baptism, because they are about the slow transformation of accident into substance, of sin into virtue, of nothingness into being and as such they continually approach an ideal, which is to say 'real', condition of stasis. Penance is no longer a sacrament in 1590s England, but repentance is still an important part of religious life, albeit one that is conducted privately and inwardly. Spenser is emphasising his continuity with and break from earlier allegories when he has Contemplation in FQ Book I.X.61 direct Red Cross Knight: "then seek this path that I to thee presage/ Which after all to heaven shall thee send;/ Then peacably thy painfull pilgrimage/ To yonder same Hierusalem do bend, /Where is for thee ordaind a blessed end". The fact that Red Cross Knight has an end in sight makes him different from most of the characters he encounters, like the Sans Loi brothers, who are caught in an endless cycle of revenge, or like Despair who can't die, "till he should die his last, that is eternally" in I.ix.54:

³⁵ Rosamund Tuve thinks that Redcross Knight's baptism comes too late in the book to be plausible, but Harold L. Weatherby, Chapter 1, part 3, counters this by examining the patristic texts Spenser is likely to have read at Cambridge, in which adult baptism was regarded as the norm.

That this penitential process involves physical pain can be seen as supporting Teskey's view that allegory is a kind of violence, but again I would argue that when the Red Cross Knight's flesh is being mortified by Amendment with red hot pincers in order to make him comport with the symbol on his shield, the pain he experiences is the pain of coming back into being after his dissolution at Fidessa/Duessa's hands, "And ever as superfluous flesh did rot/ Amendment readie still at hand did wayt,/ To pluck it out with pincers firie whot,/ That soone in him was left not one corrupted iot."(I.x.26). His return to being is a reduction of his physical body to limited dimensions, making it something that refers him to God rather than to the scheme of generation. The pain of this makes him cry "like a Lyon"(I.x.28), like that avatar of Fortune without whom Una would be dead. His return to being is to experience himself as an accident who is saved by accidents that turn out to be contrived, and therefore not accidental at all. The sin that led him into Error's wood and began his litany of encounters with Pride in its multifarious forms, involved a machiavellian presumption of the sufficiency of his own virtue, a presumption that turned out to be mistaken.

Torture and penance have in common with each other and with the sacraments which survived the reformation, that they depend on a relationship between physical actions on a material substance, and a change in the individual's will. A crucial difference between these things is that one is semiotic and contingent on consensual participation in an interpretive community, while the other is violent. However, it is true that in Spenser's society failure to participate in the interpretive community ordained by Christ in the new testament could lead to torture. Furthermore, if the difference between torture and penance is that only one of them is undertaken voluntarily, we have seen the way in

which Red Cross Knight's salvation is not volitional, and so there is a relationship between the activity of God and that of the torturer Busirane in Book III, whom Teskey uses as an exemplar of the writer as tyrant, as there is between both of these agents and Spenser. Arthur in I.8.44 says: "Best musick breedes delight in loathing eare: / But th'onley good, that growes of passed feare, / Is to be wise, and ware of like agein. This dayes ensample hath this lesson deare / Deepe written in my heart with yron pen, / That blisse may not abide in state of mortall men". Experience writes on his heart, as Busirane writes with the blood of Amoret's heart, yet if the poem teaches us anything, it is that many things are hard to distinguish from their opposites, as Duessa looks like Fidessa, Archimago like Red Cross Knight, and the despair leading to suicide looks very like the humility that leads to salvation.

The similarity of penance and torture raises questions about the relationship of the self with itself, a relationship that is referenced by Una speaking to Red Cross Knight as he contemplates suicide: "of yourself ye thus berobbed are"(I.viii.42). His dis-pair, is a doubling of himself, that is also a loss of himself. If the poem valorizes unity over duality, Una over Duessa, it suggests that when being is assumed by an other it can be either argued or persecuted out of existence, depending on how good or sinful a reader the errant subject is. When Orgoglio defeats Red Cross Knight, on the other hand, Duessa prevents the giant from killing him in a scene that would be rewritten by Milton in *Paradise Lost*, because the coexistence of Holiness and Pride, of a duality of antithetical principles in the universe, is the principle she represents: "Hold for my sake, and do him not to dye, / But vanquisht thine eternall bondsclaue make, / And me thy worthy meed unto thy Leman take."(I.vii.14) Yet we know that allegory's entire orientation is towards

an other that is persuading it out of one existence and into a truer existence that consists in understanding the first as accidental, and it may be that this does violence to many earthly attachments. The poem is a ladder or vehicle that must be left behind at the end, as the music heard by the senses gives way to unheard music beyond the senses.³⁶

While Red Cross Knight's penance, leading ultimately to baptism, is clearly an important stage in his journey, the book's concern with the Catholic and Protestant sacraments of the eucharist and the lord's supper is a more immanent one, as is the action of this sacrament in an individual life. This eucharistic theme can be said to constitute a metanarrative about allegory itself, asking the question of whether the other it points to is a separate substance and where this substance is to be sought. Auerbach provides an interesting gloss on this notion when he says:

[figura is] both tentative fragmentary reality and veiled eternal reality. This becomes eminently clear in the sacrament of the sacrifice, the Last Supper, the *pascha nostrum*, which is *figura Christi*.

This sacrament, which is figure as well as symbol, and which has long existed historically - namely, since it was first established in the old covenant - gives us the purest picture of the concretely present, the veiled and tentative, the eternal and supratemporal elements contained in the figures"³⁷

When Una takes refuge among the fauns and satyrs in Canto VI she teaches them to kneel and pray, presumably on the assumption that habitual practice teaches one until habit becomes virtue, and practice becomes an expression of theory rather than of earthbound mimesis. However old Sylvanus can't distinguish her from pagan gods like Diana and Venus (I.vi.16), and when she tries to restrain the satyrs from idolatrously worshipping her, they worship her Ass instead. In their mistaking of her accidents for substance they make the same error as Catholics who mistake the sign for the thing signified in their

³⁶ Cf. Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts* (1994)

³⁷ Auerbach, 60

understanding of the eucharist and thereby show themselves devoid of the kind of substance that comes from figural understanding, or from illumination.

Because of this deficiency in the satyrs we identify them as allegorical representations of the passions themselves. They are allegories in an opposite way to the one in which Malbecco becomes his defining passion in Book II, as we see in I.vi.21 where Satyrane is introduced as the offspring of Thyamis (passion), Labryde(turbulent/greedy) and Therion(beast). Within the poem's diegesis, Malbecco achieves allegorical meaning through habitual jealousy, while these characters have always already been passions but we as readers, along with Una, come to a recognition of this fact by reading and understanding. As the passions personified they are by definition that which suffers. ('Passion' comes from 'passio' - I suffer). Yet paradoxically they live in the woods "from lawes of men exilde"(I.vi.23). The law doesn't make people suffer, but they suffer from law's absence. Yet Satyrane's father teaches him "To banish cowardize and bastard feare"(I.vi.24) and thereby trains him to rule the rest of the satyrs such "That his behest they feared, as a tyrans law"(I.vi.26). There is a finely modulated difference between the law they suffer under and the law whose absence they suffer from. But the law they suffer under being imposed by a self appointed king rather than the King in the metaphysical sense implied in the doctrine of the king's two bodies, is also the absence of the law. While it might be tempting to see this episode as one that expresses a puritan disdain for liturgy, Carol Kaske has shown how Spenser often presents images or concepts *in malo* and *in bono*. The tone of this episode is not condemnatory, and Satyrane's tyranny is a mild one. I take this to mean that the passions are not inherently evil, but that they are deficient in their ability to comprehend truth. They are pagan but

are not condemned in the way Catholic misreadings of the sacraments and of scripture are to be condemned.³⁸ When a report comes of Redcross Knight's death at the hands of a pagan knight, Satyrane fights the knight on Una's behalf, but it is such an equal contest "that with their dreerie wounds and bloody gore/ They both deformed, scarcely could be known"(I.vi.45). Battles are won and lost in *The Faerie Queene* based on logic rather than brute strength. Satyrane and Sansloy become indistinguishable in the course of their battle because they are equivalent principles of lawlessness, though one is benign in being pre Christian, and the other is malign in being a saracen.

Their contest has been orchestrated by the Catholic Archimago who watches from the shadows. In his efforts to keep Truth away from Holiness, which is to say Wholeness, he also represents Fortune. Satyrane has an ability to defeat fortune in the form of lions and wolves through brute strength, which is a kind of Machiavellian *virtu*, but ultimately Fortune can't be defeated by brute force, because the attempt to do so assumes that there are two substances, and represents a fundamental misunderstanding of accidents as having an independent being. Duessa, whose name means 'double being', is seen wielding a chalice as her primary weapon when she and Orgoglio fight with Arthur: "Then took the angrie witch her golden cup,/ Which still she bore, replete with magick artes;/ Death and despeyre did many there of sup"(I.8.14). That the cup implies the eucharist is supported by other details of the book, such as the "trickling bloud and gobbets raw / Of late devoured bodies"(I.11.13) that appear in the dragon's mouth, which

³⁸ Cf. Cheke, *Of Superstition*, 196, "But that is not the only ignorance, which, knowing nothing, does not think itself to know any thing. Which, although it is a fault, because it is ignorance, is nevertheless a tolerable one, and more easily to be excused. But that is a far more frievous and infectious kind of ignorance, whihc either knows things corruptly, and is full of error, or pretends to know what it does not."

is like the “griesly mouth of hell”³⁹. This detail recalls Catholic literature like the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament* that shows unbelievers being given horrific visions of the eucharist as flesh. Spenser uses the protestant sacrament as a model for Allegory and sees the Catholic one as a way to subvert Allegory.

I take it that this is the reason for Duessa being forced to strip naked in I.VII.49: “And when they had the witch disrobed quight, / And all her filthy feature open showne,/ They let her goe at will, and wander wayes unknowne”. Once disrobed, her dual being is shown for what it is, something characterised by irony and antiphrasis, rather than polysemy in the hierarchical sense of the term, and whose substance is insubstantial. Her dalliance with Red Cross Knight on the banks of a stream that makes him dissolve, was both an allegory of the pre-reformation and a mimetic depiction of the depredations of scortatory love, a type of non-being that is experienced emotionally as well as understood cerebrally, characterised by what Shakespeare called “the expense of spirit in a waste of shame”, and seen as such by Red Cross Knight when he talks to Contemplation: “And for loose loves they’are vaine and vanish into nought”(I.x.62).. Once disrobed she is seen to be implicated in the limitlessness that is suspect in all the allegories I’ve mentioned, and, as an equivocal sign revealed as such, she passes out of knowledge, which is to say out of being. The convergence of a relative and an absolute subject position implied here, is one that Spenser hopes to be conferred on his own poem. It can be seen first in Book I.6 when Spenser writes, “Thus as they past, / The day with cloudes was suddeine ouercast” as if Truth and Holiness are passing his vision and ours at the same time. The apparently accidental nature of this circumstance will be revealed

³⁹ Cf also I.ix.13 where Fidelia holds a chalice containing water and wine before making Red Cross Knight despair for a second time.

to be substantial, the angled view an absolute one, and what happens elsewhere something that is supremely irrelevant.⁴⁰

To explore the idea that “The very word allegory evokes a schism in consciousness – between a life and a mystery, between the real and the ideal, between a literal tale and its moral – which is repaired, or at least concealed by imagining a hierarchy on which we ascend toward truth”⁴¹ I want to go back to *The Pardoner’s Tale* and the three revellers who are bad readers because they think Death is a determinate individual, and set out to kill him, only to die themselves. The tale’s peripeteia suggests that death is in fact a subject rather than an object, and, furthermore, is the essence of the individual subject. Such a conclusion would imply that life is something objective: as we see in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, ‘life’, according to this view of things consists in bringing one’s historical subjectivity in line with a transcendent objectivity. Death constitutes the subject’s boundary, such that when it is found, the subject is lost and replaced by an object - a corpse and the proliferant material world that is allegedly captured by allegorical form. Teskey, plausibly enough, genders this object as feminine in line with Aristotle, and with the kind of medieval misogyny comprehensively detailed by R. Howard Bloch. However, he equates it with ‘life’ in accordance with his own biopolitical concerns. He sees it as matter in contradistinction to the form that would force it into a stable significance.

Aquinas seems to agree with him about the relationship of words and things being like that of form to matter: “Wherefore in the sacraments, words and things, like form

⁴⁰ Lisa Freinkel, 10, elucidates this point in her discussion of how Ishmael and Isaac differ as the law of nature differs from and defers to the supernatural. Isaac is the son who prefigures New Testament events, while Ishmael belongs to the empty history of generations devoid of semiotic weight in the sacred book of history.

⁴¹ Teskey, 2.

and matter, combine in the formation of one thing.” But he goes on to say that this is true “in so far as the signification of things is completed by means of words, as above stated. And under words are comprised also sensible actions, such as cleansing and anointing and such like: because they have a like signification with the things”⁴². His theory of language here is Augustinian, imagining words as a type of thing, and then imagining the relationship between words or actions and things as being knowable by virtue of grace from God. It should be specified that Aquinas is talking strictly in terms of the sacraments as things ordained by the church to effect spiritual improvement in the participant, rather than about language generally as something which is intelligible because of divine illumination.

Teskey equates matter with substance in a way that seems to derive from 17th century rationalism, rather than from any medieval or renaissance source:

“Idealism is driven instead by a will-to-power that subjects what it does not understand, the realm of physis or growth, to a knowledge it imagines it already has. Hence a form such as Justice reduces to indifferent substance an other that it still needs as a place to occur outside itself”⁴³

The ways in which this condemnation points back at Teskey himself have already been suggested. I would only add that he seems to use Aristotle when he is reconcilable with the Platonic view of allegory that Alastair Fletcher also espoused, and that in his Nietzschean assumptions about Christianity he fails to take account of the Aristotelian contribution to medieval thought that was inherited by someone like Spenser who is a conservative writing during the end of that tradition in England.

⁴² Summa Theologica III.q1.a6

⁴³ Teskey, 17

When in seeking an objective Death, Chaucer's revellers die themselves and become the object they seek, the matter that made up their bodies becomes the matter that makes up their corpses, and that makes up the grass growing on their graves, and the worms nourished by their corruption. These are different composite substances from the men they were, and the principle of continuity between the quantity of matter that made up their bodies and that which is now distributed among the worms and the grass, is in(di)visible prime matter, something that, as Hooker's work suggested, is ultimately cognate with the divine other that allegory points towards.⁴⁴ The proliferating accidents that accompany their death and corruption are ontologically null, are Death itself, or 'life' as Teskey has it, which doesn't have an integral being. They only have being if transformed into universal concepts like greenness or rottenness, in which case they are no longer accidents but universals within the mind. To say that allegorical abstraction is capturing a heterogeneous substance with its abstractions in the interests of Christian dogmatics, is to refuse to see something that John Jewel understood when writing on the sacraments in 1583, in order to refute the Catholic view of them: that substance stands in opposition not to a Platonic form imposed upon it, but that form and prime matter are one indivisible substance. Joseph Bobik explains it like this: "for a thing to be a composed substance is for it to have prime matter and substantial form as its intrinsic components, as the components of what it is. For a thing to be a simple substance is for it not to have prime matter and substantial form as its intrinsic components."⁴⁵ This is part of a complicated explication of Aquinas' treatise *On Being and Essence*, but what I take it to mean is that from the point of view of human experience, the change from a man to a

⁴⁴ On this complex question Cf. Bobik, 61-67

⁴⁵ Bobik, 67

plant by a process of death, decay and growth, is a change from one composite substance to another, whereas from the point of view of the ultimate simple substance - God – no real change has taken place because matter and form are identical. God's substance is that signified by Arthur's shield Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, which "ne dint of direful sword divide the substance would"(I.VII.33), standing over against the accidents of time and space that are the sphere of a fallen sensory experience that constitutes an illusory rift in the divine. While this latter might represent reality for a modern atheist, and within it meanings can be imposed on gendered 'matter', this matter is not the same as substance, and does not become so until people like William Perkins begin to conflate substance and matter and to gender formless matter as feminine.

Chaucer's Pardoner berates cooks who turn substance into accident by marring the simplicity of dough with ornamental effects: "Thise cookes, how they stamp, and streyne, and grynde, / And turnen substaunce into accident"(ll537). In doing so he, albeit ironically, is expressing a suspicion of what we value most in literary texts: the aesthetic appeal to the senses. Although I don't know of any allegorical representation of colour, or texture, I have argued that pagan moral qualities based on habit, and upon the contingencies of one's upbringing within the polis, are also a kind of accident and so a personification like Jean de Meun's Faus Semblant, on whom Chaucer's Pardoner is based, is a collection of accidents found in individuals, abstracted into a universal, and then made into a composite rather than a simple substance in its own right by putting it back into a secondary narrative history, where its form is the one given it by that particular writer, and its matter is the tradition that bears upon this manifestation of it. The same may be said for Holiness or Unity, except that these are aspects of a divine

reason that proves to be not accidental but essential. Rosamund Tuve's argument that they have mainly analytical value rather than being real parts of "the great quiddity he is dividing"⁴⁶ is helpful in understanding this, as is her analysis of the patchwork of traditions Spenser is using. That such virtuous personified accidents are less insubstantial than those represented by, for example, Gluttony, can be seen in the amount of 'realistic' detail used to describe him in *Piers Plowman*, whereas virtues tend to be relatively nondescript, having their reality in a realm beyond the senses. Putting these universals derived from accidents in conversation with each other in a literary fiction is in one way a craft learned from a tradition, and in another way a kind of creation *ex nihilo*, presenting a version of what the accidents of history might look like to God. While it might look like "instrumental meaning, meaning not as a representation of what already is but as the creative exertion of force" (Teskey, 5), it is an article of faith that there's no preexistent life on which this meaning is forced, and where such notions creep in they are less a manifestation of Spenser's latent social conscience than a type of atheistic foreboding. This is not to say that Spenser doesn't have a social conscience, though we know it didn't extend to the Irish, who are symbolized by Maleger's troops through a comparison between them and gnats in the Bog of Allen.⁴⁷ His treatment of Grille at the end of Book II suggests that he thinks some people are natural slaves. When meaning is forced by political or military means on people who recognise England's manifest destiny, it is tyranny, rather than magic or art. Despite the resemblances between the machiavel, the priest and the artist, I want to argue that all three are engaged in different enterprises, although it might suit any one of them to conflate the other two. Teskey, being a literary

⁴⁶ Tuve, 70.

⁴⁷ FQ II.ix.16: "As when a swarme of Gnats at eventide/ Out of the fennes of Allen do arise"

critic negotiating the identity politics of the postmodern academy, and belonging to a category that didn't yet exist in premodernity, conflates all three.

Larry Scanlon criticises Teskey for constructing the middle ages as something defined against what comes after it, but, as I will argue more fully in the next chapter, what Teskey sees as a history that is being violently suppressed by allegory, exists in the middle ages under the name of hell, or the second death, which Red Cross Knight is shown a painting of in I.IX.49: “He shewed him painted in a table plaine, /The damned ghosts, that doe in torments waile/ And thousand feends that doe them endless paine/ With fire and brimstone, which for ever shall remaine”. Like Despair in FQ, I.IX.54, the old man who can't die in *The Pardoner's Tale* could be taken as symbolising this aspect of Death, while the revellers who die as a result of his directions and become pure accident, are its equal and opposite face. Together they are its substance and accident, but in an unstable binary way, since substance is supposed to be invisible and the old man is visible, while accidents are visible but these revellers have ceased to be so. Spenser's Abessa suggests that the Catholic Church itself doesn't exist because of its inherent sinfulness rather than through the actions of reformers, yet it remains a monstrous threat throughout Book I, and significantly, the dragon's body is substantial, like the relics of Catholicism, in a way that Orgoglio's body is not: “The knight himself even trembled at his fall,/ So huge and horrible a mass it seemed”(I.xi.55).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Like Teskey, Martin Stevens and Kathleen Falvey, *Substance, Accident, and Transformations: A Reading of The Pardoner's Tale*, read the lowest form of matter as feces, and see the process of turning substance into accident as that of turning food into excrement. The Pardoner is thus a kind of atheist before that term existed, because of his materialism. My idealist reading of these works points out that feces, like filth in the first part of Augustine's dialectic, is no more the basis of allegorical writing than any other type of matter. Its accidents are as unreal as those of any other kind of matter. However it may be used as a metaphor for Teskey's kind of materialism, and for the associated 'materialism' that values worldly goods like money before the supreme Good, or God.

To return to the idea of psychomachia, this time as something that encompasses the reformation, Diarmuid McCullough has described the reformation as a battle in the mind of Augustine between his theology of grace as it was taken up by Luther, and his theology of the church as it was developed by Aquinas and rejected by Luther. The theology of grace saves us from the non-being of sin and accidents by divine intervention. Grace is hard to distinguish from nature, and our embeddedness in nature involves a belief in the possibility of oblivion, something that is evident in *The Faerie Queene* when Una longs for death in preference to having Red Cross Knight misdeem her loyalty, “that rather death desire, then such despight” (I.vii.49). Writers of late medieval *ars moriendi* literature tell us that the fear of oblivion is natural, and is not sinful as long as it is not allowed to become despair⁴⁹. Just as Una’s longing for it derives from a reduction of her purview to a merely natural one, Red Cross Knight’s vulnerability comes from the fact that he is not just a personified abstraction but an ordinary man who wears the regalia of holiness. He has the proper name of George, meaning plowman, which links him back to Langland’s allegory. Unlike the elusive title-character of *Piers Plowman*, who personifies holiness willy nilly, George is trying to live up to the sign on his shield, and learning in the process that he isn’t good enough on his own, that non-being is almost part of his essence, and that he is wrong to think “Virtue gives herself light through darknesse for to wade”(I.i.12). Hell is the experience of the non-being of sin as a type of being without the possibility of reprieve. It is to experience oneself as a contradiction, and if a medieval person could view our modern valorization of the individual, which usually implies someone divided against herself, he might think that we

⁴⁹ Lupset, 75

live in hell. Despair is the passage to hell in the world, something that goes with Pride like its shadow.

This point is illuminated by examining the colloquy of Arthur and Una, Grace and Truth, in Canto VII.41:

O but (quoth she) great grieve will not be tould,
And can more easily be thought, then said.
Right so; (quoth he) but he, that never would,
Could never: will to might giues greatest aid,
But grieve (quoth she) does greater grow displaid,
If then it find not helpe, and breedes despaire.
Despaire breedes not (quoth he) where faith is staid.
No faith so fast (quoth she) but flesh does paire.
Flesh may empaire (quoth he) but reason can repaire.

Una's grief is a lack of transparency in herself, a loss cognate with modern individuality, that is afraid to recover itself by rejoining the community, necessitating the development of new political structures in the 17th century. As Maureen Quilligan has shown, there is a series of deliberate repetitions of the word 'pair' in this stanza that speaks directly to the issues about unity versus duality that we have been concerned with.⁵⁰ Grief expressed and not received sympathetically is worse than grief because it involves a total severing of relations with the community, a dis-pairing of individual and collective. The use of the verb 'breedes' suggests something uncontrollably proliferant, a fissiparous and fissile principle in contrast to the unity she represents. The solution to it, argues Arthur, is not

⁵⁰ Quilligan, 37: "Spenser slowly and carefully prepares the reader to read the word "despair" in canto 9 as dis-pair. Since canto 3 Spenser has described Una as wandering "divorced in despaire" until, in canto 7, she meets Arthur who begins the process of reintegration by arguing with her about the evils of hopelessness... The rhymes on "despaire," "paire," "empaire," and "repaire" may seem typical of Spenser's loose rhetoric if we misunderstand what the stichomythic traductio is doing. Critics used to assume that under the pressure of the elaborate rhyme scheme of his stanza Spenser had necessarily to pile empty terms on top of each other, so that he ended, in Ben Jonson's phrase, by having "writ no language." Yet... we should realise that the question of repairing disparities is exactly what Arthur is to resolve. He repairs the "breach" in Una's heart by his reason, and he also re-pairs Una and the Redcrosse Knight when he vanquishes Orgoglio and reunites them...."

silence but faith that God will give legitimacy to one's own utterance, much like Spenser's faith in his poem despite the fact that "no faith so fast...but flesh does paire", which I take to imply a dualism between flesh and faith, that is not a dis-paire, but an impairment, or the constituting of an apparent duality that is then repaired into a unity by the Reason which understands that the pleasures of the flesh are illusory and accidental.⁵¹ Faith protects against despair and is symbiotic with reason, whose shortcomings it highlights and repairs, and vice versa. Una is therefore being enjoined to believe so that she may know. Duessa, who travels under the guise of Fidessa, a name implying that faith is a kind of being, is an interestingly ambiguous commentary on this debate, since as Perkins argued, faith also implies a lack. Perkins said that faith gives being to what is absent. What lies behind Fidessa's appearance is monstrous flesh, as Christ's flesh is said to lie behind the appearance of bread in the Catholic sacrament. The gobbets of flesh in the dragon's mouth when he precipitates Red Cross Knight into the baptismal waters, show how grace brings salvation out of error, a true sacrament out of a false one.

So far I have been resisting the way Teskey tries to make *The Faerie Queene* an instrument of oppression which redeems itself by acknowledging its own violence in places, but at this point I want to speak about the subaltern characters who are hidden in plain sight within the poem. In a sense the real heroes of this text are the lion and the dwarf. The lion is a *deus ex machina* who saves Una from Archimago and is killed by Sansloi. Lions are used metaphorically elsewhere in the text, but refuse to be given a

⁵¹ 'Repair' is also an important word for Teskey, though he doesn't link it to this passage, or discuss how Spenser uses it to suggest a healing of the rift that involves disillusionment with the world, rather than violence against it, even if this disillusionment is accompanied by violence.

stable allegorical significance, even though they can hardly be said to be mimetic. The dwarf, a counterpart of the Palmer in Book II, guides the hero when his own resources fail him, and carries the regalia of holiness while he is imprisoned. He has been taken to represent the insufficiency of reason without grace, but I would see him as also representing the narrative itself, the “goodly golden chain” which concatenates the individual episodes into a history rather than a collection of emblems. He is beneath notice because he is an aspect of *The Faerie Queene*'s 'individuality' in the modern sense of that term. This is not to say that the dwarf is a sinful person, but that he is both insignificant and vital. Accidents in themselves are not sinful. It is when they are turned into ends rather than means that problems arise. Nevertheless, in reading them as more important than Spenser makes them, I'm doing precisely that, not in the interests of convicting him of tyranny, but to suggest that their insignificance is highly significant only to a modern reader.

Augustine, who taught that sin was a privation of good, thought there was ultimately a single soul in which we were all participants, and this enables an apparent theology of universal salvation in a late medieval theologian like Julian of Norwich. Aquinas, who combined Augustinian neoplatonism with Aristotelian metaphysics, thought that souls retained their individuality, though in order for them to do so, each soul had to be a kind of species unto itself. Their pain is the pain of being separated from God, and their physical punishment in hell a sign of that separation, rather than something designed to purify them. It is a meaningless pain that they have chosen, and it gives meaning to those who have made the opposite choice. This is a hard logic, and when will is taken out of the equation, as it was by some Calvinist thinkers, then God

becomes the author of evil and the eternal pain that rewards it: he becomes Busirane. In the stychomythic exchange between Arthur and Una above will has a crucial role to play in avoiding despair. Actions are not necessary but only the willingness to do them. Although Red Cross Knight is shown a picture of hell, hell is not a place within the poem, and the picture is shown to him by Despair rather than by Coelia or Contemplation. Peter Marshall⁵² has written about the spatialisation of the afterlife, and the question of whether hell is an actual place or a state of mind, arguing that it was increasingly the latter in Early Modernity, and that many writers avoided talking about it because the question was somewhat embarrassing. Spenser's other depiction of the underworld is the Cave of Mammon in Book II, but this is an underground cave, that while it suggests hell by being underground, is at the same time pagan, and, as the cave of Mammon, representative of the world as well as the underworld.

When his humanity is defeated by error and falsehood and preeminently by Pride, (which Hugh Lattimer saw as being the opposite of faith,⁵³ or Fidessa, the guise in which Duessa travels for the first part of the book), the dwarf carries his armour until Arthur comes along with his shield, representing grace, described as a substance that can't be divided, and saves the day by defeating Orgoglio. Orgoglio's insubstantiality is conveyed by the fact that he's full of wind so that "of that monstrous mass was nothing left, but like an emptic bladder was"(I.viii.24). This wind that escapes from him is like wind that causes earthquakes underground, and earth itself is conferred, retrospectively, with the insubstantiality of Orgoglio, groaning under the force of his blows: "The sad earth

⁵² Peter Marshall, "'The Map of God's Word' : Geographies of the Afterlife in Tudor and Early Stuart England," The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, ed. Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁵³ Cf. White, 42

wounded with so sore assay, / Did groan full grievous underneath the blow, and trembling with sad fear did like an earthquake show” (I.viii.8). Earth is also what gives life to the fiends attacking the Castle of Alma in Book II, who regenerate upon touching her. The idea that earth, something that might symbolise reality to Teskey's way of looking at things, is a sign of non-being doesn't originate with Spenser, but is arguably present in the 'plant of peace' image in *Piers Plowman*: “Love is plonte of pees, most precious of virtues, / For heuene holde hit ne myghte, so heuy hit first semede, /Til hit hadde erthe yhoten hitsilue./ Was neuer lef vppon lynde lyhtere theraftur, / As when hit hadde of the folde flesch and blode taken”⁵⁴. Its heaviness, possibly implying grief about sin like Una's in *The Faerie Queene*, causes it to descend from heaven, but contact with earth gives it the lightness needed to ascend once again. Earth's nothingness is again invoked in Canto VII of Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, which describes Arthur thus: “When him list the raskall routes appall, / Men into stones therewith he could transmew, / And stones to dust and dust to nought at all”(I.VII.35).

His reduction of difference to mere nothingness is a measure of a virtue that might appear machiavellian in that it resists sin, and sin is first cousin to Fortuna in that it is a kind of accidental being that mars what is virtuous about humans. The image from *Piers Plowman* doesn't cast the earth as evil. It is after all part of God's creation. Instead it presents an aporetic image in which heaven's beneficence moves the plant towards earth to heal earth's insufficiency, which latter in turn moves the plant back towards heaven. The opposition between heaven and earth is healed in the plant as it is in the person of Christ. The rift that Teskey thinks of as being between realism and idealism is a modern

⁵⁴ Langland, *Piers Plowman*, C.I.148ff

historiographical construct and not one that has meaning in the 16th century. In this image we can see that both heaven and earth are substantial and insubstantial in different ways, and just as the rift is repaired historically in Christ, it doesn't really exist at all in the God the Father, while the Holy Spirit mediates between the historical and eternal understandings.

To avoid construing Arthur's reduction of men to dust as critical of earthly life per se, it is crucial to note that the cover always comes off Arthur's shield by accident. The question that Una is asked earlier in the poem about "what the Lyon ment"(I.III.32) suddenly begins to make sense after we meet Arthur and understand the operations of grace, and that there are no real contingencies. The Lyon resists allegorical interpretation, being pure accident, yet we learn that the accidents that would be ontologically null are given status by being instruments and signs of the ultimate abstraction which is God, or the One. Just as an allegorical representative of Holiness can fall prey to sin, causing the prolixity of this book and of the poem as a whole, the sinfulness of accidental being can rise to the condition of allegory as something that speaks of an other standing behind it, something that yields to understanding in moments of grace, when accidents reveal the presence of an author.

The faith that this author is on Spenser's side, so that Spenser's viewpoint becomes consonant with God's, is, to be sure, a type of Pride that looks like Orgoglio's, and is dependent on an association with, and desire to flatter, the splendour of Elizabeth's court. The uncanniness that Teskey detects in the poem and reads as evidence of an

atavistic desire to eat one's fellows⁵⁵, (an idea that he presumably got from Hegel), I read as a kind of hollowness in the beautiful surface of the poem, like that of the maple tree that is "seeldom inward sound" in I.i.9. Spenser is afraid that he is going to fall through that surface into the abyss rather than rise into the empyrean. This hollowness is something peculiar to the historical moment in which he was writing, and was one that also attached to the myth of Elizabeth as she got older, and the end of history she represented to those who may have promulgated, with whatever degree of conviction, what E.M.W Tillyard dubbed the Tudor Myth,⁵⁶ began to lose its glitter in light of the fact that she lacked an heir. The prospect of a political vacuum at her passing is perhaps figured in the image of a "greedie gulfe" in I.xi.21, recalling John Stubbes' forebodings about what would happen if Elizabeth married a Frenchman, and the sea that would "eat/ His neighbour element in his revenge" figures the horrors that might be imagined coming to fill it. Such forebodings can be seen in the context of the early reformation belief that the world was coming to an end soon, a belief that by the end of the sixteenth century was becoming harder to maintain. Spenser's poem can be seen as an effort to stave off the infinity that threatened to engulf a crumbling façade by arguing that whatever claims the Irish or the French made on English Protestantism, they didn't exist *sub specie aeternitatis*, and in making this claim he recruited a long tradition of medieval Catholic thought of which he may be said to represent the terminus. It may be that allegory, with its eschatological orientation, is ultimately incompatible with the democratic energies of

⁵⁵ Teskey, 188, "It is the feeling we have when we read Spenser's pageants, or the great symbolic centers of which *Mutabilitie* is the most peculiar and risky, that something is being blocked out so that everything on the surface of the poem may shine."

⁵⁶ Tillyard, 320/21, "In the total sequence of plays dealing with the subject matter of Hall, [Shakespeare] expressed successfully a universally held and still comprehensible scheme of history: a scheme fundamentally religious, by which events evolve under a law of justice and under the ruling of God's providence and of which Elizabeth's England was the acknowledged outcome."

Protestantism, and that the meaning of Spenser's poem was dependent on the increasingly forlorn hope that the world would end when Elizabeth died. Spenser died in penury, perhaps reflecting that "death will never come when needs require"(I.11.28), an equal and opposite counterpart to the truism that one knows not the day nor the hour when death will stop one from finishing one's epic poem.

3. The Multiplying Villainies of Nature

In his seminal study of medieval kingship, Ernst Kantorowicz lays out the theory of the king's two bodies as it developed over three centuries. Although it is related to incarnational theology and the idea of Christ's two natures in one person, it has its proximate genesis in the material exigencies of political states. Philosophically, it found a useful resource in the rediscovered writings of Aristotle which introduced a new concept of time that complimented the Augustinian sense of time as existing at the bottom of a hierarchy of being. Kantorowicz describes how the concept of *aevum* was interposed between time and eternity by medieval jurists, who used it to theorize the sempiternity of the state.¹ The state thus became more than a collective of individuals responding to unforeseen necessities for self-defence. It was also theorized as a group of individuals who succeed each other through time while maintaining a collective identity, and who respond to internal necessities for justice and food and clothing. Inherent in this notion is the idea of time as a place occupied by corporate persons. The personification of city states led to speculations about whether this kind of corporate person could be excommunicated, leading Innocent IV to rule that it could not because the body politic has no soul, being an intellectual fiction created by human policy. The personification of this fiction, argues Kantorowicz, is not the same as the toponymical deities of antiquity, but a representation of a *species* or *eidos*, which is, strictly speaking, invisible. Gradually the synchronic collective in space became philosophically less important than the diachronic collective across the space of history, and the body politic came to be incorporated in the single body of the monarch. The difference between the substance of

¹ Kantorowicz, 303

the king's two bodies and that of a regular species, is that the king's species has only one instantiation at any given moment. Like the phoenix, the body natural is replaced by another very similar body, upon the king's death. The king, qua body natural, however, has an immortal soul which is subject to the consequences of his actions, unlike the body politic which redeems the imperfections of the body natural, but doesn't itself have a soul. The problem of how to differentiate between the desires of these two bodies was a difficult one that resulted in their increasingly sharp differentiation in the seventeenth century, until it became possible for revolutionaries to make war on Charles' body natural in defence of his body politic.²

Despite the general acceptance of the accidental nature of the king's body natural, a woman's body natural was too accidental for its own good according to John Knox. *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* was published in 1558 towards the end of Mary Tudor's reign. It conflates the monstrosity of women rulers and the idolatry of the Catholic church as things which subvert the order of nature. Knox intended to follow it with two more blasts but the accession of Elizabeth I shortly after its publication made it an embarrassment to many of Knox's supporters and the sequels never appeared. The order of nature thus subverted has two dimensions, the first being empirically given to us in the natural world and the second being in God's revealed truth. Despite the Aristotelianism of the king's two bodies theory, Aristotle is the first authority cited in support of the unnaturalness of women rulers because even without the benefit of God's word the philosopher could see that they were a recipe for "injustice,

² Kantorowicz, 20, "Without those clarifying, and sometimes confusing, distinctions between the King's sempiternity and the king's temporariness, between his immaterial and immortal body politic and his material and mortal body natural, it would have been next to impossible for Parliament to resort to a similar fiction and summon, in the name and by the authority of Charles I, King body politic, the armies which were to fight the same Charles I, king body natural"

confusion and disorder.”³ He is backed up by Roman law, and then by St Paul who says that women are positively created to be subordinate to men, and negatively they are punished for tempting man to original sin. The pain of childbirth is part of this punishment.

Although Knox’s primary authority for his argument is scripture, he backs it up with patristic authorities because part of his agenda in condemning women rulers is giving the nascent reformation a venerable pedigree: “The world is now almost comen to that blindness that whatsoever pleaseth not the princes and the multitude, the same is rejected as doctrine newly forged and is condemned for heresy.”⁴ He quotes Tertullian on “why gorgeous apparel is abominable and odious in a woman;”⁵ Augustine on how woman is not in God’s image except relative to lower animals; Chrysostom on how women are easily persuaded by false prophets and how “their covetousness is like the gulf of hell;”⁶ and other uncited histories “proving some women to have died for sudden joy, some for unpatience to have murdered themselves; some to have burned with such inordinate lust that, for quenching of the same, they have betrayed to strangers their country and city; and some to have been so desirous of dominion that for the obtaining of the same, they have murdered the children of their own sons. Yea, and some to have killed with cruelty their own husbands and children.”⁷ Viewed in this light, Lady Macbeth, far from being a monster who lacks the characteristics proper to her species, would seem to be an exemplary woman, unless we take it, as Knox seems to do, that women are inherently monstrous, and need to be kept down by force. Yet Knox, like

³ Knox, 43

⁴ Knox, 48

⁵ Knox, 49

⁶ Knox, 53/54

⁷ Knox 45

Spenser, differentiates between tyranny and law. Knox sees the suppression of women as benign law, while women's authority is by definition tyranny.

Augustine, says Knox, tells us that God's order is immutable and universal, and this is corroborated by the evidence of the twin mirrors of the body natural and the body politic.⁸ Life flows from the head to the body in both cases and each organ has its particular office. Bureaucracy and physiology become hard to distinguish in this description where the state with a woman sovereign is compared to a body whose "eyes were in the hands, the tongue and mouth beneath in the belly, and the ears in the feet...such a body could not long endure." In a monstrous nation state ruled by a woman, the head is replaced with an idol, "that which hath the form and appearance but lacketh the virtue and strength which the name and proportion do resemble and promise."⁹ Maintaining the proper order of the universe is synonymous with justice or the "perpetual will to give to every person their own right". Giving power to women is giving them something which is not their right. When the effeminate Richard II is on the throne in Shakespeare's play, his spineless behaviour brings about a situation in which "Distaff women manage rusty bills" (3.2.118) and indeed Elizabeth recognized herself in him. A monstrous body natural causes monsters to abound at the level of the commons, and the commons to usurp the functions of the King, such that tyranny is implied to be effeminate in a man, just as in a woman it is a result of usurping male prerogatives.

Having cited numerous authorities to support his argument that women are naturally and eternally barred by divine justice from having any kind of authority, including acting as rulers, magistrates or prophets, Knox goes on to address "such

⁸ Knox, 55

⁹ Knox, 56

objections as carnal and worldly men, yea, men ignorant of God, use to make for maintenance of this tyranny (authority it is not worthy to be called) and most unjust empire of woman.”¹⁰ He says that “particular examples do establish no common law”¹¹ and are attributable to the fact that “God, being free, may for such causes as be approved by his inscrutable wisdom dispense with the rigor of his law and may use his creatures at his pleasure.”¹² Particularity is part of woman's essence, and not something that can be redeemed by abstracting it into a law. He anticipates the possibility that someone might argue that Mary Tudor is sovereign through a special dispensation of God’s will by showing that Deborah who ruled Israel wielded the spiritual and not the temporal sword. This is proved by the circumstance that although she was married at the time, her husband didn’t rule for her. Her chief executive was Barak, a man appointed by God. Although she judged Israel she did so in the same sense as Christ judged nations and as Knox himself judges those who support the monstrous regiment of women, not as a representative of the civic power but as an independent and conscientious representative of God. As a man Knox can arrogate this authority to himself. Deborah, under extraordinary circumstances was given exemption from her female nature but her difference from Mary Tudor is that Deborah's status wasn’t passed on to her children. The example of the daughters of Zelophehad who were given ground among the men of their tribe is dismissed from consideration as a scriptural example of female rulers because they were given this land in order to preserve their father's name and were forbidden to marry outside their tribe.

¹⁰ Knox, 64

¹¹ Knox, 65

¹² Knox, 66

Although Knox recognises that all are descended from Adam he is insistent that the division of the world into tribes or nation states is God's doing and that the danger of a woman ruler is not only the danger of polluting the throne from below, as it were, but of polluting it by marriage with a stranger. He promises to deal more with this subject in the second blast of the trumpet, which was never written because of Elizabeth's accession. Knox says that if asked whether it was permissible to openly rebel against a female sovereign he would say that her punishment is in God's hands. He implies that while rebelling against her would be sinful on the part of the rebels, it wouldn't necessarily be a bad thing absolutely. The excesses of Mary's reign are punishment for England's failure to support the Protestantism of Edward's reign, and England could have chosen a different ruler. England did choose a different ruler after Mary's death, leaving Knox's coreligionists with the problem of how to reconcile Elizabeth with his polemic, whose tenets many of them did not disagree with in principle. The solution found by Knox, Aylmer and others was to maintain that Elizabeth was a miracle rather than a monster.¹³

Given Knox's invocation of Aristotle, Elizabeth's gender should be an accident attending on the substance of the monarch, but, like some present-day literary scholars, he is more inclined to follow the misogynist Aristotle than the rational one. He thus

¹³ Cf. Quilligan, Maureen. "John Knox, Female Sovereignty, and the Problem of Elizabeth I." In Conference *On Sovereignty*. Duke University, 2007, "Knox's point is that only direct divine intervention into human affairs can legitimize female rule. If a woman did not rule as a monstrosity, she must rule as a miracle. McLaren notes that in the letter Knox sent to Elizabeth, there is a significant notation in Elizabeth's handwriting: "Querative: if God should her majesty leaving issue a daughter...what he thinketh of that Daughter's Right?"¹³Elizabeth clearly understood that Knox's objection to female rule directly undermined the principle of dynastic, hereditary succession, based on blood. // John Aylmer was given the task of answering Knox; strangely, he often agrees with him. More specifically he corrects Knox's horror at a woman sitting within a male parliament, by arguing that female rule in England is less dangerous because of the nature of its mixed monarchy.....Aylmer answers Knox by constituting a different notion of sovereignty, the queen as she is counseled by her godly advisors. "Elizabeth can be led by God" as Knox decrees, "or by godly counsel" as Aylmer avers. Neither allow Elizabeth full sovereignty as a woman."

makes her an accident that usurps the substance of the body politic. It should also be noted that Knox's conception of the body politic is an organological one, which sees the monarch as the head and the people as the members of the body politic. This is different from the notion of the body politic that was invoked to explain the transition from Elizabeth to James a few years later, in which the body politic is an Aristotelian species of which the monarch is the only instantiation. The materialism informing Knox's thinking doesn't differentiate between matter and substance, but sees matter as either formless or formed. It reduces the subtleties of the Aristotelian dialectical or syllogistic system to a simple opposition between order and chaos. Yet what appears to be chaos has a hidden order that is known only to God, and so Knox can make a woman ruler monstrous and an expression of God's will at the same time.

In the Spenserian figure of Duessa, Mary Tudor is seen as someone whose accidents usurp her substance, and who effectively brings about the existence of two substances, one accidental and one real. She represents a protestant parody of the miracle of transubstantiation which, as we saw, raised the specter of accidents existing without substance. Making Elizabeth a miracle rather than a monster, on the other hand, involves a sovereign imposition of meaning on her female body and on the kingdom she represents, rather than a hieratic transformation of her substance from one kind into another. However, the source of this sovereign miracle is difficult to identify. Knox associates the Marian monstrosity with the multitude, thereby constituting himself and other Calvinist divines as an oligarchy responsible for the maintenance of the head of the country, whose instatement is an opportunity for enacting the law that precedes it, as well as the instatement of a sovereign whose will is the law. If the Elizabethan miracle comes

from God it does so indirectly by means of those who are subordinate to her within the state.¹⁴ As woman Elizabeth submits to the sovereign interpretive power of her male advisors, while as Sovereign she constitutes them as advisors. She is both the form imposed on them and the matter imposed upon by them. As we know form and matter in the strict Aristotelian sense are only analytically separable. It could be argued that the ambiguous situation occasioned by Elizabeth's gender makes her a true Aristotelian substance in which form is not imposed on matter imperialistically, any more than matter captures form, but both are immanent in nature. By contrast, James' writing on sovereignty in 1598 argues for an absolute monarch whose authority derives unilaterally from God,¹⁵ and in this it represents a trend that was already widespread in the 1590s.¹⁶ Bodin who regarded sovereignty as being firmly located in the person of Elizabeth, developed a series of forensic procedures for finding sovereignty in a state, but they were procedures that only worked retrospectively. Elizabeth's collusion in Mary's death seems to cast a shadow over her sovereign status by arguing that a queen can be deposed. It suggests the ominous possibility of a truly democratic world of conscientious men and women, devoid of hierarchy, and points to the widening gap between king and commons in Tudor and Stuart England.

¹⁴ Kantorowicz, 296, "For the sake of that immanent continuity of a *populus qui non moritur* the transcendental legitimation of continuity had not necessarily to be discarded. One combined the two "continuities" - that from above and that from below - with the result that the conferring of the imperium on a Prince became jointly a work of the eternal God and the sempiternal people."

¹⁵ James, 64, "Kings are called Gods by the propheticall King David, because they sit upon God his Throne in the earth, and have the count of their administration to give unto him."

¹⁶ Cf. Shuger, *Habits of Thought*, "By the time the first installment of *The Laws* was published in 1594, Hooker's views on ecclesiastical polity were rapidly becoming outdated. As has often been noted, in the last decade of Elizabeth's reign, political theology, especially - but not exclusively - among higher clergy, began moving in the direction of divine right absolutism."

Elizabeth's coronation does violence not so much to her as to the normative meanings of her gender in the minds of Calvinists for whom sin is the female body of death, all our righteousness being "as a cloth defiled with menstree" unless it is redeemed by grace from God. Spenser conflates the terms monstrous and menstuous in his description of Duessa bathing in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*: "Her neather partes misshapen, monstuous, / Were hidd in water, that I could not see, / But they did seeme more foule and hideous, / Then woman's shape man would beleewe to bee." (I.2.41). 'Monster' comes from 'moneo' - I warn, and from 'monstro' - I show. As a monster Mary had been a sign that showed the sinfulness of the English body politic, and warned of the judgement to come.¹⁷ As a miracle Elizabeth is supposed to demonstrate the chosenness of England and that the historical contingencies attendant on her monarchy are providential rather than accidental. She becomes the transcendent figure whose reign is an end of history for Hooker and Spenser.¹⁸ Yet because of her inescapable materiality she may also represent a situation in which *species* and *eidos* give way to a material theater without substance whose propaganda becomes increasingly unbelievable as she ages.

Writing about the idealism inherent in the notion of Elizabeth as an end of history, Leonard Tennenhouse has argued, based on an interpretation of the Ditchley portrait, that she is identified with the land of England, and that the dismemberments enacted on the

¹⁷ Cf. Jewel, 172, "He is a monster whosoever knoweth not God."

¹⁸ Cf. Hooker, 9: "That God who is able to make mortality immortal give her such future continuance, as may be no less glorious unto all posterity than the days of her regiment past have been happy unto ourselves; and for his most dear anointed's sake grant them all prosperity, whose labours, cares, and counsels, unfeignedly are referred to her endless welfare:"

Shakespearean stage figure the internal forces that threaten to fragment her kingdom.¹⁹ She participates in the physics of the grotesque body as well as the metaphysics of blood, and by staging the inversion of these bodies followed by the restoration of order, the fragmenting power of the grotesque body is contained.²⁰ As Knox's work indicates, she is a means by which the boundaries of the kingdom can be breached by a foreign prince through marriage, and Tennenhouse's argument suggests that pollution from a foreign source, and fragmentation from within are made indeterminate sources of destruction on the stage. This may be understood as deriving from the fact that there should logically only be one monarch in the world, just as there can only be one substance, and in order to understand Elizabeth's position within Europe, it is necessary to blur the distinction between her fellow European monarchs and those hierarchically beneath her within her kingdom.²¹ Kantorowicz explains the origin of this idea in the late middle ages: "Pope Boniface VIII was bent upon putting political entities within what he considered their proper place and therefore stressed, and overstressed, the hierarchical view that the political bodies had a purely functional character within the world community of the *corpus mysticum Christi*"²² When Henry VIII took sovereignty over the English church from Rome he contributed to the fragmentation of the church as the substance of all

¹⁹ Tennenhouse, *Power on Display*, 108, "Dismemberment entails the loss of members. Thus the initial gesture of penetration does not seem to matter so much in Shakespeare's version of the Philomel story as the condition of Lavinia's body which both conceals and points to the initial act of penetration. Rather than make Lavinia serve as the object of illicit lust, Shakespeare uses her body as the site for political rivalry among various families with competing claims to power over Rome. For one of them to possess Lavinia is for that family to display power over the rest - nothing more nor less than that. By the same token to wound Lavinia is to wound oneself, as if dismembering her body were dismembering a body of which one were a part, thus to cut oneself off from that body."

²⁰ Tennenhouse, 52, speaking of Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*: "She uses her Rabelaisian energy along with her position as aristocratic female to reassert the hierarchy of husband to wife which invokes that of subject to sovereign."

²¹ Christine De Pizan's *Book of the Body Politic* has nothing to say about the relationship between monarchs, acting as if there were just one body politic in the universe.

²² Kantorowicz, 194

bodies politic and laid part of the groundwork for Locke's assertion that "all commonwealths are in the state of nature with one another."²³ As we have seen in Chapter 1 Elizabeth's reign is characterized by the attempt to hold in balance many competing religious viewpoints, some of whom, like Knox, derived their authority from other European countries. Indeed when Calvin dedicated one of his works to Elizabeth, the gesture was rejected on her behalf by Lord Burghley because of Calvin's association with Knox.

Tennenhouse's sense of Elizabeth constituting a threat of fragmentation to the state, is borne out by Louis Montrose's examination of the way in which Elizabeth's image was manipulated during her reign.²⁴ He shows that she was a bricolage of different representations deployed in sophisticated ways, and that each of these representations was treated as if it was her real body, such that defacing the queen's image was an attack on her person.²⁵ In addition, despite being a Protestant monarch, Elizabeth was quite capable of exploiting people's susceptibilities to imagery from the old religion for political purposes. Maureen Quilligan's work addresses some of these enabling and potentially destructive contradictions by arguing that Elizabeth's virginity was maintained by appropriating the trope of holy incest from Catholic sources, thereby making Elizabeth the spouse of her own kingdom.²⁶ Yet we can see that while marriage to a foreign prince

²³ Locke, 183

²⁴ Montrose, 116, quoting Mary Douglas, "The body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious."

²⁵ Montrose, 117, "The ways in which royal portraits were treated not only by the adherents but also by the enemies of the regime confirm that they were regarded not merely as representations of the body natural of the monarch but as charismatic symbols of the mystical body of kingship that inhered in the person of the Queen"

²⁶ Quilligan, *Incest and Agency*, 35, "Indeed, with uncanny specificity, the situation of the two Tudor Queens demonstrates in Renaissance history what incest narratives demarcate in theory: the potential for active female agency."

might have threatened the physical boundaries of the kingdom, her virginity was a self-defeating proposition in that it deprived the kingdom of an obvious heir to the throne. As Elizabeth got older the prospect of a political vacuum in which the forces of chaos that were held in check during her reign by the holy incest trope, would break free and engulf the nation, became an increasingly real threat.²⁷ Defeating the threat from France and Spain by means of the holy incest conceit, left the country open to invasion by Elizabeth's own death in the increasingly near future. The Essex Rebellion was an attempt to forestall this threat by placing either Essex himself, or James VI of Scotland on the throne. However, Essex was even less able than Macbeth or Henry IV to "trammel up the consequences" of his actions and died in the Tower.

The succession issue had been a forbidden subject ever since the ill-fated affair of her proposed marriage to the Duke D'Alencon, which John Stubbes had figured as a "greedy gaping gulf" waiting to consume the kingdom.²⁸ Because of the strictures on discussing it openly, it is an important subtext for Shakespeare's sonnets, in which the beloved is accused of consuming himself with "self substantial fuel." Even though the beloved is a man, he is exhorted to reproduce himself as a gift to posterity, an exhortation that constitutes a self sacrifice on the part of the poet. Yet rather than giving way to marriage, it gives way to a transgressive *hetero*-sexuality.²⁹ Margreta De Grazia has

²⁷ Kantorowicz, 331/2, discusses the anxiety caused by interregnums throughout the late medieval period and the way the threat of a little interregnum between the King's accession and his coronation was circumvented by on the one hand desacralizing the coronation in order to remove it from the power of the papacy, and on the other hand resacralizing it within a secular context by using Aristotelian philosophy to develop a metaphysics of blood: "Henceforth the king's true legitimation was dynastical, independent of approval or consecration on the part of the Church and independent also of election by the people.....creating, so to speak, a royal species of man"

²⁸ Stubbes' 1579 pamphlet was entitled, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf Whereinto England is like to be Swallowed by an other French Mariage, if the Lord forbid not the banes, by letting her Maiestie see the sin and punishment thereof.*

²⁹ Cf. Fineman, 18, "Shakespeare in his sonnets invents the poetics of heterosexuality."

argued that the real scandal of these sonnets is not their homosexuality, and that their hetero-sexuality is not the love of a man for woman but a love that crosses the difference in rank that was, according to De Grazia's reading, the ultimate form of alterity for people in the renaissance.³⁰ As I will argue in what follows, the sacrifice of a platonic love with another man for a heterosexual love with a woman of lower rank, once again demonstrates the mutual inclusiveness of the material and the ideal in the literature of this period. The wished-for marriage of the first group of sonnets takes place within the ambit of an Aristotelian materialism in which the beloved's species will be carried on by his successors, while the profane love for the dark lady, involves these sonnets in a post-Aristotelian materialism that is frighteningly democratic.

In sonnet five Shakespeare describes an artistic process without an artist, a kind of *physis* in which Time itself frames the gaze that is the cynosure of all other gazes:

Those hours, that with gentle work did frame
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
will play the tyrants to the very same
And that unfair which fairly doth excel:
For never-resting time leads summer on
To hideous winter and confounds him there;
Sap cheque'd with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'ersnow'd and bareness every where.
Then were not summer distillation left,
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it nor no remembrance what it was:
But flowers distill'd though they with winter meet,
Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

This sonnet describes a process similar to that I have described in relation to Elizabeth's coronation as Queen, whereby subjects and a central subject are mutually constituted.

³⁰ De Grazia, *Scandal*, 106

The hours are an undifferentiated mass of people around a sovereign individual, and just as public opinion is notoriously fickle, this audience will inevitably undo that which it has framed once it ceases, through the passage of time, to mirror them in a flattering way. Their "gentle work" will become tyranny, and their gentility vileness. Like a woman ruler for Knox, the authority of the mob is by definition a tyranny, because it is not reasonable. Because of the inevitability of death that makes kings and beggars equal, it is necessary to procreate, to reproduce the mutually self-constituting interaction of gazer and gazee. The "glass" of line 10, connoting both mirror and vial, can be read as a figure for the platonic/aristotelian notion of substance, and for the sonnet form itself which is both something that is instantiated by individual poems, and something that is immanent in Shakespeare's culture.³¹ As we saw, the monarch is someone in whom the Aristotelian species coincides with the individual, a phoenix who rises again from its own ashes, never sharing the substance in which it participates with others of its kind at the same moment. In using the verb 'frame' and the noun 'glass' to describe this process Shakespeare incorporates idealist and materialist perspectives into his poem.³² In this as in Sonnet 53 he makes that which is most general and that which is most particular hard to distinguish from each other, as they were in the person of Elizabeth, but he also hints at an alternative reality in which the individual hours will gain a hegemony due to the love object's refusal to procreate, and this alternative reality is a materialism without immanent or transcendent form. In Perkinsian terms it is a sinful chaos without form.

³¹ As Kalas, 111, recognizes "[Deborah] Shuger's conclusion that the Renaissance mirror "functions according to an ontology of similitude" effectively recasts the mirror as the image of the medieval mindset."

³² Kalas, 111, sees this as depending on new technologies of glass-making in the renaissance and so "Gascoigne's *Steele Glass*... demonstrates the role of materials and technology in a metaphor that for centuries had served not only as figure of divine ideation but as a practical instrument for human contemplation of the divine Logos".

Thomas Dekker in *The Wonderful Year* (1603) figures it as the plague that comes to fill the gap left by Elizabeth's death.³³

Sonnet 53 turns on the way in which the word 'one' is at the same time the most particular and the most general thing in the universe:

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
Since everyone hath every one, one shade,
And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
Is poorly imitated after you.
On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
And you in Grecian tires are painted new.
Speak of the spring and foison of the year;
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
The other as your bounty doth appear,
And you in every blessed shape we know.
In all external grace you have some part,
But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

The poem posits substance as that out of which an object is made, but also registers that the object's substance is unknowable. It includes both form and matter. It seems to be a platonic substance in that it produces millions of shadows, yet each of these has a shadow that is the index of its materiality, making it indeterminately Aristotelian and Platonic. Their shadows are also shades, however, giving them a posthumous air, and suggesting a world devoid of substance, except for this unknown 'one' in line 4 which is the poem's addressee. Description gets us no closer to knowledge of it, nor does art (line 7), these being things characterized by mere novelty. Yet all novelty is old by virtue of its participation in the poem's a priori 'one'. In line nine, the shadow is a foreshadowing, a mocking recollection of a figural universe circumscribed by Christ, but the promised

³³ The full title is *The Wonderful Yeare, Wherein is shewed the picture of London, lying sick of the Plague. At the ende of all (like a mery Epilogue to a dull Play) certain Tales are cut out in Sundry fashions, of purpose to shorten the lives of long winters nights, that liye watching in the darke for us.*

bounty only "appears", and 'appear' is a word fraught with equivocation, implying either superficiality or revelation. Every blessed shape gives us knowledge of some 'part' of substance, but never the thing itself, and so in its inability to be compared to anything accurately, substance is inconstancy or inconstancy stands in for substance. The idealism of the sonnet's first line, gives way to a materialism that promptly loses its matter in a series of equivocations that leave us in a nominalist chaos where nothing is like anything else. The nominalist chaos nevertheless offers us shapes that invite us to make sense of them, but never in a definitive way. The idealist One becomes a nominalist one which tries to impose its subjective meaning on us and thereby become an objectivity. Such confusion is the reason why idealism is so often perceived as totalitarian. However, tyranny is always individual and not general, and the subtle modulation between things that are supposed to be opposites can have far-reaching consequences.

In rendering the ambiguities of his culture in this way, Shakespeare announces himself as a poet concerned with abstract questions in an equal and opposite way to that in which Aristotle was a philosopher who wondered at and about that which he couldn't capture by means of logic. Hegel too wrote his most abstract and difficult work about the development of an individual consciousness that is at the same time every consciousness. Idealism and materialism are not alternative ideological positions but mutually necessary tools for thinking about practical and theoretical problems. It is instructive to bear in mind the etymology of 'theory' at this point, a word deriving from the Greek terms meaning to look at a show,³⁴ and the etymology of 'practice' which means to strive or

³⁴ OED gives this etymology: [ad. late L. *theria* (Jerome in Ezech. XII. xl. 4), a. Gr. a looking at, viewing, contemplation, speculation, theory, also a sight, a spectacle, abstr. n. f. (:*) spectator, looker on, f. stem -

endeavour as well as to commit a fraud,³⁵ and 'method' which means a road or a way.³⁶ Shakespeare's method of putting on a show was to pass over well trodden ground by reinventing a well established poetic form in the sonnets, or by retelling oft told tales in his drama, and we may wonder to what extent their appeal to their first audiences had to do with the way he changed them rather than with their familiarity. Theory and methodical practice are related to a third term which I loosely call nominalist, though 'chaotic' might do as well. This is the term that encompasses the kind of individuality that is valued in the modernity, and is inimical to the concept of framing, or bringing something to material form in consonance with a preestablished pattern. A nominalist view of the sonnets would see them as individuals with an equivocal rather than a generic relation to one another. This kind of 'invention' implies originality rather than the humanist *inventio* which involved coming upon things whose order had already been established. Novelty for its own sake easily becomes boring, however, and getting rid of genres or species, makes everything different and therefore the same. Yet this kind of originality has a connection to that which causes the spectator to wonder, because it is unexpected.

Accidents, in the temporal sense, are unexpected, and Shakespearean drama is a series of 'accidents' contrived by a playwright who, depending on which critical school you favor, is either a historical person who wrote some plays at a specific point in time, a great author who transcends his time, or a hermeneutic fiction that makes reading

of to look on, view, contemplate. In mod. use prob. from med.L. transl. of Aristotle. Cf. It. *teoria* (Florio 1598 *theoria*), F. *théorie* (15.. in Godef. *Compl.*.)]

³⁵ OED: ..partly < Middle French (Walloon) *practiser* to strive, endeavour (c1380; used reflexively), *pratiser* to commit (a fraud)..

³⁶ Online Etymology Dictionary: 1541, from M.Fr. *methode*, from L. *methodus* "way of teaching or going," from Gk. *methodus* "scientific inquiry, method of inquiry," originally "pursuit, following after," from *meta-* "after" (see *meta-*) + *hodos* "a traveling, way"

possible.³⁷ Reading Shakespeare generically, as a conservative ideologue whose art was political, Leonard Tennenhouse both echoes and contradicts E.M.W Tillyard who is most often used as an example of the bad old historicism which thought you could separate the work from its context and use one to explain the other.³⁸ Where the latter made Shakespeare conservative in the service of a view of the author as a transcendent authorial substance, Tennenhouse reads Shakespeare as conservative in order to tear down this modern conservative icon by making him a Foucauldian principle of thrift in the semiotic field of renaissance culture as it survives in the bricolage of texts from the period that come to us through the accidents of history. My reading of Shakespeare as a historical individual who possessed enough negative capability to be free from the kind of irritable reaching after fact that is the province of criticism, owes something to all three Shakespeares, and sees him as all at once an idealist, a materialist and a nominalist.

Although he nearly always uses the platonic words substance and shadow together, never the Aristotelian substance and accident, in much of his later work Shakespeare is more interested in matter than its transcendence. When he thinks of transcendence in the Sonnets he more often does so in terms of monuments enduring through history, or of procreation, rather than of ascending the chain of being. His familiarity with an Aristotelian sense of substance and accident can arguably be found in Sonnet 124

If my dear love were but a child of state,
It might for Fortune's bastard be unfather'd
As subject to Time's love or to Time's hate,

³⁷ Tennenhouse, 2, "Shakespeare exists for us as several rhetorical strategies." Cf. also Witmore, *Culture of Accidents*, on emergent notions of contingency as they manifest in Shakespearean drama.

³⁸ Tennenhouse, 61, "Even using such popular materials to mock the practices of court, however, Shakespeare adheres strictly to the metaphysics of blood."

Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd.
No it was builded far from accident;
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the blow of thrall'd discontent,
Whereto the inviting time our fashion calls:
It fears no policy, that heretic,
Which works on leases of short-number'd hours,
But all alone stands hugely politic,
That it nor grows with heat nor drowns with showers.
To this I witness call the fools of time,
Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime.

Accident and fortune are equated here in lines two to five. The love, described as "hugely politic" is both a personal affection and the object of that affection. It is different from the machiavellian policy that characterizes ordinary human relationships in line 9. As a body politic rather than a body natural, it is sempiternal, and its fate is not determined by making a good or a bad death ie. dying for goodness when you have lived for crime (line 14). Therefore it is not a soul that has gone to heaven. It has never suffered, and so it is not even a passion. It is sovereign, and all alone, a solitude that defines the multitude, and yet it calls the multitude to witness it, and so remains for practical purposes dependent on matter and on discourse.

As already mentioned, the earlier sonnets which figure the tripartite structure of transcendent, immanent and nominalist cosmologies in terms of a homoerotic pair contrasted with the mass of individuals they move among, also situate themselves in relation to a woman of lower class. In Sonnet 129 the "shades" of sonnet 54 find an echo in the mention of heaven and hell as states of being attendant on erotic love:

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action, and till action, lust
Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight,
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,

Past reason hated as a swallowed bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad.
Mad in pursuit and in possession so,
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme,
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe,
Before, a joy proposed, behind a dream.
All this the world well knows yet none knows well,
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

If a miracle is an intervention in nature from outside creation in medieval eucharistic theology, and for Knox it is an imposition of meaning on matter by a sovereign political power whose location is ambiguous, in this poem the disjunction between an apparently uniform order and what disrupts it is produced by a sexual act occurring horizontally outside the boundaries provided by law or sacrament. It involves a kind of local transcendence that is experienced as transgression. Characterised at all points by that which is extreme and therefore itself embodying a moderate position, this poem casts 'spirit' both as that which is divine in man, and as a bodily substance secreted during sexual intercourse. We will see the puritan Snuffe making the same pun in *The Atheist's Tragedy*, showing that the libertine and the puritan have relationships to matter that are so polarized as to be at times identical. The pursuit of illicit sex leads one past reason into a litany of transgressions, and once achieved is "a very woe," looking in retrospect like a dream. The fact that this deceptiveness is common knowledge makes it no less alluring, demonstrating that theory and passion are discrete entities or even substances that don't communicate. Passion suffers death in time, while theory transcends time and death, yet theory only finds expression in practice, and exceptional practices prove the theories they attempt to violate. The poem can be taken as an answer of sorts to the question of why there is something rather than nothing. It doesn't ask about the existence or otherwise of a

deity, but describes the experience of transgression that leads the author to experience his life as a dream.

As Hooker recognized, Being is produced within a community of language-users, some of whom are motivated by the Good and others who are mistakenly pursuing lesser goods. As the product of all these users, language becomes what Hegel thought of as an Ethical Substance, or a field of normative meanings. When a tyrant changes these meanings by force Substance is banished, and only matter remains. In seeking illicit pleasures the libertine is himself a kind of tyrant who seeks to impose an illicit meaning on an act whose meaning is normative for that society. In a sexual relation between an aristocratic man and a common woman it is unclear whether she is ennobled or he is debased, and within the individual's sense of himself there is a sea-change, from coherence to dissoluteness.

Lucretius thinks the absence of Religion, or the ability to do what you like, is freedom.³⁹ In Sonnet 129 that kind of argument is "a swallowed bait/ on purpose laid to make the taker mad" yet whose purpose is in question is not clear. It may be the object of desire whose subjectivity is at fault, or it may be the subject of the desire whose will is contrary to the objective truth of God's will. In either case there is a divided will trying to unite itself with something 'other,' and its rage is occasioned by the fact that the other is really itself, and that its own desires are other to its better judgement. This can be connected to Leontes' rage in *The Winter's Tale*, in which Hermione comes between him and his best friend, becomes literally the difference between them and therefore the

³⁹ Lucretius, V, 83ff, "For if those who have fairly understood that the gods pass a life free from care, nevertheless wonder, meanwhile, how things can severally be carried on, especially in those matters which are seen in the ethereal overhead, they are carried back again to their old notions of religion and set over themselves cruel tyrants, whom they unhappily believe able to do all things."

difference between Leontes and himself. Her difference and his own lead him to an experience of the world as suffused with nothingness:

Is whispering nothing?
Is leaning cheek to cheek....Is this nothing?
Why then the world and all that's in't is nothing,
The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia nothing,
My wife is nothing, nor nothing have these nothings
If this be nothing. (1.2.287ff)

Sonnet 129 is recalled when Leontes' in his fit of jealousy imagines having "his pond fished by his next neighbour, by/ Sir Smile, his neighbour" (1.2.196/7). This is a nasty image conveying the insinuating horror of the fall into sin as a fishhook caught in the genitalia. If sonnet 129 depicts the emasculating shame that afflicts someone pursuing heaven too greedily, the hatred of women that Leontes manifests is a kind of hell in which that which was most valuable becomes that which is least valuable, an inverted narcissism. The visual register in which the relation between the sexes takes place is part of its imperfection. The woman is idealised in a Platonic way, and then vilified when the spectacle turns out to be hollow. In this context we can recall Edgar in King Lear, pronouncing that his father deserved to lose his eyes as if the spectacle of his mistress was a kind of darkness had blinded him, and in his blindness he starts to see clearly: "The gods are just, and of our pleasn't vices/ Make instruments to plague us. / The dark and vicious place where thee he got/ Cost him his eyes" (5.3.169). We might also remember that in his youthful libertinism, Perkins, that great 'opener' of textual objects, was said to have dug so deeply into the causes of things that he bordered on hell itself. The libertine is an extremist no less than the puritan, and what they share is a contempt for the via media of Aristotelian virtue and of Aristotelian substance, for the metaphysical rather than the physical encompassing of matter. Metaphysical compassing, I will argue in the

final chapter, is approached negatively rather than positively, and in the imagery of darkness and light in Edgar's speech quoted above, we can see traces of the negative theology of the pseudo-Dionysian neoplatonic tradition.

I have already suggested some of the ways in which the idea that that which lacks finitude or definition lacks being informs Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, a poem that was instrumental in propagating the myth of Elizabeth's reign as an end of history. Thomas Dekker describes her reign as a "miraculous mayden circle"⁴⁰ whose breach by the hand of death instigated an outbreak of contagion. When James comes down from Scotland shortly afterwards to fill the political vacuum, he is hailed as a saviour, but is inevitably tainted by the symbolism of plague "Vpon Thursday it was treason to cry God saue king James king of England, and vppon Friday hye treason not to cry so."⁴¹ Kantorowicz writes about how, for a world circumscribed by the Catholic Church during the high Middle Ages, "in the last analysis .. Christ would have functioned during the interval, so to speak, as interrex."⁴² For Dekker, Christ seems to be missing, and the plague is the medium across which James has to assert his continuity with Elizabeth. The language of substance and accident is key to understanding how this transition was understood philosophically by Elizabethan and Jacobean jurists. The substance of the monarch's body remains unchanged but its accidents, including gender, changed from those of Elizabeth to James. The literature of his reign shows that it was a much more somber affair, during which Luther's early reformation belief that the end of the world was nigh,

⁴⁰ Dekker, 17

⁴¹ Dekker, 21

⁴² Kantorowicz, 314

and the slightly later myth that Elizabeth's reign was a secular end of history, was giving way to a sense that both the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods might be just episodes in an endless *De Casibus* tradition, in which the sempiternity of the state is not redeemed by the eternity of the church and instead becomes conflated with the infinity of accidents. Such an indefinite history is hinted at in Macbeth's vision of the line of Banquo's heirs stretching "out to the crack of doom"(4.1.133). Kantorowicz reads this line as referencing the sempiternity of the state, but it is an odd phrase that sounds like a subversion of the phrase "the crack of dawn," and evokes a subjective horizon as much as it does a last judgement.⁴³ It will become apparent later that for Macbeth it signifies the end of recorded time. The qualification of time by 'recorded' begs the unanswered question of what kind of time follows after recorded time, and suggests a conflation of the state's sempiternity with individual mortality in a way that privileges the latter. There are many other sinister images of unboundedness in the play, from the horses who break from their stalls (2.4.16) on the night of Duncan's murder, to Malcolm's pretence that he is like Macbeth in his "boundless intemperance", his "confineless harms"(4.3.50ff). His vice is something characterised by many 'particulars'. He realises that his attempt to impose instrumental meaning on matter by killing Duncan is doing the opposite of framing in Kalas' sense, when he says "But let the frame of things disjoint...ere we will eat our meal in fear and sleep in the affliction of these terrible dreams"(3.2.184). His crimes are depriving the world of its immanent being, making it more material and less substantial.

A similarly debased materialism can be seen when Lear finds Cordelia dead and he calls on those around him to "Howl, howl, howl." When they don't, he says "Oh you

⁴³ Kantorowicz, 387

are men of stone, had I your tongues and eyes I'd use them so that heaven's vault should crack....I know when one is dead and when one lives. She's dead as earth"(5.3.256ff).

Hamlet describes man as a quintessence of dust and Macbeth sees dust as the end of history. When he shows that Macbeth fears Banquo's "being," (3.1.55) and that Fleance's "absence is material to [him]" (3.1.136) Shakespeare is aware of something that Augustine realised when he gave up Manicheism, and that Spinoza expressed clearly in the 17th century: that a substance, in the purest sense of the term, is something of which there can only be one in the universe. If matter is real, then a transcendent God isn't, and vice versa. Lucretius thought there was only matter and void, and these operate like two substances for him, except that one is clearly a kind of non-being. The same may be said of Plato in the *Timaeus* 50C, for whom the receptacle of form is a void, having no characteristics.⁴⁴ Descartes tried to have two substances, but could never satisfactorily explain the connection between them. Hobbes was working with the same question when he said there can be only one sovereign in a political state. Macbeth wants to be that sovereign substance, rather than just an individual who participates in it. In an attempt to give himself definition, like a substance, he tries to "trammel up the consequence"(1.7.3) of his actions. Because his actions are transgressive, the consequences instead proliferate uncontrollably. The witches' "metaphysical aid," that would help him to that symbol of the Aristotelian body politic - "the golden round,"(1.5.26)⁴⁵ - their fleeting visibility and subsequent vanishing, Banquo's description of them as "the bubbles of the earth," and Lady Macbeth's calling on "sightless substances"(1.5.47) to unsex her, makes these

⁴⁴ Plato, *Timaeus*, 57, "The Receptacle has no distinctive qualities."

⁴⁵ Cf. Kantorowicz, 211, where he says "a new halo" descended from the works of Aristotle upon the corporate organism of human society, with morals and ethics different from, but compatible with, that of the ecclesiological corpus mysticum.

witches subversively akin to Aristotelian substances. They are not species immanent in nature, however, but wayward individuals, "imperfect speakers,"(1.3.68), who trick Macbeth with their equivocations. In their ability to "look into the seeds of time" (1.3.56), they might suggest an ordered universe, or at least a Lucretian one, but the truth is that they mislead Macbeth and are an inherently nominalistic principle. In the original folios and quartos, the witches were known as the weyard sisters.⁴⁶ Weird is an 18th century emendation, but my analysis lends support to those critics who argue that wayward might be an equally plausible emendation and that this is a tragedy of freedom as well as fate. The witches' motiveless malice is supernatural, but in the sense that they violate normative standards and show that nature is infinitely mutable both morally and physically. Nevertheless Macbeth briefly wonders at them, as he does at Banquo's ghost. Miracles of transcendence only happen in England in this play, because England has a legitimate king. In the difference between the two kingdoms we can see how the via media of Aristotelianism, and the sempiternity it implies, can become nominalism under the influence of a tyrant, or idealism in the presence of a virtuous king.

That the bearded witches in Macbeth are individuals refusing allocation to a species makes them monsters in Aristotelian terms: "You should be women yet your beards forbid me to interpret that you are so"(1.3.43). When contemplating Donalbain and Malcolm as obstacles to her husband's taking the "empty" throne, Lady Macbeth says "in them nature's copy's not eterne" (3.2.38).⁴⁷ Aristotle, as I have said, was considered an atheist by some because he appears not to have believed in the immortality of the

⁴⁶ Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, *The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text*, 263

⁴⁷ I am aware of the alternative reading of these lines, as referring to a copyhold lease, but see no reason why Shakespeare can't be compressing multiple meanings into a single phrase.

individual soul, but only in the immortality of the species. For him matter was the principle of individuation and the individual qua individual really was a quintessence of dust. Like the witches, Donalbain and Malcolm, with all their particulars of virtue and vice, are as the bubbles of the earth in pure Aristotelian terms. By killing them, Macbeth can make them go away forever, and replace them with his own progeny. But, as Macduff observes, he has no children, and in him nature's copy is not eternal either. Because of the failure of the body politic to protect Duncan, individual kings and princes have become interchangeable, equivocal instances of the species man for Lady Macbeth. Macbeth, having stepped outside the boundaries set by "the bill which writes them all alike" suggests that each individual is a species unto itself in this tale told by an idiot i.e. by someone who is so individual as to have no 'real' relation with anyone else. The 'them' in this quotation refers to dogs rather than people, and so Macbeth, while seeming to uphold differences of species and rank in his discussion with the murderers is simultaneously complicit in their subversion. This play goes beyond the Aristotelian materialism in which a species is a real thing in nature because man is defined anew by every transgressive individual who follows Macbeth's lead. Macbeth's is a history in which nature is unlike herself in every successive moment. In the end he is promised the same fate as Cleopatra, and like her, prefers death: Macduff tells him: "Then yield thee, coward, / And live to be the show and gaze o' the time: / We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are, / Painted on a pole and underwrit, / Here may you see the tyrant"(5.8.251). Tyranny and substance are incompatible concepts. The idea of substance is arguably referenced in the 'underwrit' of these lines that designates Macbeth as tyrant rather than king, and holds him up as a carnival spectacle. In the course of the play he has moved

from a beloved participant in Duncan's substance, to becoming a species unto himself, and ends as a spectacle. Where substance is invisible, Macbeth has become supremely visible, and has lost all moral weight and seriousness. After killing Duncan "from this instant there's nothing serious in mortality"(2.3.89). The radical mutability of nature as it is embodied by the witches, is closely parallel to the kind of mutability described by Montaigne's *Of Experience*. Montaigne says "I study my selfe more than any other subject. It is my supernaturall Metaphysik, it is my naturall Philosophy."⁴⁸ If the individual makes himself the source of all supernatural metaphysics and natural physics, as Sonnet 129 shows, then the supernatural becomes transgressive rather than transcendent, and metaphysics is confounded with physics. In this way the 'real' changes position from the heavens to the ground beneath one's feet, and literary 'realism' is no longer best served by allegory, but by drama. This is the situation brought about by Claudius' transgression in *Hamlet*, a play in which, as Margreta De Grazia shows, the fundamental association of human and humus is foregrounded.⁴⁹

Not only was *Macbeth* written after the death of Elizabeth, but it was written in a country where the Catholic tradition had recently been crushed in the space of a few years by a machiavellian political dynasty. Traditional religion is portrayed in opposite ways in Scotland and England in the play. Macbeth's house is associated with the church by the temple-haunting martlets that nest in its eaves. There is a banquet with eucharistic overtones, in which the proffered chalice of hospitality is metaphorically poisoned. In England by contrast, the king has miraculous power to cure the evil, we are told, and graces gather about him as evils proliferate around Macbeth's domicile. This suggests a

⁴⁸ Montaigne, 377

⁴⁹ De Grazia, *Hamlet Without Hamlet*, 34

deep ambivalence about Catholicism in a period described by Lafeu in *All's Well that Ends Well* as one in which "they say Miracles are past and we have our philosophical persons to make modern and familiar things supernatural and causeless"(2.3.1). In Scotland there are no philosophical persons to explain away the supernatural, but the supernatural itself, which starts by being uncanny, eventually becomes banal, as Macduff indicates when he tells Macbeth to "Despair thy charm"(5.10.14). Macbeth's materialism is neither Aristotelian nor modern, though it is Christian in that it is vicious. Its phenomenology relates to the indoors, to the oikos rather than the polis. The stars are compared to candles, the night sky to a blanket full of holes. We may compare the roughly contemporaneous King Lear as a play about a legitimate king rather than a usurper, in which the outdoors is the ruling metaphor. In his post Aristotelian take on Greek Tragedy, Hegel would later see individuality as a feminine, household affair, and woman as "the eternal irony of the community," which might be a good description of how women operate in this play.⁵⁰ They help Macbeth to the throne only to emasculate him by pushing him beyond the bounds set by the laws of hospitality and of fealty, and therefore beyond the bounds that define manhood. The institutions that should control their power are shockingly vulnerable to individual evil. The polarity between individual and monarch in Jacobean England has become extreme, and in this play we can see two different models of sovereignty vying for preeminence. One is absolute monarchy that claims to derive its authority from God, although James' own political writings tend to argue that all authority has been usurped at some point in history.⁵¹ The other is a relative

⁵⁰ Hegel, 267

⁵¹ James I and VI, 74, "For when the astart of Normandie came into England, and made himselfe king, was it not by force, and with a mighty army? Were he gave the Law, and tooke none, changed the Lawes,

democracy in which patriarchal households are the building block of society. Yet a household is the province of the woman, and within it masculine and feminine genders are preeminent depending on whether it is seen in itself, or in the context of the state.⁵² Hegel shows how brothers and sisters within this sphere maintain an equality that they lose once one of them marries into another household.

The result of his usurping the state through the household is that Macbeth lives in an individual hell, or the hell of being an individual. The porter at his castle gate imagines himself the porter of hell gate and says "This place is too cold for hell." Apparently he hasn't read Dante's *Inferno*, whose lowest circle is bound with ice. Malcolm, when pretending to be like Macbeth, says that he would "pour the sweet milk of concord into hell, uproar the universal peace, confound all unity on earth"(4.3.97ff). Macbeth's actions rob world of its substance, whether that substance is understood as transcendent or immanent. The lack of definition that ensues is coextensive with his involvement in matter, matter which has at the same time become pure accident, spectacle or shadow. The play's anticlimactic climax comes with the now famous speech "Tomorrow and tomorrow, and tomorrow/ Creeps in this petty pace from day to day, / To the last syllable of recorded time; / And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! /Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player/ That struts and frets his hour upon the stage/ And then is heard no more. It is a tale/ Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury/ Signifying nothing"(5.5.19ff). Macbeth has lost the contest for being that he

inverted the order of government, set down the strangers his followers in many of the old possessours rooms, as at this day well appeareth a great part of the Gentlemen in England, beeing come of the Norman blood, and their old Lawes, which to this day they are ruled by, are written in his language, and not in theirs."

⁵² Shuger, *Habits of Thought*, 2 quotes Sir Thomas Smith's 1562 *De republica Anglorum* to the effect that "husband and wife "ech obeyeth and commaundeth other and they two together rule the house."

waged against Duncan, Banquo and now Malcolm. The indefinite future he imagines is one that takes place indoors, in the feminine sphere, where his being is that of a candle that will be extinguished at some indeterminate date.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Peter Marshall has described how in the Renaissance hell was increasingly represented as a state of mind rather than a place. Both Marlowe's Mephistopheles and Milton's Satan show that hell is wherever they happen to be.⁵³ Even if it continues to be a place, that place is increasingly similar to mundane history. The sempiternity of species that Aristotelian philosophy helped people to theorize in the late medieval period allowed them to think about the state as undying, and to posit honour as an alternative form of afterlife.⁵⁴ The souls in Dante's hell are anxious about how they will be remembered in the world. In Spenser's Cave of Mammon hell and the world are contiguous and Milton's Hell is full of people with real bodies engaging in architectural projects and philosophical discussions. Humanist recovery of Epicurean texts may have contributed to the conflation of hell and the world: Lucretius locates Avernus in an earthly geographical location.⁵⁵ Another source of this conflation is in the kind of puritan materialism I have touched on in my discussion of Perkins. Molly Hand's essay on devils and witches in early modern drama argues that "The possibility that there was a Faustian overreacher speeding towards damned end right there in London was not beyond the imagination of Marlowe's audience. That Lucifer and his crew would actually pay him a visit and rend his limbs from his body was conceivable. And perhaps as early as 1594, Renaissance audiences associated the performance of Marlowe's play with the

⁵³ Marlowe, *Dr Faustus*, 2.1.119ff, "Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed/ In one self place, but where we are is hell,/ And where hell is there must we ever be./ And, to be short, when all the world dissolves,/ And every creature shall be purified, /All places shall be hell that is not heaven"

⁵⁴ Kantorowicz, 277

⁵⁵ Lucretius, *On The Nature of Things*, Book IV

possible appearance of a real devil."⁵⁶ The possibility that real devils and real people could mingle indiscriminately may be seen in the context not just of Puritan anti-theatricalism, but of the puritan belief that the church can be perfected in history. For Augustine hell is the second death of temporal infinity.⁵⁷ It is a material insubstantiality that one experiences through one's own sinfulness, whereas the puritan materialism is a function of their certainty about their own election.⁵⁸ Yet they both imply infinite duration rather than transcendent being.

Macbeth's despairing vision is one involving his own personal extinction, beyond which he envisions neither transcendence nor damnation, but dust, the ultimate atomisation of the universe. Significantly, unlike in *The Faerie Queene*, where Arthur's sword reduces dust to "nought at all," this dust is irreducible matter, like Lucretian atoms. The last syllable of recorded time invokes the familiar idea of history as a text, but it isn't followed by the second coming, and if it constitutes a semiotic plenitude, that plenitude is indistinguishable from a final entropy. When time is no longer circumscribed by Christ it is infected by the boundlessness that is characteristic of sin, of accidents, of that which lacks intrinsic being. In *Macbeth*, as hell becomes both a state of mind and a mode of history, inside and outside are blurred by the figuring of the cosmos as a house or a bedroom. The play may equally be read as late medieval in its figuring of being as boundedness, or as already postmodern in its sense that all boundaries are imperfect, all perspectives involve subjective horizons rather than absolute knowledge, and all individuals are species unto themselves, yet mortal at the same time. Although the play

⁵⁶ Hand, 73

⁵⁷ Cf. *Pearl*, 652, " The blod vus boght fro bale of helle,/ And delyuered vus of the deth secounde"

⁵⁸ Lake, 33, talks about Cartwright's fundamentally eschatological view of the process of edifying the faithful through preaching, while Whitgift thought that the church wasn't progressive and what happened to the elect happened to them invisibly.

ends on a tentatively hopeful note with Malcolm being "compassed with [his] kingdom's pearl" the redemption of Scotland by English aid must have been adumbrated in 1606 by the fact that England had recently invited a Scot onto the throne, and was living a kind of posthumous existence in world where Elizabeth's virginity had ended by being grotesque, and after her death her youthful pretensions are replaced by the shadows of the Jacobean theatre of state.⁵⁹

It is in this context that Shakespeare turned to the question of wonder in the plays that later became known as the romances, still playing with the idea of the supernatural, and whether it is banal or meaningful. Aristotle was led to philosophy through wonder or wondering about the fact that there was something rather than nothing. For Descartes wonder was the first of the emotions, having no opposite.⁶⁰ *The Winter's Tale*, which began with a perception of the reality of Hermione's desire as a kind of "nothing" that invests the whole world, ends with her return and that of her daughter amidst an outbreak of wonder that happens offstage, reported by a gentleman to Autolycus: "A notable passion of wonder appeared in them, but the wisest beholder, that knew no more but seeing, could not say if the importance were joy or sorrow(5.2.). Substance is here designated by the term "importance," a word implying both moral weight and physical amplitude. As it is manifested by accidents the word indeterminately expresses joy and sorrow as the breach between individuals long separated is healed and they lose and find themselves in one another. The reason why this is reported rather than shown is that

⁵⁹ Tennenhouse, 133, argues that Shakespeare idealizes the monarchy in this ending and that in Malcolm he creates a king in whom the body politic and the body natural are one again, but I argue that Malcolms claim that he is 'yet' unknown to woman suggests an inevitability that he will become known to woman, and indeed the genealogical nature of aristocratic kingship that Tennenhouse describes supports this, while the virginal nature of absolute kingship is one that recent history had made ambiguous.

⁶⁰ Descartes, *Passions of the Soul*, 350.

wonder can't be represented more than once without seeming tawdry, as CS Lewis noted in relation to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, when he said that two *ferlies* are always less impressive than one.⁶¹ Jealousy on the other hand is eminently representable. This difference between the two emotions suggests that wonder, like the Being it perceives, is ontologically singular. It is different from the mutually self constituting gaze noted in the sonnets, or from what Joel Fineman discusses as the poetics of praise.⁶² Wonder is not the same as admiration, which has a subject and an object, even if these things exchange reflections. In reducing those who experience it to silence, the subject and the object of wonder become one and the same. Leontes' jealousy on the other hand reads Hermione in such a way that he ends up speaking a language she doesn't understand. It too defeats language, but in a way that establishes the existence of two substances which can't speak to one another without one doing violence to the other. Antigonus says that if Hermione is lying then "every inch of woman in the world, / Ay, every dram of woman's flesh is false"(2.1.139). Even though he is defending her virtue in this instance, he does so by reducing her to a quantity of designated and fungible matter. Leontes' tyranny involves the imposition by force of a heterodox meaning on this type of matter.

When he imposes form on matter in this tyrannical way, Leontes, like Macbeth, is engaged in a destructive act rather than the creative one of 'framing' an object in conformity with a pattern. In doing so he places himself outside the community of his peers. In the reconciliation scene Leontes and Hermione appear on the stage together, seeing one another but not speaking. Their meeting is mediated by Paulina who is both

⁶¹ Lewis, Chapter 1. A *ferlie* is a marvel or wonder in middle English.

⁶² Fineman, in *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye*, reads Shakespeare through a neoplatonic lens, and where he invokes Aristotle it is in the context of mimesis rather than metaphysics.

woman and servant. Her lower rank hides her gender enough for her to talk to Leontes. As that in which both Leontes and Hermione participate, Paulina might be seen as the true substance of this play, one that is 'common' in every sense of that term, and is cognate with the earth that De Grazia has shown to be foundational for *Hamlet*. On the other hand Paulina can equally be seen as female and Hermione and Leontes as two gendered substances facing one another, uniting through marriage into one transcendent substance of which all the other married couples are shadows. As in Sonnet 53, where Shakespeare's use of platonic metaphors didn't exclude a material reality, in this play the ending is ambiguously material and transcendent.⁶³

As we have seen, the opposition between Platonic and Aristotelian substances can be collapsed by regarding them as complementary realisms, standing in opposition to nominalist chaos. The queasiness that Stephen Greenblatt detects in the ending of *The Winter's Tale* is caused by the question of whether there is cause for wonder at a reconstituted substance following a period in which individuals became separated from each other, or merely for perplexed wondering. We might wonder, for example, what to think about the harmonious restoration of order in light of the death of Antigonus. His death is redeemed by the marriage of his widow, Paulina, with Camillo. The death of Mamillius is redeemed in the marriage of Florizel and Perdita who will produce male heirs. In making Antigonus and Camillo interchangeable units, the difference between them remains a merely accidental one. They are subjects of the king individuated by their common reference to him, or alternatively they are members of the species man

⁶³ Cf. Irigaray, *Wonder*, 82, "Wonder would be the passion of the encounter between the most material and the most metaphysical, of their possible conception and fecundation one by the other. A third dimension. An intermediary. Neither the one nor the other. Which is not to say neutral or neuter."

individuated by the matter that made up their bodies. Interpreting the play in a way that preserves the personal nature of their deaths forces us to choose a world in which there is an indefinite number of substances, a chaos on which order could be imposed only by a Hobbesian sovereign,⁶⁴ or by an omnipotent God inhabiting the consciences of the elect, alternatives that would haunt the politics of the coming century. In both cases substance is reconstituted as a subjective interiority whose outward manifestations are ambiguous. A third alternative is that in this nominalistic universe wonder "would subsist among all forms of others irreducible each to the other. The passion that inaugurates love and art,"⁶⁵ but the idealism inherent in this notion seems impossibly utopian to Shakespeare who only registers it as a fleeting possibility in plays like *The Winter's Tale* and *All's Well That Ends Well*. In these plays the way in which the ending is staged can be decisive for the meaning of the play, depending on whether the couples are presented close together, lovingly reunited, or reluctantly facing one another across a wide distance.

In Book II, Canto II of *The Faerie Queene* Guyon, attempting to wash Ruddymane's parents' blood from the child's guiltless hands, finds that the blood won't come off "The whiche him into great amaz'ment drove, / And into diverse doubt his wavering wonder clove." (2.2.3). In these lines we can see that wonder is ontologically singular, but is also wavering, meaning that it tends to split into two, quickly turning into desire or fear in relation to an object.⁶⁶ Doubt on the other hand is a cleaving of it into

⁶⁴ This is arguably what is symbolized in *The Faerie Queene* by Britomart's canter across the jewelled strand after mortally wounding Marinell, in which she disdains to notice them because "all was in her power."

⁶⁵ Irigaray, *Wonder*, 82

⁶⁶ Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions*, 81, quoting Albertus Magnus' rationalization of wonder, says, "Wonder... is not a steady state; it is inherently unstable, a shifter, not only the sign but the principal

many, and multiplicity, as we have seen has a connection to sin and to nothingness in premodernity. We are told that the poem describes "matter of just memory" and not painted forgery. The matter of just memory, if memory is taken as implying Platonic anamnesis is transcendent substance, while painted forgery might be taken as the poetic imagery produced by the corporeal imagination. Spenser says he can't prove that his poem has this substance because "none that breatheth living aire, does know, / Where is that happy land of Faery, / Which I so much do vaunt, yet no where show, / But vouch antiquities which nobody can know" (II.Proem, 1). He goes on to suggest that Faeryland might be discovered geographically, like America. This claim figures the exploration of people like his friend Raleigh in terms of the reader's search for the ontological substance of his poem, a substance that in Book I was approached by means of contemplation. It reduces metaphysical wonder to the level of wondering at exotic objects in the world.⁶⁷ This is a sophisticated conceit occasioned by the fact that the poem is at once a work intended to flatter Elizabeth, and a serious meditation on virtue and vice as paths leading to heaven and hell. That is to say it is concerned with material history and with transcendent truth, and how to reconcile them in the context of man's sinful nature.

Book II is concerned with the embodied soul, and is clearly thinking in Aristotelian terms both about Temperance as a golden mean and about the relationship between substance and the infinities of temporal and modal accidents. The monsters attacking the bulwarks representing the human senses in the castle of Alma seem like substances but "substance from them fades." This is because they are Aristotelian

instigator of movement. For Albertus Magnus the movement driven by the marvellous is from the blankness of ignorance to the fullness of philosophical understanding."

⁶⁷ Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions*, 14, "Wonder is, I shall argue, the central figure in the initial European response to the New World" but cf. also de Certeau on the spatialization of the mystical 'experience' in early modernity, discussed in the final chapter of this dissertation.

accidents, and occasions of sin to boot. They are defeated by Arthur, who represents the origins of the Tudor dynasty and whose shield is an indivisible substance that occasionally saves him from the accidents of the narrative, and thereby saves the narrative itself. Meanwhile Guyon, or Temperance, approaches the Bower of Bliss, a sinful body whose boundaries seem designed to be breached, populated by monsters who defy categorization. The wandering rocks that he negotiates in his approach to it, figure a nominalistic world of many substances, devoid of Substance. Guyon throws a subtle net over the adulterous embrace of Verdant and Acrasia, whose names imply pullulating vegetation and immoral excess respectively. Guyon thereby imposes form on chaos. His act is, on the face of it, as destructive as those of Macbeth or Leontes, and Teskey as we saw in the previous chapter sees this kind of thing as characteristic of Allegory as a genre and Allegory as being culpably implicated in European imperialism. He is not alone in this judgement. Stephen Greenblatt says that " To be sure, criticism has convincingly shown that the intellectual tradition behind Guyon's act of moral violence included not only puritanism (which must, in any case, be understood as far more than a hysterical rejection of the flesh) but a rich matrix of classical and medieval thought."⁶⁸ He interprets it further in relation to *Civilization and its Discontents* in terms of the 'renunciation of instinct': "Civilization behaves toward sexuality as a people or a stratum of its population does which has subjected another one to its exploitation."⁶⁹

However, Temperance imposes form on matter in order to bring substance out of accident. If it is experienced as violence that is because its subject is sinful, rather than merely different. Although Spenser tends to conflate sin with other kinds of difference,

⁶⁸ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 171

⁶⁹ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 173

for example by insinuating that some of his personified vices are Irish or that the passions are Native American, these details are accidents attending on the poem's universal truth, a truth that he asks us to believe in as protestant readers. Although the circle of 'us' implied by the poem is narrowly nationalistic, and recruits the idea of evil as non-being to the cause of English imperialism, to turn Spenser's metaphysics of evil into an assumption of the evils of idealist metaphysics is ideological in the sense of the word that New Historicists often use to describe sixteenth century religion. Spenser has a clear sense of the difference between a tyrannical imposition of meaning, and the virtuous bringing of form from chaos or substance from accident, according to the norms of his time and place. At the same time, for Spenser's poem to deal conceptually with the otherness of the Irish, he would have to cease believing in the reality of immanent forms in nature, or in the naturalness of his own values, which would be to adopt a type of materialism that he could only think of as atheistic. Allegory made sense in a world where heterogeneity was contained within the parameters of the Catholic church, but Spenser is a conservative writing in a period when those parameters are vanishing. This poem is not as hospitable to changing contexts as a Shakespeare play, because it is not holding a mirror up to nature, but to the forms immanent in a nature that is already a thing of the past. Insofar as it is individual it includes poetic imagery that appeals to the senses, and details which later ages have come to condemn as imperialistic, but insofar as it is typical it points beyond the accidents of its narrative to a transcendent substance. As he tells us in the Letter to Raleigh, the poem is a Method, in the sense derived from university logic books, meaning a way through the chaos of experience to the truth that redeems it rationally and spiritually.

The kind of art that Guyon destroys in the Bower of Bliss is that proletarian art which was produced in the Elizabethan theaters, in which the monarch was also implicated as Spenser tells us repeatedly by referring to various episodes in the book as Tragedies, and comparing the Bower to an actual theatre. One of the things that makes it dangerous is also that which makes a female monarch dangerous: the difficulty about the precise location of sovereignty in such a state or such a work. As Spenser puts it: "The art which all that wrought, appeared in no place"(II.12.58). Foucault and Barthes were still worrying this question when they theorized the death of the Author in the 1960s. When Foucault says the author is a principle of thrift, he is making the same intellectual move as Aristotle made when he differentiated between substance and accident, but Foucault thinks accidents are real and substance a chimera. In both the case of *The Faerie Queene* and of naturalistic drama critics have often looked at a text that they treat like a person, but where the dark conceit of allegory aims to reveal God as its author, even when thematizing its own failure to reach God, the Shakespearean drama is a drama of immanence in which transcendence is radically called in question. In its materiality, a play resembles an Aristotelian substance, while Spenser's Allegory might be seen as being made up of the shadows of a transcendent substance. Yet the allegory as psychomachia has reference to the material world in which it was written, and Shakespearean drama is filled with individuals who have transcendent longings. Both are threatened by the death of the author. In the case of Allegory there is an immanent possibility that God may not justify the work and the author may be damned, and in the case of the kinds of drama that we have come to regard as the beginnings of modern literature, there is a refusal to tell us conclusively what the author meant, such that his

invisible substance might be suspected not to exist at all. God is either disapproving or virtually absent.

The main difference between them is that Shakespeare's theater is inherently common and Spenser's poem is aristocratic. Like Aristotle Spenser thinks that some people are slaves by nature. At his most charitable, he is able to let them go their own way, like the hoggish Grille at the end of Book II who resists being turned back into a man during Guyon's virtuous placing of the Bower's monsters back into their rightful species groupings. By letting Grille remain a pig, Spenser makes differences of rank into a species difference. Yet this species difference is harder for Spenser to overcome than the ontological differences that Shakespeare tries to overcome and preserve in *The Winter's Tale*. Curiously, an ontological difference can be closed by hierarchically subordinating one of its pair within the marriage bond, such that one of the pair becomes 'indifferent.'⁷⁰ They can thus produce offspring, but, as De Grazia's argument about Shakespeare's sonnets helps us see, the offspring of an interspecies relationship is threatening to the fabric of Spenser's society. This is because in an ontological opposition, the opposite number always looks like 'nothing' from wherever you are standing, whereas in a hierarchical difference between species, genders or social castes, the inferior member has connotations of matter and mortality. It is a kind of attribute or accident that threatens to become an entity.⁷¹ Ontological difference is tamed by hierarchizing it, but hierarchical difference can be frightening enough to seem an ontological one because when it is inverted, evil seems to have its own being rather than being an accident attending on a substance that doesn't change. When hierarchy is

⁷⁰ Cf. Irigaray, *This Sex Which is not One*

⁷¹ In Derridean terms it is a supplement that usurps what it supplements.

undermined completely by a tyrant like Macbeth, and every human being is its own substance placed in a state of nature with every other substance, then gender becomes part of the dialectic of individuality, such that masculine and feminine, map onto other binary pairs like power/passivity, one/many, form/matter in both women and men. In the texts under consideration here we can see this in the way that matter is associated with 'menstrue' for Perkins, Spenser and as we will see in the next chapter for the writer of *This World's Folly*. Women suffer from this egalitarianism by seeming to 'act' contrary to their essence, and so have to be resubordinated within the patriarchal family in the seventeenth century.

Where monarchy provides a model of the individual in premodernity, the family becomes the basic building block of society in early modernity. *The Winter's Tale* is a story about a monarchy that is also a family, and so it compresses a lot of meaning in a small space. The marriages that happen at the end might be seen as economic exchanges in which the ontological difference that doesn't signify, is turned into a qualitative difference that needs a general equivalent. In *Capital* Marx quotes the *Nicomachean Ethics* on how "There can be no exchange without equality, and no equality without commensurability."⁷² By subordinating women within the family, they become units of exchange in power relationships between monarchs or states who, in the absence of the Catholic church, would be unable to recognise each other because there would be no basis of comparison. The result would be a war of each against all. Although it may appear that because matter is the principle of individuation for Aristotle, his kind of individuality is dehumanising, in fact the opposite is the case within a Christian

⁷² Marx, *Capital*, 151

dispensation. The matter that individuates is part of the soul, and the human soul is a kind of species unto itself. It participates in prime matter and transcendent substance, which, I am arguing, are ultimately the same. The debased concept of matter that arises from getting rid of the Aristotelian concepts of *substance* and *accident*, is one in which there are only accidents, no matter how much you look for their substance by 'opening' them. In the absence of a belief in substance, an alternative will be found in the general equivalent of money. This is the meaning of Mammon's cave in Spenser, and of the scene in *The Atheist's Tragedy*, where D'Amville comes upon his servant dozing over the piles of money that, for D'Amville, are the only referent of the word 'substance'. Just as history takes on the characteristics of hell in early modernity, the activities formerly thought of as usurious find legitimacy under capitalism. We can see the connection between Hell and Usury made explicitly in *The Wonderful Yeare*: "Usurers and Brokers (that are the Divels Ingles, and dwell in the long-lane of hell)"⁷³

⁷³ Dekker, 12

4. Language and Matter in Nashe, Jonson and Tourneur

The English term 'atheism' was coined by Elizabeth I's tutor, John Cheke, in his vernacular introduction to a Latin translation of Plutarch's *On Superstition*, addressed to Henry VIII. For Cheke atheists are those

who know, indeed, and understand what ought to be done, what is good, what pleases God, and what is perfect; who lay out much pains and study in the knowledge of the divine law, but perform nothing that is real; who carry a fair outside in looks and gestures, as though they were full of piety, while they are at the same time internally empty of all good works....The Scripture calls them hypocrites.¹

In his use of the term 'real' here, Cheke is a Platonist. Later he talks about how the ignorant are like the characters in Plato's cave, unable to look at the light. He demonstrates that his relationship to a history devoid of God is to something that is unreal, and that actions performed in History have reference to a transcendent truth understood in terms of light against darkness.² Yet in imagining unreal objects as physically hollow, he also calls attention to the inherently figurative nature of the realist language, which Aquinas thought could only be predicated of God in an analogical way. Cheke also has a less binary view of things than William Perkins writing on the same subject fifty years later, because he recognises gradations of reality. For Cheke, a less sinful category than that of Atheism, is Superstition, which is the sin of those who are confused about their sanctity and piety. Sanctity is knowledge of God found through study and contemplation, while piety is putting that knowledge into action. Error in one involves error in the other. As we will see again in the next chapter, the active and

¹ Cheke, 199

² Cf. Shuger, *Habits of Thought*, "The structure of Herbert's *Temple* exhibits the same discontinuities visible in contemporary religious prose: the contrast between the apparent emptiness of history and inward presence.."

contemplative lives are a complex rather than discrete things. He says that "Hypocrites are like to them, who being tortured with the French disease, or some such incurable and loathsome distemper, do, in the midst of this most grievous vexation, and miserable state of body, pretend that they are sound."³ The body referred to is indeterminately the body politic and the body natural, and the context for all of Cheke's address to Henry VIII, is not just individuals in a society but individual monarchs in the world, as is made clear when, in reference to God's law he says "For as there is no respect of single persons, so neither is there of particular nations with God."⁴ Turning from God is an implicitly pestilential practice. The connection between atheism, plague, and hypocrisy in Cheke's work, is analogous to that between tyranny, plague, and femininity in Knox's. They are both ways of describing the ascendancy of matter and accidents over substance.

In its original Greek context an atheist could be somebody who didn't respect the Gods of a particular city.⁵ As such, the atheist demonstrates again the connection between the polis understood as a walled city, and figurations of the self as a circumscribed entity representing the state in microcosm. By the time atheism becomes a position that individuals can adopt at will, this concept of self and state has been superseded by the modern nation-state, and the individual as something indivisible has been replaced by the paradoxical notion of the sovereign subject. In the sixteenth century, however, 'atheist' is a term of abuse exchanged between Catholics and Protestants, or between Conformist and reformed Protestants, one that is roughly synonymous with 'heretic.'⁶ Its connection with citizenship and sovereignty can be seen in the frequency with which it is discussed

³ Cheke, 200

⁴ Cheke, 215

⁵ Michael J. Buckley, 3

⁶ Cf. Nashe, *Christ's Tears*, "There is no Sect now in England so scattered as Atheism"

in the same context as sedition, e.g. by Thomas Lodge and Francis Bacon.⁷ As pestilence dissolves the embodied self of an individual, atheism threatens the body politic with chaos, because it implies that the monarch no longer gets authority from God but from power backed up by theatrical conjuring. Marlowe is reputed to have said that "Moses was but a juggler and one Herriot, being Sir Walter Raleigh's man, can do more than he."⁸ Nashe writes that atheists "make Moses a wise provident man, well seen in the Egyptian learning, but deny he had any divine assistance in the greatest of his miracles."⁹ For this reason, there is a simultaneous connection between the atheist and the machiavel, as signalled by John Hull in the title of his 1611 tract *The Unmasking of the Politic Atheist*. Although recent writers like Duffy, Kantorowicz and Gary Macy recognize the existential authenticity of late medieval sacramentalism as something that depended on the honesty of the participants, for early modern Protestants like William Perkins and John Hull, the connection between Atheist and Machiavel also connects these characters with Catholicism and with theater, an artform that the author of *This World's Folly* thought of as "the menstruous rags" of the city.¹⁰ This latter, as we have seen, was a catchphrase repeated in many different contexts, coming originally from English translations of Isaiah

⁷ Cf. Bacon, 366-374, where 'Of Seditious and Troubles,' 'Of Atheism' and 'Of Superstition' are placed together. Cf. George T. Buckley, *Atheism in the English Renaissance*, 53, "the accusations of atheism made against Kyd and Marlowe followed a charge of sedition....Thomas Lodge in *Wits Miserie and the Worlds Madnesse* (1595) treats sedition immediately after atheism, thus showing how closely the two were associated in his mind."

⁸ Quoted in *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*, under the entry for Thomas Harriot.

⁹ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 479

¹⁰ Quoted in Neill, *Issues of Death*, 25, "the theatre itself became tainted by its association with what Coriolanus calls 'the rank-scented meiny'(Coriolanus, 3.1.66). In the propaganda of their enemies, indeed, playhouses were often identified not merely as disseminators of pestilence, but as the original cause of such divine punishment. 'I.H.', the angry moralist of *This Worlds Folly*, for example, insisted there could be no quelling fo the plague until 'Bawdy Players' were banished from the commonwealth: 'neither can God's wath be qualified, nor his pestilential arrows, which fly amongst us by day & lethally wound us by night, be quivered up, till these *menstruous rags* be torn off (by the hand of *authority*) from the city's skirts, which so besiol and coingunate her whole vesture'.

64.6, that feminized the unrighteousness of mankind in a way that agreed with Aristotle's view of menses as the matter out of which a foetus was formed. By getting rid of Aristotle these writers introduced a type of materialism that needed to have form imposed upon it by God and his human agents, and without such form, matter was sinful, feminine, chaotic, combining all the evils that Knox outlined in his misogynist diatribe.

Aristotle's association with atheism is traceable back to Averroes and Avicenna, who mediated his writings to the west in the thirteenth century.¹¹ Averroism led the Paduan humanist, Pomponazzi, to assert that Aristotelian logic led one to a disbelief in the soul's immortality, but that as a Catholic he was enjoined to believe in immortality.¹² Aquinas argued that Aristotle's belief in the uncreatedness of matter didn't contradict a belief in God as creator, since God was still responsible for holding matter in being. Nevertheless, scripture commanded a belief that God had created the material world in time, and therefore creation belonged to the category of revealed truths rather than those truths that could be known through natural reason.¹³ The Aristotelian language of substance and accident that I explained in the first chapter is a realist, and some would say an idealist, account of the nature of being. It thinks of time as something that doesn't entail open-ended change or progress. It is thus easily assimilable to Christian neoplatonism, and to the belief in eternal truths. Despite the Atheism imputed to Aristotle, the anti-Aristotelian, nominalist turn in late medieval thought has been made

¹¹ George T. Buckley, 21, "by 1250 practically all the works of the great Peripatetic were available with the commentaries of Averroes. Even this early the Schoolmen were aware that a new enemy of the faith had reared its head."

¹² George T. Buckley, 26, "it was the thought of Pomponazzi and his disciples that the English writers had principally in mind when they leveled their attacks against Italian atheism."

¹³ Kenny, 19, "[St Thomas] wrote *On the Eternity of the World* to argue that there is no contradiction in the theory that world had no beginning. That creation took place at a particular point in time is something to be accepted on faith, not demonstrated by reason."

the source of modern nihilism by Michael Gillespie in *Nihilism Before Nietzsche* (1995). This was an anti-realist tradition that can be seen to have influenced Cranmer, Hooker and Andrewes in ways.¹⁴ Heiko Oberman has shown how Nominalism influenced the reformation through Gabriel Biel's influence on Luther (though Perkins dismisses Biel as a Pelagian).¹⁵ Biel, like Aquinas, taught that God created the world in time and held it in being, but for Biel His presence was so immanent in nature as a created order, that He didn't need to interfere with it from 'outside.'¹⁶ In making God hard to distinguish from nature, he arguably helped to set the stage for a belief that human existence was determined completely by blind natural processes.

The idea that the world was not made by God for the benefit of man had other sources, however.¹⁷ Epicureanism was transmitted to renaissance England through Lucretius' poem *On The Nature of Things*.¹⁸ It was not published in English until 1683, but was well known through French and Latin editions. Epicureanism certainly influenced Montaigne whose translated essays were circulating in manuscript in London in the 1590s.¹⁹ However, perhaps the major indirect source of Epicureanism in Renaissance England was Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, with its litany of equivocal

¹⁴ McGee, 193, "For Cranmer, however, the notion that accidents could be present under the mode of substance and not under the mode of accidents was inconceivable. His position was the Nominalist one that substance was made up of its accidents, and that any change of substance would necessitate a change of accidents...."; Shuger, *Habits of Thought*, 38, "Hooker draws on both the Reformed tradition of Calvin, Bullinger, and Bucer and the fourteenth century nominalists to argue that sacramental signs do not contain or cause grace but instead signify God's concomitant yet independent bestowal of it."

¹⁵ Perkins, 119/120: "The Papists make Christ's satisfaction imperfect, in that they do adde a supply by humane satisfactions: and thus much a learned schoolman, Biel in plain words confessed"

¹⁶ Oberman, 50, "Biel takes Gregory to task for not having sufficient confidence in man's potentiality *in puris naturalibus*. Though Biel shares with Occam the conviction that everything God does with the help of second causes he could have done without them, in his analyses of the physical *concursum* of God with his creatures there is nothing that forbids the attribution of naturalism."

¹⁷ Lucretius, IV.111-56

¹⁸ Cf. Michael J. Buckley, 48, "The "chief reasons" that Lessius assembles as causes of the convictions of atheism come out of an Epicurean tradition."

¹⁹ George T. Buckley, 19

transformations that violate established species categories. Lucretius, like Aristotle, doesn't believe in the immortality of the soul or the createdness of matter. However he understands matter as produced by the collision and combination of irregularly shaped atoms, and thinks that "there is nothing in the universe but body and space, and that all other things which are said to be, are only adjuncts or events, properties or accidents of body and space"²⁰ In the primordial Lucretian situation, atoms fall at a constant speed through a bottomless void, and at some indeterminate time and place one or more of them deviates infinitesimally from its course, causing chaos. In the resulting collisions atoms combine to form different substances. The finite number of kinds of seminal atoms limits the number of types of objects they can form, though the number of atoms is limitless. In the early stages of the Lucretian universe there are only monsters, but those monsters to whom chance has given the ability to reproduce, become species.²¹ The Lucretian universe is not designed, and this is evidenced through its 'imperfection,' in the sense that it is never finished. Unlike the Platonic atoms which are isosceles and scalene triangles, Lucretian atoms are irregularly shaped lumps, and thus appear more material than geometric, more matter than form. Lucretius also thinks about the relationship between words and things: he thinks the combinations of letters that go to make up words are like the combinations of a finite number of atoms that make up substances in the physical universe.²² There is no primordial act of naming, but sounds and grunts that men found themselves by chance capable of, were given meaning by mutual consent, and so language was formed haphazardly, like things. Just as the world, and the heavens, came

²⁰ Lucretius, 1

²¹ Lucretius, V.835-922

²² Lucretius, 2.682-707

to be as a result of atoms colliding, they will pass away in the same manner. In the meantime, his concept of human flourishing has to do with the individual experience of pleasure rather than with the development of virtues in an Aristotelian polis. However, there may be benefits to living in society, since long term pleasures are better than brief ones, a point of view that Borachio conveys to D'Amville at the beginning *The Atheist's Tragedy*:

D'Amville: Then if Death casts up
Our totall summe of joy and happinesse,
Let me have all my sences feasted in
Th'abundant fulnesse of delight at once,
And, with a sweet insensible increase
Of pleasing surfet, melt into my dust.

Borachio: That revolution is too short, me thinkes.
If this life comprehends our happinesse,
How foolish to desire to dye so soone!
And if our time runnes home unto the length
Of Nature, how improvident it were
To spend our substance on a minute's pleasure,
And after, live an age in miserie! (1.1.18ff)

Before reading Tourneur's play closely I will look at two of his contemporaries and the way their materialism has been rendered insubstantial not just by personal vice, but by the reformation, and how this materialism is reflected in their sense of the relationship between words and things.

Thomas Nashe

In the preface to Greene's *Menaphon* (1590), Thomas Nashe laments the demise of Aristotelianism at Cambridge since the days of Cheke. He concedes that the humanists had given England a more perfect method of study:

"But how ill their precepts have prospered with our idle age, that leave the fountains of sciences to follow the rivers of Knowledge, their over-fraught studies

and trifling compendiaries may testify. For I know not how it cometh to pass, by the doting practices of our divinity dunces, that strain to make their pupils pulpitmen before they are reconciled to Priscian. But those years which should be employed in Aristotle are expired in epitomies; and well too, they may have so much catechism-vacation to rake up a little refuse philosophy.²³

In this quotation he compares Aristotle as the fount of science with compendia of second hand knowledge that are used by the students of his own day during their training to be puritan preachers. This provides a clue to his strategy in the *The Unfortunate Traveller*, in which his persona, Jack Wilton, ignores the hierarchical and logical distinctions of Aristotelian logic, making connections between equivocally related things as if they were logically related. He does this first by punning on the word 'page,' in his "Introduction to the dapper monsieur pages of the court." 'Pages' means the leaves of a book, a junior court servant, and the first-person narrator himself: "as mercenary attendant on {Henry VIII's] full'sailed fortune, I, Jack Wilton, a gentleman at least, was a certain kind of an appendix or page, belonging or appertaining in or unto to the confines of the English Court."²⁴ This follows from an extravagant conceit in which the bookleaves are compared to leaves on the tree of his patron Henry Wriothesley. Extravagant metaphors and puns that, unlike Spenser's, don't so much build towards a critical mass of meaningfulness as towards absurdity, immediately signal that we are in a nominalistic universe, in which we can't rely on the authorial persona. Not only do words change meanings after the manner of Ovidian metamorphosis, but the narrative persona himself is protean, moving from obsequious patronage-seeker to supercilious patron to urbane villain to Petrarchan poet and Spenserian romancer as the mood takes him. Like the characters we will see in Jonson's *Alchemist*, Wilton occupies the liberties outside the confines of the court, much

²³ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 21

²⁴ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 254

as Hermione occupied the periphery of Leontes' court, as Foucault's madman was incarcerated in the walls of the city in *Madness and Civilization*,²⁵ as the theaters were the *menstruous rags* on the city's 'skirts,' or as "Death has pitched his tent in the sinfully polluted Suburbs" in *The Wonderful Year*.²⁶ This implies both a trespassing on a sphere of legitimacy, and a deviation from it that is not so great as to produce absolute incoherence. Wilton says, following one of his long digressions that "I must not place a volume in the precincts of a pamphlet"²⁷ foregrounding his textuality, and parodically referencing his self-conscious failure to observe logical and generic categories, as well as that he remains to some extent bound by that from which he deviates.

Although he is in some sense fortune's fool, and an accidental principle in the text, Wilton generally outwits those around him, including the mechanicals, who are beneath him in rank, and the Earl of Surrey who is above him. His relation to his fellow men is as equivocal as that of nouns without grammar. Like Macbeth, Wilton lives in a hell of individuals, who are figured as "idiots." The "mechanical captain,"²⁸ whose idiotism Wilton confides to the reader, but conveys to the vainglorious captain himself as "singularity" is persuaded to go into the French camp and kill the French king. His foolishness is great enough to absolve him from blame and when Henry VIII hears of it, Wilton himself is thrashed, this being the impetus for his next picaresque adventure. The connection between the mechanical captain and Erasmus' *Encomium Morae* mentioned

²⁵ Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation*, 11, "The madman's voyage is at once a rigorous division and an absolute Passage. In one sense it simply develops, across a half-real, half imaginary geography, the madman's liminal position on the horizon of medieval concern - a position symbolized and made real at the same time by the madman's privilege of being *confined* within the city *gates*: his exclusion must enclose him; if he cannot and must not have another prison than the threshold itself, he is kept at the point of passage. He is put in the interior of the exterior, and inversely."

²⁶ Dekker, 31

²⁷ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 271

²⁸ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 262

later is an aleatory one, except that Erasmus himself participates in the genre of idiotism, through his implication in Wilton's critique of learning as a higher kind of foolishness. The repeated Latin tags, the ventriloquism of different literary registers, the confusion of Ovidian eros with religious devotion, make the text a gallimaufry of epitomes. Its monstrosity means it has no hope of either damnation or forgiveness, since Hell for him is no more than the suspense attendant on not knowing what will happen next,²⁹ and his only Heaven is Honour. Heraclide, about to be raped by Esdras of Granada, in a scene similar to one in *The Atheist's Tragedy*, says to her attacker "Repent betimes, imagine there is a hell though not a heaven. That hell thy conscience is thoroughly acquainted with, if thou has murdered half so many as thou unblushingly braggest."³⁰ Hell is a state of mind in this world without boundaries, rather than a place beyond it. The countries Wilton passes through are fragments of a lost catholic unity, themselves comprised at an even more microscopic level than the national one of Anabaptists, Lutherans, Catholics and Atheists.

Italy, the paradise of the earth and the epicure's heaven, how doth it form our young master? It makes him to kiss his hand like an ape, cringe his neck like a starveling, and play at heypass reposs come aloft, when he salutes a man. From thence he brings the art of atheism, the art of epicurising, the art of whoring, the art of poisoning, the art of sodomitry³¹

Eden, according to this passage, is still with us, as an epicurean paradise of gratified appetites. Atheism is an art connected to the epicurean consumption of food, drink and women.

²⁹ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 258

³⁰ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 334

³¹ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 345

Even the most dyed in the wool 'atheist' in sixteenth century England exists within a religious context however.³² Chaucer's Pardoner may be a thoroughgoing materialist, but his materialism is inextricable from his sinfulness. Nashe tropes the apotheosis of wickedness depicted in *The Unfortunate Traveller* in terms of the subversion of the sacraments which bind a religious community, by making Esdras dedicate his soul to the devil through a contract written in blood. Esdras says "For thy sake will I swear and forswear, renounce my baptism and all the interest I have in any other sacrament. Only let me live how miserable soever, be it in a dungeon amongs toads, serpents and adders, or set up to the neck in dung."³³ These sound a lot like the tortures devised for sinners in Dante's *Inferno*, and, like Tourneur's atheist, what Esdras fears is not damnation but oblivion. In a reference to tragedies Nashe says "Revenge in our tragedies is always raised from Hell: of Hell do I esteem better than heaven, if it afford me revenge. There is no heaven but revenge"³⁴ and two pages later: "The farther we wade in revenge the nearer we come to the throne of the Almighty."³⁵ God's eternity has become temporal infinity. Aristotelian substance has become an admonition to the reader to "subaudi," a learned reference to old grammar books, meaning "understand" but inviting one to participate in a profane secret: the fact that he had sex with the Earl of Surrey's innamorata. It may be argued that Wilton/Nashe asserts one positive value when he argues for the value of writing over violence in the section on Aretine, but in his reference to the spirit of ink, he reduces spirit to matter, and rarefies matter as spirit in a world where matter is infinitely

³² Cf. Michael J. Buckley, 15, "the central meaning of atheism is not to be sought immediately in atheism; it is to be sought in those gods or that god affirmed, which atheism has either engaged or chosen to ignore as beneath serious challenge. The history of the term indicates this constant, and the analysis of its meaning suggests that it is inescapable: atheism is essentially parasitic."

³³ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 367

³⁴ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 367

³⁵ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 369

mutable, but to no positive end.³⁶ There are no first or final causes here, and matter itself has no substance, being instead a series of accidents or efficient causes. Wilton's travelling is "travailing," a work unlike Catholic "works" that doesn't have salvation as its telos, but only the money Nashe is paid for his writing. Substance as divine presence becomes substance as wealth. Wilton is not just an allegorical principle of Fragmentation in the text. His transitions from one milieu to another are also motivated intra-diegetically by boredom, a word that, though it didn't exist yet in English, is made necessary by the world this work embodies and describes.

Jonson

The allegoricism of Jonson's *The Alchemist* gives its materialism too a religious valency. The main characters are confidence tricksters like Chaucer's Pardoner, who, in the first act, dupe a small time gambler into thinking he is the nephew of the Queen of Faery. The transmutation of base metal into gold is made synonymous with the transmutation of a commoner into a gentleman when Subtle claims to have "Wrought [Face] to a quintessence"(I.i.70). Making 'face' a quintessence is nothing other than turning surfaces or accidents into substance. It is also the transmutation of the general into the particular, when the whore Doll Common is to be made Doll Particular, after restoring order to the "republic" of the Alchemist's house. The reconciliation follows a quarrel between Face and Subtle who are rivals for sovereignty. Doll addresses them as "Sovereign" and "General." In reward for her peacemaking Doll is promised that "at supper thou shalt sit in triumph, / And not be styl'd Doll Common, but Doll Proper,/ Doll Singular: the longest cut, at night, / Shall draw thee for Doll Particular" (1.1.76ff). Doll's

³⁶ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, 309

accidental nature can be seen in the fact that in her movement from Doll Common she first becomes Doll Proper, which is to say the 'property' of one of these men, both in the sense of commodity ownership, and of a physical attribute. Her relation to fortune is signified by the fact that her attribution to one or the other of them is based on the drawing of straws. This exaltation of the individual is explicitly done in the service of a commonwealth of rogues existing outside the walls of the city proper, but within the liberties, their master having gone to the country to avoid the plague.

A Midsummer Night's Dream notwithstanding, the invocation of the Queen of Fairy in a 1609 play, must invoke Spenser's poem, and we saw how the search for that poem's substance was troped as a search for treasure in the New World. In Act II of Jonson's play we can see that the search for the philosopher's stone is understood in a similar way, as a physical search for something exotic, which will bring about a return to the Golden Age: "Now, you set your foot on shore/ In novo orbe; here's the rich peru: / And there within, Sir, are the golden mines, / Great Solomon's Ophir' He was sailing to't / Three years, but we have reached it in ten months."(II.i.1ff) The man searching in this way is Sir Epicure Mammon, whose name makes him the epitome of Godless materialism. Indeed money is one thing that can transmute the base mettle of a commoner into that of a gentleman, a procedure that was becoming more common during James' reign. The resulting subversion of hierarchical rank may have been achieved in the service of absolute monarchy, but in also supporting venture capitalism, it conduces to a situation in which individual material fortunes can overcome the the metaphysics of bloodlines. The attempt to unite the mutually exclusive principles of capitalism and

feudalism is central to the comedy of act IV when Mammon pretends to see noble lineage in Doll:

Mammon: I do see
The old ingredient, virtue, was not lost,
Nor the drug, money, us'd to make your compound.
There is strange nobility i' your eye,
This lip, that chin! Methinks you do resemble
One o' the Austriac princes.
Face: [Aside] Very like,
Her father was an Irish costermonger.
Mammon: The house Valois, just, had such a nose.
And such a forehead, yet, the Medici
Of Florence boast. (VI.i.53ff)

The Valois and Medici, mentioned in the same breath here, are noblemen and bankers. Subtle, whom Mammon addresses as Father, is pretending to be an alchemist, and his alchemy is a thinly veiled allegory of Catholicism and the reformation. Indeed the whole depiction of his alchemical procedures is an example of the kind of allegoresis that modern writers on the literary genre of Allegory have been anxious to distance themselves from. In its overdetermined metaphoricity, alchemy is a kind of universal solvent, or "menstrue"(1.1.116). Menstrue and faeces are equated with prime matter here, but prime matter is a debased concept in these alchemical discourses, which imagine it as having physical properties after the manner of Ramus, Perkins et al. The Aristotelian language of substance and accident is invoked in passing in Act IV, when Subtle is teaching Kastril how to argue:

O this's no true grammar,
And as ill logic! You must render causes, child,
Your first, and second intentions, know your canons,
And your divisions, moods, degrees, and differences,
Your predicaments, substance, and accident,
Series extern, and intern, with their causes
Efficient, material, formal, final (IV.ii.21ff)

The Aristotelian terminology thus used is itself a kind of fungible stuff, like all the other specialist jargon being used to obfuscate rather than explain. A few lines later we are treated to a disquisition on palmistry. This is not a case of words as things so much as of language as non-signifying matter. Language is the 'stuff' of this play, and is given a kind of opacity similar to the opacity of the dark matter the alchemist is playing with as he pretends to make gold. It demonstrates a version of the Epicurean relation between words and things found in Lucretius, whose logical development is the completely inked over pages in *Tristram Shandy* a century and a half later.

Tourneur

Although it opens, as we have seen, with an Epicurean reference to the importance of bodily pleasure, and the superiority of extended pleasures to brief ones, *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611) is suffused with the Aristotelian language of substance and accident, a fact that has gone unremarked by critics of the play, who tend to dwell instead on its overbearing Calvinist agenda.³⁷ It describes a world in which accidents have become substance, and where the only hope of redemption is not through the sacraments of the church, but through election by a Calvinist deity. As the meaning of the Aristotelian terms is transformed in Tourneur's poetry, they start to tell us about the ontological status of the good and evil characters who employ them. They are embedded in a text dense with all sorts of wordplay, as he punningly investigates the interconnections between different linguistic registers. By analysing this wordplay, I offer a different perspective on what Huston Diehl has called Tourneur's "inquiry into the

³⁷ Michael H. Higgins, "The Influence of Calvinistic Thought in Tourneur's 'Atheist's Tragedy,'" outlines the ways in which Tourneur is demonstrably a Calvinist.

status of visible signs.”³⁸ I also offer a corrective to John S. Wilks in *The Idea of Conscience in Renaissance Tragedy* (1990), who says that “Neither in The Atheist’s Tragedy nor in Jacobean drama generally, do we find any trace of that Thomistic order of phenomena ruled and concatenated by laws.”³⁹ My argument suggests that the reason Tourneur seems to make most sense when seen through the genre of allegory, is that he is attempting the self-contradictory task of establishing a Calvinist ontology.⁴⁰ Janelle Mueller argued that Foxe's martyrs gave themselves ontological stability by preferring death to apostasy, and this play ends with the hero stoically facing his own death, much to the bewilderment of his Catholic/Atheistic persecutor.

In Act 1.1 the atheist, D'Amville, asks “what is he hath such a present eye/ And so prepared a strength, that can foresee/ And fortify his substance and himself/ Against those accidents, the least whereof/ may rob him of an age’s husbandry?” (1.1.48ff). He mischievously uses the terms substance and accident to mean personal wealth and the contingencies that threaten it. The answer to his rhetorical question would be both ‘God’ and ‘nobody,’ indicating the parameters of his self-regard, and foreshadowing the association of sin with nothingness that is crucial to the way Tourneur attempts to resolve the play's contradictions at the end. The terms *substance* and *accident*, although not used in an ostensibly religious context here, nevertheless help to give D'Amville the air of a machiavellian priest cum dramaturge in the play as a whole. In the speech just quoted, D'Amville touches glancingly on the eucharistic idea of ‘presence,’ but does so with a pun on “present I/eye.” The presence he is interested in is his own individual existence,

³⁸ Diehl, 145.

³⁹ Wilks, 172.

⁴⁰ Murray, 59: “The dramatization of D'Amville's “career” is in the allegorical and symbolic medieval tradition of metrical tragedies and of morality, miracle and saints plays.”

rather than that of Christ's corporate body, though his choice of words suggests the possibility of the latter interpretation. His instrument, Borachio, replies "I understand the mark whereat you aim" (1.1.59), thus playing on the notion of 'standing under' implicit in the word sub-stance, and, before he can explain what he means, they are interrupted by Charlemont, an accident that conceals from us the plot that might otherwise be revealed. In this exchange we can see the philosophical term *substance* losing its specificity through a pun that confuses it with one of its homonyms: substance as ontology becomes substance as wealth. The process is extended and complicated as its etymological relation to another word – *understand* - is made part of its meaning. The semantic complexity increases when D'Amville asks Charlemont "is not this the day you purposed to set forward to the war?"

Charlemont: My inclination did intend it so.

D'Amville: And not your resolution? (1.1.62-5)

The gradations of volition contained in these lines help to introduce the idea of will or purpose as an alternative counterpart to the word accident, and a synonym for substance, something that will be taken up later in the play e.g. When Charlemont says in the graveyard, upon finding a convenient disguise: "I'll not expostulate/ The purpose of a friendly accident"(4.3.73).⁴¹ It will become apparent that resolution or purpose to pursue a course of action confers being on the virtuous characters, and vitiates the being of the

⁴¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VII.1041b.25, where he says that a substance is ultimately determined by its cause, comprising formal, material, efficient and final causes. For a late medieval Catholic or an early modern Protestant, substance and intention are preeminently united in God as the first cause who continues to hold everything in being, and it is the nature of the individual will's relationship to this God which is under debate in the reformation.

evil characters.⁴² For the moment the idea is merely introduced, and then Borachio returns to the word substance, and its meaning of wealth, but also gives it another meaning, one that is related to the idea of purpose i.e. the gravamen of an argument. He says “The substance of our former argument was wealth” (1.1.106).

D’Amville, for machiavellian reasons, presently offers part of his financial substance to help Charlemont realise his purpose of going to war: “I’d disinherit my posterity/ To purchase honour. ‘Tis an interest I prize above the principal of wealth. I’m glad I had th’occasion to make known how readily my substance shall unlock/ Itself to serve you”(1.1.88). At this point the pairing of substance and accident has joined itself with the notion of principal and interest, again making a transition from Aristotelian ontology to a different kind of materialism. Charlemont replies to his uncle’s offer: “fear not that your profit shall be small;/ Your interest shall exceed your principal”(1.2.147/8). In the context, interest acquires an additional meaning of self-interestedness as opposed to impartial moral principle. Both pairs of terms – substance/accident and principal/interest – have one term implying something foundational, contained, stable, and a second term implying something with the potential to increase to infinity.

The convergence of modal and temporal accidents that first appears in D’Amville’s punning use of the eucharistic terms substance and accident to mean ‘money’ and ‘contingencies,’ is also a convergence of Aristotelian accidents and Augustinian conceptions of evil as at once something ‘material’ and a kind of nothingness. G.R. Evans has argued that for Augustine chance events - ie. temporal accidents - were the first

⁴² An ‘inclination’ on the other hand, is a mere accident. Heidegger, 62, makes an etymological connection between the Latin *modus* and the Greek *enklisis*. Developing this, we can see an inclination as a modal accident, and resolution as substance.

manifestations of evil in the universe, and that, even while espousing a theology of evil-as-privation, he was never able to free himself from a residually Manichean sense of the materiality of evil.⁴³ Spenser, who is known to have been an influence on Tourneur's poem *The Transformed Metamorphosis*, seems to have had a similar sensibility when he rewrote Aeneas' visit to the classical underworld, and Dante's descent into Hell, as Guyon's descent into the cave of Mammon, the god of 'materialism.' In *The Atheist's Tragedy*, Languabeau Snuffe apparently belongs to the radical sect called The Family of Love (1.4.53), which was associated with atheism in Tudor and Stuart England because of its disbelief in heaven and hell as places beyond the material world.⁴⁴

D'Amville is a natural denizen of this kind of history, a world of conflicting individuals, in which one person's purposes are another's accidents. He demonstrates that when God no longer sponsors nature, the family or the political state, then linguistic meanings, money, human bodies and accidents tend to proliferate uncontrollably. His plot to usurp Charlemont's patrimony is part of an attempt to provide a bodily and financially 'material' foundation from which he himself can increase to infinity: "Had not my body spread itself/ Into posterity, perhaps I should/ Desire no more increase of substance than/ Would hold proportion with mine own dimensions"(1.1.45). Looking at his children he says "There's my eternity. My life in them and their succession shall forever live" (1.1.123-5).⁴⁵ However, the material with which he proposes to achieve eternity in this

⁴³ Evans, 36, "There persisted, however, a lingering association between matter and evil which Augustine never quite severed."

⁴⁴ Buckley, *Atheism in the English Renaissance*, 48

⁴⁵ Cf. Kantorowicz, 392, "When Frederick II, in a charter for his son Conrad, said that "by the benefice of an innate grace [the son] is held to be one person [with the father]," he - or the responsible clerk - may have had Justinian's *Code* in mind where it is said that "father and son are understood to be by nature almost the same person."...In these cases, the fiction of law was actually supported by the philosophers - Aristotle and, in his wake, Aquinas - according to whose biogenetic doctrines the "form (eidos) of the better and the

way is also Charlemont's "absence"(1.2.111) as well as the person of his eldest son, Rousard, who later turns out to be "empty" in the sense of having no seed with which to impregnate his wife (4.3.104). In D'Amville's rhetoric the matter of history becomes insubstantial. In his hubristic attempt at ex nihilo creation he thinks he is God, but will turn out to be nobody and nothing. In fact this attempt thinks of itself as ex deo creation, because D'Amville hasn't yet understood his own nothingness.

If D'Amville fancies himself as God the Father, Charlemont is set up as his equal opposite when he returns from war to find his betrothed, Castabella, weeping over his own grave in a scene with eucharistic overtones where she is cast as the priest and Charlemont as Christ: "on the altar of his tomb I sacrifice my tears"(3.1.59/60). She is now married to Rousard, and thinks she is seeing a ghost, until Charlemont tells her

Reduce thy understanding to thine eye.
Within this habit which thy misinformed
Conceit takes only for a shape, live both
The soul and body of thy Charlemont.

Castabella [touching him]

I feel a substance warm and soft and moist,
Subject to the capacity of sense. (3.1.80ff)

Castabella is misled by circumstances into mistaking Charlemont's appearances for something illusory, like the appearance of the sacramental bread and wine which, according the doctrine of transubstantiation, conceals and reveals Christ's Galilean body. When she realises that he is not a ghost, he acquires an aura of the risen Christ. Despite the reductively material sense of substance here, described as something "warm and soft and moist," by giving Charlemont Christological significance Tourneur prepares the ground for his apotheosis at the end of the play. In addition, substance is again connected

begotten were the same owing to the seed's active power, which derived from the soul of the father and impressed itself upon the son."

with understanding. Having reduced substance to matter, Tourneur raises matter to a semiotic existence that depends for its authenticity on the ontological status of the reader as elect or reprobate. The virtuous reader possesses a faculty called 'conscience' which is in no way contingent on history or an "efficient cause," (5.2.166) in the way that virtue as described by Aristotle in the Nichomachean Ethics is contingent upon one's upbringing within the polis, or that transubstantiation is dependent on the intention of the priest performing the ceremony.

At first Charlemont himself is still operating within an Aristotelian paradigm when he says

Of all men's grief's must mine be singular?
Without example? Here I met my grave,
And all men's woes are buried i' their graves
But mine. In mine my miseries are born.
I prithee, sorrow, leave a little room
In my confounded and tormented mind
For understanding to deliberate
The cause or author of this accident; (3.1.132-9)

His Christlike singularity renders him insubstantial - incapable of being understood because he is not deducible in terms of a paradigm. Yet it is significant that his technical non-existence is something he suffers at the hands of an oppressor, and therefore 'understands' in the sense of 'standing under' a physical torment, while his oppressor, D'Amville, has yet to understand his own metaphysical lack of being. This is the turning point of the play, as it hovers between two paradigms: an Aristotelian Catholic past that has been polemically associated with atheism, and a Protestant future whose character is yet to be revealed.⁴⁶ To move into the Protestant future, Charlemont must begin finding

⁴⁶ Cf. Perkins, 338, "Here I might stande long to shewe what be the sinnes of the Church of Rome: but I will only name the principall. The first sinne is Atheisme:.."

his way from accidental being, back to substance, by understanding who is really behind his predicament.

In Act 3.3. as he struggles to find the understanding he lacks, he diagnoses the malaise of the society around him:

Our own constructions are the authors of
Our misery. We never measure our
Conditions but with men above us in
Estate, so while our spirits labour to
Be higher than our fortunes, th'are more base.
Since all those attributes which make men seem
Superior to us are man's subjects and
Were made to serve him, the repining man
Is of a servile spirit to deject
The value of himself below their estimation. (3.3.4-24)

The attributes or accidents, such as wealth and clothing, that confer rank, have become more valued than the humanity that is their underlying 'subject' or substance. This situation comes about as a result of poor interpretive practices or "constructions." The "servile spirit" that makes "spirits labour" towards an ethically inadequate end, causes them to value adventitious hierarchies unquestioningly. It exalts newly established norms over traditional ones. Charlemont threatens the myth that accidents of rank tell the truth about their substance upon which the machiavellian theater of state is built. The resulting misdirection of desire makes people transgress the boundaries of the ideal polis, thereby involving everyone in barbarism, and banishing justice from the world. Charlemont says, addressing God:

How should that good purpose of
Thy justice take effect by bounding men
Within the confines of humanity,
When our afflictions do exceed our crimes?
Then they do rather teach the barb'rous world
Examples that extend her cruelties
Beyond their own dimensions, and instruct

Our actions to be more, more barbarous. (3.3.4)

As we have seen, the walls around the polis, whether or not they physically exist, are a metaphor for a conceptual boundary defining the ethical and political limits within which it is permissible to think and to act. The self-appointed deity of this play, D'Amville, has demonstrated to a Jacobean audience that he is a 'freethinker,' someone versed in schools of thought that cross political, moral and semantic boundaries, coming from Italy to England, via France where the play is set. He and his associates produce a series of puns on the idea of freedom as liberty, as generosity, as licentiousness, that is as complex as the imagery I have been tracing so far. However, in exploring the play's thinking about the issue of "unbounded licence"(3.2.57) and the way it produces barbarism, I will concentrate on a motif that is introduced in D'Amville's response to Borachio's reminder that the substance of their former argument was wealth, quoted earlier. D'Amville replies "The question [is] how to compass [wealth]"(1.2.108).

In the subplot, which involves sexual antics among various upwardly mobile imposters, there is a series of puns on the idea of a compass as navigational instrument, compassing as understanding, compassing an intention and compassing a person between the bedsheets. Fresco, resisting his seduction by Levidulcia, says, "a lady is a great thing; I cannot compass her"(2.5.42) to which she replies "Am I so great I cannot be compassed? Clasp my waist and try"(2.5.44). She then produces a metaphor about polar exploration and the North West Passage to describe Fresco's lack of enterprise in compassing her either with his arms or his understanding. Sebastian, who has not been party to the previous exchange, offers to contain her in "less than the compass of two sheets." Because these characters are indulging their appetites, this compassing is a

parodic subversion of the boundedness represented by the Aristotelian notion of substance, or that represented by God's ordained power as invoked by Castabella in the graveyard when D'Amville proposes to commit incest with her: "O God, / Is Thy unlimited and infinite / Omnipotence less free because thou dost/ No ill?"(4.3.131-3). It is rather "the expense of spirit in a waste of shame." The absence of an interventionist God looks like the absence of any God to a man without faith. As such a man, D'Amville aspires to fill the vacancy by seeking the kind of instrumental power that intervenes in the order of nature using science and technology, and in the moral order using persuasion and rhetoric. The semantic excess that he promotes is related to early modern imperialism through the metaphor of the compass, while the sexual dimension of this motif helps to gender imperialism as a masculine activity, and the territory it usurps as feminine.

The association of the multifarious uses of compass with imperialism resonates with D'Amville's figuring of his victims' funeral monuments as the Pillars of Hercules: "on these two Herculean pillars, where their arms / Are placed, there may be writ Non ultra"(3.1.45-8). The Pillars of Hercules were that beyond which there was nothing in pre-Columbian Europe, while in the reformation, epistemologically speaking, there is nothing beyond personal death because prayer for the dead is no longer efficacious, and you cannot actively determine your own trajectory in the afterlife by means of good works. However, in 1611 the Pillars of Hercules are a gateway to the New World. The equivalence of an obsolete geographical non ultra with an early modern epistemological non ultra, and their joint association with sexual promiscuity, cancels out the transcendence implied by either of them. It makes illicit carnal knowledge, far flung geographical knowledge, and the reduction of invisible substance to the visible accidents

attending on matter, into parts of the same narrowly materialist outlook in which to know everything is to know nothing. As we have seen, 'nothing' is something that Augustine associated with the material world, and the material world is a nothing that D'Amville's rhetoric tends to feminize. Hamlet, it may be remembered, implied that nothing was to be found between a maid's legs (*Hamlet*, 3.2.111).

That certain kinds of positive knowledge, and the resolution to pursue them, can result in a loss of being, or nothingness, emerges more clearly when we trace a series of puns on 'lightness' and 'heaviness,' the former associated with sexual licentiousness, the latter, paradoxically, with loss: 'paradoxically' because lightness, obviously, implies a loss of physical density, and heaviness an accumulation of it. It goes to show that matter and substance have a shifting, complex relation to each other. Sin deprives one of substance and involves one in matter. Yet a sinner can experience himself as being as light as "words [that] vanish into air"(1.2.202), while virtue lends one a solidity of outline that is usually thought to be the property of material objects. In the banter between Castabella and Rousard, Rousard asks for "any toy, any light thing" (1.3.18) as a favour, and when she fobs him off with clever wordplay, he says "Tis no light favour, for I'll be sworn it comes somewhat heavily to me"(1.3.54/5). Later Levidulcia, castigating Rousard for being impotent tells him "Your sickness will/ Distaste the 'expected sweetness o' the night. That makes her heavy"(2.3.22). To which he replies "That should make her light"(2.3.23). 'Heaviness' here means grief and pregnancy at the same time, while 'lightness' implies both a loss of substance and mirth. The idea that grief can propagate itself, and that the resulting loss of substance is something to laugh about, gives this

scene of amorous banter a queasiness that bespeaks the underlying despair of the characters.

Later in Act II, the metaphor of lightness for loss of virginity is brought back to the idea of understanding and consequently of substance, when D'Amville tells his drunken servant to start a fight with his fellow by hitting him on the head with a torch, to which the servant replies "I will make him understand as much"(2.2.45). Then, inciting the other servant to a similar violence, D'Amville instructs him to "Light [his torch] at his head; that's light enough" (2.4.7). Subsequently, the metaphor of being light in the head and therefore lacking understanding, is reunited with the lightness of being no longer a virgin in the dalliance between Soquette and Languebeau Snuffe:

Soquette: I must put my understanding in your trust sir. I would be loath to be
deceived

Snuffe: No conceive thou sha't not. Yet thou shalt profit by my instruction too.
my body is not every day drawn dry

....

Soquette: You purpose i'the dark to make me light (4.3.44ff)

The word 'conceive' alerts us to the fact that understanding in this case implies lying under someone in sexual intercourse. Just as Fresco's inability to compass a lady implied an inability either to understand or to put his arms around her, in this case understanding goes to show how, for Tourneur, the opposition between atheism and virtue entails incommensurable forms of stupidity. When D'Amville proposed to commit incest with Castabella "the horror of [his] argument confounds [her] understanding" (4.3.142). For Soquette to understand Snuffe's innuendo, or for Castabella to understand D'Amville's

depraved reasoning, would be to consent to the transgression, making them part of the Pauline body of sin that obstructs human understanding of God.⁴⁷

This body is symbolized in Tourneur's play by the ambiguously Protestant and Catholic graveyard full of rotting corpses where its central events take place. The nadir of D'Amville's wickedness, his decision to commit incest with Castabella in this graveyard, in lieu of his "empty" son, is accompanied by the declaration: "I am resolved. Daughter!"(4.2.47) However, his subsequent horror at the decaying flesh all around demonstrates that even an atheist experiences this kind of resolution as a transgression. His burgeoning sense of the gross materiality of his world is coterminous with his loss of substance. By contrast, Charlemont's resolution to go to war, his contemplative response to the charnel house behind St Winifred's, and later his "resolution"(5.2.177) in facing execution, make him distinct from D'Amville as the elect are from the reprobate. By the final scene of the play D'Amville will have to admit that "in me the resolution wants to die with that assurance as he does. The cause of that in his anatomy/ I would find out"(5.2.149-152). Resolution, as well as implying firmness of will, in contrast to the mere inclination to go to war with which Charlemont started out, suggests his having solved a problem. Like Castabella, Charlemont now has understanding in a different way from that described earlier when understanding implied subjection, because all the individual purposes that were vying with each other in the play have resolved themselves into aspects of a single unified will belonging to Providence, in which he now participates.

⁴⁷ Cf. Augustine, *City of God*, 26, on "Whether the violation suffered in captivity by consecrated virgins could defile their virtue of soul even though their will did not consent" and 28: "sanctity of the body is not lost while sanctity of the mind remains, even if the body is overpowered; whereas...sanctity of the body is indeed lost when sanctity of the mind is violated."

Despite having received empirical proof of the workings of Providence in ghostly visitations and in the sudden death of his two sons, D'Amville completely lacks understanding when he proposes to discover conscience by means of an autopsy, or when he wants to use his financial substance to put life back in his dead sons by injecting them with gold. His search for a physical organ called 'conscience' is akin to the alleged mistake of Catholics who were sometimes thought to believe in a perceptible Jesus lurking inside the bread and wine of the eucharist. Yet the search for the essence of texts or objects by 'opening' them is a Puritan rather than a Catholic trait. By projecting it onto D'Amville, Tourneur seeks to identify him as the type of Politic Atheist described in Hull's tract, and thereby to connect him with Catholicism. D'Amville's mistake is corrected when he is told that "The peace of conscience rises in itself"(5.2.159) and is not attributable to some "efficient cause"(5.2.166). Because it is invisible, and without an efficient cause, conscience is not contingent upon accidents of any kind. As such it is similar in some ways to an Aristotelian substance, though not to the caricature of it that D'Amville offers us. As an incorrigible materialist he remains, in Tourneur's polemic, a creature of the medieval past, something that is made clear again when his pangs of conscience cause him to see Montferrers climbing a mountain that must surely conjure purgatory for an audience in 1611: "Yonder's the ghost of old Montferrers in/ A long white sheet, climbing yond lofty mountain/ To complain to Heaven of me"(4.3.230/1). His lack of substance however becomes a perverse kind of understanding at last when, in cleaving his own brain with an axe, he gives expression to the fact of his divided will. Since all his purposes have ended up being expressions of the divine will, to the extent that he was an atheist he was nothing at all.

This realisation and the resulting suicide are an ironic commentary on his earlier pride in his own skill as a dramatist:

Aye, mark the plot. Not any circumstance
That stood within the reach of the design,
Of persons, dispositions, matter, time,
Or place, but by this brain of mine was made
An instrumental help; yet nothing from
Th'induction to th'accomplishment seemed forced
Or done o' purpose, but by accident. (2.4.105-111)⁴⁸

In order for D'Amville to realize that he is not the author of the drama, but one of its characters, it is necessary that neither Tourneur nor his Calvinist God be the kind of dramatist that D'Amville valorizes: one who proceeds by indirection, writing himself out of the drama in order to become its immanent principle. When Tourneur reveals the play's accidents as expressions of divine purpose he tries to tell us how to interpret his play, a fact that goes to support those critics who read the play as being entrenched in the allegorical tradition. Like many Jacobean dramatists, Tourneur's allegorical tendencies are most evident in the names of his characters, which usually suggest something about what they represent. D'Amville's name tells us that his soul is damned; Levidulcia is sweet levity and her lightness is inseparable from her promiscuity; Borachio is a drunkard; Cataplasma is a poultice laid on the soulsickness of adulterous men; Castabella is chaste beauty, in contrast to Languebeau Snuffe whose name might be glossed as 'the beautiful language of death.'

D'Amville, as an atheist and free-thinker, while ostensibly the most 'modern' character, ends up being so thoroughly duplicitous that he achieves a kind of univocal

⁴⁸ Cf. *The Cloud of Unknowing*, 75, "in what bodily likeness the fiend appeareth, evermore he hath but one nostril, and that is great and wide; and he will gladly cast it up so that a man may see in there at to his brain up in his head. The which brain is nought else but the fire of hell, for the fiend may have none other brain."

allegorical status as Vice personified. Charlemont as his opposite number seems to heal the breach between accidents of rank and the human substance that gives them authenticity, when he consolidates the aristocratic titles of his uncles under his own name as Heaven's chosen representative. In this consolidation of power he asserts an absolutist authority that is inimical both to the aristocratic values of his extended family, and especially to the democratic energies of a world made up of individual "spirits [who] labour" either in the service of God or of Mammon. If there is a fundamental equality among people then there is a conflict with any kind of hierarchical state because, as Aristotle says in *Politics* II.2: "you cannot make a state out of men who are all alike."⁴⁹ In reconciling democracy and monarchy so complacently, what this play posits is not a feasible alternative to the Aristotelian past, but an end of history. Charlemont is no longer a real person, himself susceptible to falling short of the position he holds, and therefore to overthrow by democratic forces. He is a Platonic philosopher-king, of the kind that Aristotle approved but also thought could never exist in real life. The similarity of Charlemont's position at the end to that sought by D'Amville throughout the play, might suggest how easily the philosopher-king who resolutely faces his own death, can modulate into the Hobbesian sovereign who presides over a ghostly realm of insubstantial materialism. Tourneur is careful to exclude any hint of such an irony from his denouement. In doing so he plays God in a way equal and opposite to his anti-hero, whom he arguably resembles more than he would have liked to think.

In charting a course away from Aristotelian substance, through all the forms of insubstantial materialism, and back to understanding within a new Calvinist dispensation,

⁴⁹Aristotle. *Politics*, II.2.

the play makes being into something that is subjectively felt when one adheres to socially normative meanings. When a clever and powerful individual tries to change the meaning of substance and accident through wordplay, and of words like 'uncle' or 'daughter' by incestuously ignoring the "distances affinity observes,"(4.3.124) the result is a loss of both understanding and substance, a devastating experience of accidental being that demands to be redeemed by divine power. Margreta De Grazia has mapped the loss of connection between language and the divine in her essay on the secularization of language in the seventeenth century.⁵⁰ An interesting contrast with Tourneur's assertion of Providence's readiness to perform a recovery of divine language by direct intervention in nature, is provided by *Richard III*, an early play that has been used to argue that Shakespeare was promulgating something called 'The Tudor Myth,' as Tourneur might be said to contribute to a Stuart myth.⁵¹ Shakespeare never relinquishes irony, even when God appears to be making everything better at the end. He writes of "smooth-faced peace and smiling plenty" (5.8.33/4), words that suggest an ironic difference between appearance and reality. Hamlet shows us that even murdered sinners come back to haunt those who have tried to write them out of history, as D'Amville is haunted by Charlemont and Montferrers. Tourneur wants no such hauntings at the end of his 'Calvinist' play, and so he has the atheist realise his own nothingness and then make it official by committing suicide.⁵²

⁵⁰ Margreta De Grazia. "The Secularization of Language in the Seventeenth Century." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41, no. 2 (1980): 319-29.

⁵¹ Tillyard, 320/21

⁵² This can be seen as an amusing commentary on an emerging modern conception of the artist. Cf. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 191, "The artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails. // -Trying to refine them also out of existence, said Lynch."

The Atheist's Tragedy has never become canonical because it was overtaken by the irony that the atheistic past it constructs actually lay in Tourneur's future, while the theocratic future it imagines was already a thing of the past. There is no record of its being performed in the author's lifetime, perhaps because it is more metaphysical poem than Jacobean drama. It ends with a profusion of metaphysical images, as D'Amville calls for a glass of wine, which he mistakes for blood. This symbolizes the profane eucharist he has presided over in transmuting his family's metaphysical substance into the accidents attendant on material wealth, sexual licence and polysemic excess. These accidents have been transmuted back into readerly understanding by a *deus ex machina*, who technically is not performing a miracle since he is supposed to be inseparable from nature, not intervening in it. As such he is made to represent a disenchantment of the medieval universe, symbolized in a reversal of the miracle of the wedding feast at Cana: D'Amville's wine is translated into Charlemont's glass of water, emblemizing, we are told, his temperance and artlessness. Charlemont explains:

Only to Heav'n I attribute the work,
Whose gracious motives made me still forbear
To be mine own revenger. Now I see
That patience is the honest man's revenge.(V.ii.273)

'Patience' comes from *patior* - to suffer, and these lines describe his passage through suffering from one form of understanding to another according to which there are no accidents, only God's 'gracious motives.'⁵³ Although this may be true for Charlemont, the reader may feel that Tourneur's motives at the end are less gracious than overbearing. The play can be seen as a work of profound ambivalence written in country that had so

⁵³ The writer of the *Cloud of Unknowing* which I examine in the next chapter regards the contemplative wisdom that comes from suffering as inferior to that which is a result of personal discipline achieved through God's grace.

recently been Catholic.⁵⁴ Reading between the lines suggests that Tourneur's interventionist Calvinist God is really the Catholic God in disguise; D'Amville, the Jacobean dramatist whose art is to conceal his art, is the true Calvinist God; and Tourneur himself is a Catholic Atheist, exalting a God he is no longer allowed to believe in at the expense of one he wants to punish. The reality is that he has been abandoned by both Gods and his Calvinism and his Atheism are finally impossible to disentangle from each other.

Charlemont's philosopher-king is rescued from a concept of matter which is inherently inimical to him, and which can only be 'formed' from the outside, because it has no substance. This kind of materialism arrives with capitalism, and a history in which all individuals are sovereigns in a state of nature with each other, seeking secular forms of immortality through wealth, or through artistic and military achievement, like the denizens of Milton's hell. It is a history in which the universe where objects were signs turns into one where there is no difference between language and matter or else the difference between them is so great as to be an identity. Because D'Amville doesn't believe in any kind of transcendence, when he imagines immortality for himself he can only think of it as an infinite expansion of his own body and of the piles of money that sustain it. It is an immortality that, like Macbeth's, is hard to distinguish from entropy. This entropy is experienced as 'lightness' but is different from the nonbeing of sin in a neoplatonic or Aristotelian schema because it is irreducibly material. Arthur's sword in

⁵⁴ Cf. Eamon Duffy. *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*

The Faerie Queene could reduce dust to "nought at all" but dust is quintessence for these
Jacobean writers.

5. The Devil's Contemplatives

Spenser's knights at the most material level are like Lucretian atoms colliding on the billiard table of Faeryland. At the logical level they are Aristotelian terms trying to form themselves into meaningful sentences. In the context of the poem as a whole they are facets of a typical person. Their metaphysical fate remains a mystery, in part because their author died before he finished writing. Coming to the end of *The Faery Queene* at the point where Spenser died in penury is like stepping outside the psychomachia of this typical individual into Shakespeare, Tourneur and Jonson's world, the world of early modern England where *The Faerie Queene* is a particular individual in a post-Aristotelian history that doesn't care about her, a world where she is Castabella or Doll Common. Spenser's poem is not just puritan preaching, nor is it simply a flattering mirror, but it is a dark conceit. Its darkness is that of an opaque material object, of a language-using human being, of the God it aims towards without ever reaching and who nevertheless is presumed to be its immanent principle. It is the darkness of the general and of the particular, which are finally the same thing. A nominalist like Thomas Nashe who wants to make the general just another particular, or to generalise particularity, might appear to fit in this category, but his primary affect is self-loathing. In this he is symmetrical with the puritans he condemns, because like them he has lost any sense of himself as self-determining, or his self-determination has become so absolute as to be tyrannical.

Although Red Cross Knight climbs the hill of contemplation and catches sight of the New Jerusalem, he returns to Faeryland to battle the dragon. Even his marriage to Truth is not the consummation he had hoped and he is forced to return to Gloriana's court to fulfill his contract to her. This points to the fact that in the Christian contemplative

tradition as distinct from the purely neoplatonic one, contemplative communion with the Godhead has little soteriological value in itself. For Augustine, as John Peter Kenney has shown, it is merely a prologue to confession.¹ Augustine's *On the Teacher* is a prologue to his confessional, historical and political works. This is not to say that it is less important, but that, as John Cheke argued in the 1540s, the contemplative and the active lives, while distinct, are not completely separable for human beings. However, they should not become indistinguishable.

Denys Turner's study of negative theology argues that there is a difference between the modern understanding of mysticism as 'an experience' and the medieval sense of the darkness of God as a kind of unknowing.² Michel de Certeau makes a similar point in a 1992 essay on mysticism:

Previously "mystique" was only an adjective that qualified something else; it could be assigned to all types of knowledge or objects in a still religious world. The substantivisation of this adjective in the first half of the seventeenth century, a time in which mystical literature proliferated, was a sign of the great division [decoupage] that occurred concerning knowledge and facts. A certain space would delimit, from this point on, a mode of experience, a genre of discourse, an area of knowledge. At the same time that its proper name appeared (designating at that time a novelty) mysticism constituted itself in a place apart. It circumscribed isolatable facts...³

We saw in chapter three how Spenser is already beginning to figure the substance of his poem as existing in the New World, and in chapter four how D'Amville locates death in the same location. The telos of the medieval *via negativa* is not an 'experience' and therefore it can't really be communicated, taught or travelled to. It is not arrived at by

¹ Kenney, 11, "All experiences of transcendence must give way to the supreme Christian act of confession, the recognition of the soul's need for the mediation of Christ."

² Turner, 2; Cf. also Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, I.10.56, on Redcross's view of the heavenly city: "Whereat he wondered much, and gan enquire,/ What stately building durst so high extend/ Her loftie towres unto the starry sphere, / And what unknowen nation there empeopled were."

³ De Certeau, 13

opening objects, texts or people. Nevertheless, it is 'real' in a more or less neoplatonic sense, in that it involves contact with the Godhead, a contact that finds expression in the context of a Christian community. I have argued here that Aristotelian metaphysics offers a vocabulary for translating the concerns of postmodern critics with the death of the author back into premodern terms. I will end this dissertation by suggesting that the romantic notions of authorship that have come under so much criticism in the academy in recent decades, also have a premodern ancestor in the contemplative tradition: Hegel's *Phenomenology* can be read as a story of contemplative ascent. It ends with an assertion of Absolute Knowing that is connected to the Prussian state of 1807 and to the empire of Napoleon.⁴ In his own life Spenser may fall prey to a similar megalomania (if that's what it is), but, at least in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, he is cognizant that any claim to possess the truth must be qualified by knowledge that the soul remains embodied and that contemplation always returns one to historical exigencies.

The Cloud of Unknowing is a fourteenth century guide to contemplation that was circulating in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the time of Henry VIII. It begins with a prayer that was familiar to readers of the *Book of Common Prayer* as the Prayer for Purity at the beginning of the Eucharist:

GOD, unto whom all hearts be open, and unto whom all will speaketh, and unto whom no privy thing is hid. I beseech Thee so for to cleanse the intent of mine heart with the unspeakable gift of Thy grace, that I may perfectly love Thee, and worthily praise Thee. Amen.

⁴ Cf. Carl G. Jung, *On the Nature of the Psyche*, 1928, "A philosophy like Hegel's is a self-revelation of the psychic background and, philosophically, a presumption. Psychologically it amounts to an invasion by the Unconscious. The peculiar, high-flown language Hegel uses bears out this view -- it is reminiscent of the megalomaniac language of schizophrenics, who use terrific, spellbinding words to reduce the transcendent to subjective form, to give banalities the charm of novelty, or pass off commonplaces as searching wisdom. So bombastic a terminology is a symptom of weakness, ineptitude, and lack of substance."

The writer continues with an admonition not to give his book to people who haven't been led genuinely by their active lives to "the sovereignest point of contemplative living". They should have a "whole intent"⁵ to follow Christ, language reminiscent of Spenser's giving Raleigh the whole intention of his work as being to fashion a gentleman. He asks that it not be given to the intellectually curious person, "For ...if a man saw one matter and not another, peradventure he might lightly be led into error."⁶ The possibility of error derives from and leads back to 'lightness', which is to say the unsubstantiality deriving from an impure intention, or a divided will, as was seen in *The Atheist's Tragedy*. Though easily mistaken for it, it is the opposite of the lightness experienced in contemplative joy, or the lightness that Langland used to characterize Christ's resurrection and ascension in the plant of peace image.

For the *Cloud*-writer there are four kinds of Christian life: Common, Special, Solitary and Perfect.⁷ His book is for those seeking through the third to get to the fourth, though he does accept that people in the active life might find help in his work.⁸ The desire for God is planted in the depths of the will with their consent by God.⁹ The contemplative life involves work, the opposite of sloth, and the contemplative will be working in a cloud of unknowing darkness. His task is to do what is in him.¹⁰ The soul can know God through love only, not through the intellect, which implies that while God

⁵ *Cloud*, Prologue, 3

⁶ *Cloud*, 4

⁷ *Cloud*, 5

⁸ *Cloud*, 4, "Yea though they be full good men in active living, yet this matter accordeth nothing to them. But not so to those men, the which although they stand in activity by outward form of living, nevertheless yet by inward stirring under the privy spirit of God - whose dooms be hid - be full graciously disposed: not continually, as is proper to true contemplatives, but now and then."

⁹ *Cloud*, 7

¹⁰ Cf. Oberman, 53 on the idea of *facere quod in se est*: "Not man but only God or the Church can bridge the gap between natural theology and revealed theology. Under the law of grace, however, God will not desert him who does what is in him, "facit quod in se est,"..."

may be seen as Substance, he is not a substance. The writer thinks of time in terms of atoms, "by the definition of true philosophers"¹¹ and each atom contains an impulse which we obey or not, and yet all the time given to us will be as one atom for which we will have to account. There will be no excuses, for God does not give us two atoms side by side and only one impulse.¹² In any given atomic moment we can ascend to God, but just as quickly the corruption of the flesh brings us down again.¹³ Not only are we veiled from God by the aforementioned cloud, but we must hide from the world through a cloud of forgetting, because our remembrance of the world is what constitutes the cloud of unknowing. The concept of time as atoms that become one atom at death, is another version of the distinction in identity between one and One that is integral to a premodern 'realist' understanding of time and matter.

The *Cloud*-writer thinks it a good idea to get a mantra like "God" or "Love" and stick to it through all temptations. This word is a sword and buckler to pierce the cloud of unknowing.¹⁴ He treads down his intellect with Love only so that his being will not be "scattered." The ascendancy of affection over intellect inverts the conventional order of passion and reason, and the Teskeyan sense of "logocentrism" as meaning imposed on matter. At the same time it is not what Debora Shuger, writing about Hooker, calls "theocentric emotionality."¹⁵ Rather it is an attempt to form a habit, and thereby turn a repetitive discipline into a state of being. In the end it is neither ascent nor descent, because spatial directionality is deceptive in contemplative experience: "for in ghostliness

¹¹ *Cloud*, 9

¹² *Cloud*, 10/11

¹³ Cf. Wilber, 175, where he describes this concept as 'microgeny.' It is the idea that in each moment the soul ascends through the levels of being to God, but experientially it has always already forgotten those levels that haven't been achieved consciously through contemplation.

¹⁴ *Cloud*, 16

¹⁵ Shuger, *Habits of Thought*, 84

all is one, height and depth, length and breadth."¹⁶ In this way it also anticipates the objection that Christianity is incompatible with neoplatonism because the Christian God is equally present to all of his creation, and can't be understood in emanationist terms as the pinnacle of a hierarchy of being.¹⁷ Therefore the hierarchy of being is better understood in a Christian context as describing the relation between sin and virtue within the individual. The question of why there is something rather than nothing then becomes a question about personal virtue rather than about God's existence.

In the *Cloud*-writer's reduction of discourse to one or two repeated words, we can see an iteration of the equivalence of words and things that privileges their 'thing-ness' rather than their discursivity, but thingness has two mutually incompatible aspects that can look alike to those who undertake their study frivolously. Sin and God are two incommensurable substances trying to be one:

And because that ever the whiles thou livest in this wretched life, thou must always feel in some part this foul stinking lump of sin, as it were oned and congealed with the substance of thy being: therefore shalt thou alternately mean these two words - Sin and God. With this general understanding: that if thou hadst God, then shouldst thou lack sin; and mightest thou lack sin, then shouldst thou have God¹⁸

We can see here the same logic that informed the Augustinian thinking of *On the Teacher* and of *The Faerie Queene*. That a full perception of God causes us to perceive sin as

¹⁶ *Cloud*, 54

¹⁷ Cf. Turner, 30, "the imaging of creation as a laval flow is implicitly emanationist and implies that the lower degrees on the hierarchical scale flow from those which precede them and are not in any immediate relation of ontological dependence on the One 'Cause of All'. so stated, this would not be a doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. Rather it would imply that the One causes the existence of lower beings through the mediation of the higher; not there for 'out of nothing' but out of a something which pre-exists. In fact Denys does not hold with this: each being, at whatever point it is placed on the scale of beings, and in whatever relations of dependence it may stand to those ontologically higher than it, is in an absolutely *direct* and unmediated relation of existential dependence on God. Between each being and God there is nothing. Consequently, there could be little more mistaken than to conceive of the One as the being which tops off the ascending scale of beings, ontologically closer to those next to it than to those lesser beings lower down the scale."

¹⁸ *Cloud*, 56

matter, and matter as unreal like Aristotelian accidents, suggests that the darkness of matter and the darkness of God, might be equivalent aspects of Substance:

Such a good will is the substance of all perfection, all sweetness and comforts, bodily and ghostly, be to this but as it were accidents, be they never so holy; and they do but hang on this good will. *Accidents* I call them, for they may be had and lacked without breaking asunder of it. I mean in this life; but it is not so in the bliss of heaven; for there shall they be oned with the substance without separation, as shall the body (in the which they work) with the soul. So that the substance of them here is but a good ghostly will. And surely I trow that he that feeleth the perfection of this will (as it may be had here), there may no sweetness and no comfort happen to any man in this life, but he is as fain and as glad to lack it at God's will as to feel it and have it.¹⁹

Accidents fragment experience but are not evil in themselves because they are a beam of the likeness of God, printed on the soul within history.²⁰ He stresses the need for beginners and proficients, but not those perfect in human terms, to employ the help of reading, thinking and praying on their way to contemplative unknowing. However, the devil's contemplatives are those who cannot get away from a materialistic outlook. The suffering of the contemplative is the awareness that he 'is' in contradistinction to God. Sorrow for this is a large part of contemplation, but all consolations are accidents to the substance that is humble love and goodwill towards God. So his sorrow, although it indicates a lack, is his his greatest asset, and his sin, although it is material, is the index of his nothingness.

For this writer, unlike for Augustine, confession is a preliminary to the physical removal of oneself from the world. Redcross Knight's brief experience of it makes him

¹⁹ *Cloud*, 68

²⁰ *Cloud*, 17/18, "It is a sharp and a clear beholding of thy natural wit, printed in thy reason within in thy soul. And where thou askest me whether it be good or evil: I say that it always be good in its nature; for it is a beam of the likeness of God. But the use thereof may be both good and evil. Good when it is opened by grace so as to see thy wretchedness, the passion, the kindness, and the wonderful works of God in his creatures, bodily and ghostly....But then is the use evil, when it is swollen with pride and with curiosity of much learning"

too want to become a Carthusian or a solitary contemplative: "O let me not (quoth he) then turne againe/ Backe to the world, whose ioyes so fruitless are" (I.10.63). The difference between this and D'Amville's individualism can be seen in the fact that although contemplative life removes one from the common herd, *The Cloud of Unknowing* is a description of an "ordinary" individual who is called away unaccountably from the life of an activist or an academic to something he values more than liberty. The Benedictine, Augustine Baker, writing in 1629 says

But if [God] do not call us by an extraordinary way - as we are not to expect that he will - we are to walk by the ordinary way. And it will be good for us to be acquainted with the books that describe the same, of which kind is the present treatise of the *Cloud* in a high degree.²¹

It should not be thought that this is a way of coercing somebody into extreme ideological conformity. The *Cloud*-writer's ordinariness is not exclusive of personal idiosyncrasies, and in fact these individuals often flirted with heresy. Baker says

The truth is that all mystic writers, in expressment of the spiritual course they have run, do seem to differ wholly one from another, whereas all the difference - if matters were rightly understood - is but the difference in words and terms and not in matter,²²

which is a way of saying that the idiosyncrasies are secondary to the common substance of the experience.

Denys the Areopagite, rather than Augustine, is the originator of this neoplatonic tradition. He talks about divine darkness when describing God's truth, but also uses the language of illumination in describing the approach to this truth.²³ In the *Cloud*-writer's translation he says:

²¹ Baker, 161

²² Baker, 158

²³ One of Perkins main criticisms of Catholicism is that "faith being nothing else with them but an illumination of the mind, stirreth up the will; which beeing mooved and helped, causeth in the heart many spiritual motions"(82)

I beseech thee for to draw us up in an according ableness to the sovereign-unknown and the sovereign-shining height of thy dark inspired speakings, where all the privy things of divinity be covered and hid under the sovereign-shining darkness of wisest silence, making the sovereign-clearest sovereignly for to shine privily in the darkest²⁴

This is not philosophical 'idealism' in the strict etymological sense of 'idea' as a visible form, but it is neoplatonic, and intellectual ideas are not negated any more than the body is.²⁵ The point is that they are a stage on the path that ends in love, but they are also what the contemplative necessarily returns to. Only love can go the final part of the way towards God but this kind of love is not sustainable.²⁶ Yet insofar as he is oriented towards it, the *Cloud*-writer is not political, is not trying to impose anything on anyone, is not seeking anything for himself, and writes only for those who want what he has, which is, in empirical terms, Nothing.

Heidegger thought the Good was a series of accidents reified into a God and that as such God is basically nothing. This writer thinks nothing is the way to God. As one of his editors puts it: "The natural man will say that this work is nought; but the contemplative must wrestle always with this "blind nought" for this nought is all."²⁷

Heidegger, it may be remembered, thought the poet and the philosopher were united in

²⁴ McCann ed. 140

²⁵ Heidegger, 63, "The Greeks call the look of a thing its *eidos* or *idea*. Initially, *eidos* resonates with what we mean when we say that a thing has a face..."

²⁶ While this is different from the scholastic theologies I have been using up to now, it is not radically different. Augustine Baker, 156, says of the *Cloud* writer: "Both he and the scholastic divines do seem to make the perfect exercise of love in this life to consist in a quiet aspect towards God, perfectly joying in his felicity as if it were the man's own, and congratulating the same; the which kind of perfect exercise is not, as I conceive, attained to in this life. For the highest exercise of this life is but an elevation of the will, by which it willeth God to be that which he is, without any such aspect of God, or of any attribute of his, otherwise than according to the confused and general knowledge of him that our faith ministrereth to us. Nor is there in such exercise any such actual joying in the felicity of God, as scholastic divines do suppose; yet in some sort or in effect, it is the same kind of love or exercise that they intend." Cf. also Aers, 253, "Theological tradition and the Mass itself included both affirmative and apophatic forms of discourse about God and the "invisible gifts God offered. The tradition understood that these were two ways, both inadequate to divine being and both necessary for human talk about the divine. Two different ways, certainly but both viable within Catholic tradition: both limited and both needed."

²⁷ McCann ed., xv.

their ability to talk about this Nothing. Both Spenser and Shakespeare in different ways were obsessed with nothingness. Augustine after giving up Manicheism always associated matter, sin and nothing, which is part of the reason Spenser is suspicious of his own imagination. In Langland's allegory of the incarnation, the plant of peace's weight brings it to earth, and the nothingness of earth raises it to heaven. As we saw in relation to *The Winter's Tale*, ontological difference always looks like nothing, and is only comprehensible when it becomes a hierarchical difference. Substance is always desired from the position of lack, and attempts to pursue it physically leave one in the same position as when one started. The only thing to do when confronted with the paradox of desire seems to be to sit still. Then it becomes apparent that the nothingness experienced through the insatiability of desire is a false image of God's nothingness experienced in contemplation. This is why Hooker saw the aimless movement of desire as a kind of stasis, and thought of the circular movement of the liturgical year as promoting spiritual growth.

Despite the imperialist apologetics of Spenser's epic, the narcissistic ambiguities of Shakespeare's sonnets, and the absurd hubris of Macbeth and of D'Amville, all these personae have mystical longings but find themselves trapped in insubstantial matter and suffering a kind of Stockholm syndrome that makes them enamoured of their captor.²⁸ Their efforts to fulfill themselves end in their own dissipation. In the seventeenth century the world is increasingly a place in which the options for satisfying transcendent desires are secularized, multiplied, and there is sometimes no guide but one's own conscience as

²⁸ *Cloud*, 20, "And all the while that the soul dwelleth in this deadly body, evermore is the sharpness of our understanding in beholding of all ghostly things, but most specially of God, mingled with some manner of fantasy"

to which 'goods' are ultimately wholesome. Virtue and contemplation, as Red Cross Knight learned, do not by themselves provide sufficient light for guidance. For the *Cloud*-writer, Substance is encountered beyond the 'mirror of creatures' and beyond language, in a place to which only affect can travel, but as affect travels in love towards God, God moves down through the intellect and there is a circular movement in the soul rather than the infinite horizontal movement of desire. In a sense it is history, rather than the individual which is transformed, but only from the individual's point of view, a perspective that is made absolute by its participation in God's substance. It is easy to see how this conflation of 'one' and 'One' could modulate into, or be seen as, megalomania, but it would be wrong to assume that it necessarily does so. "There's no art to find the mind's intentions in the face," and the "whole intent" behind a work or an activity can suffer from improperly motivated readings, which is why this writer wants to keep intellectuals at a distance.

Not only are objects of desire being multiplied in the renaissance, but the physical, conceptual and social confines within which Being was formerly housed are being broken down by exploration, iconoclasm and democracy. The association of idealism with totalitarianism can be said to arise from mistaking the personal praxis offered by contemplation for a political credo, something that Debora Shuger shows Hooker doing selfconsciously and with reluctance.²⁹ Shuger's obvious sympathy with early modern religion in *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance* (1990), stands in contrast to most of her New Historicist colleagues writing in the same era. The complacency with

²⁹ Shuger, *Habits of Thought*, 130, "With considerable reluctance and regret, Hooker argues that the church must possess the tangible, social signs of power - land, money, titles, retainers - in order to hold secure any vestige of moral authority."

which Stephen Greenblatt, reduces medieval religion to ideology in *Renaissance Self Fashioning* (1980), makes him an imperfect reader of a culture that still remembered that there was a contemplative life as well as an active life. While they may be mixed together, as John Cheke understood in the 1540s, they are nevertheless distinct, and for Cheke an atheist is someone who can't tell the difference between them. *The Cloud*-writer suggests that if he were alive today he would be tolerant of activism, and willing to recognize it as a valuable kind of work. As he sees it, the difference between him and leaders of the active life, is that he has been where they are, and understands them, but they haven't been where he is and don't understand him. He says "unto this day all actives complain of contemplatives"³⁰ and "meddle you not with contemplatives. Ye know not what aileth them."³¹ It is tempting to see the relationship he describes between contemplatives and actives as a forerunner of the relationship in recent times between those who celebrate the romantic author and those whose work is devoted to dancing on his grave. In this context it should be remembered that for him there are many actives who have contemplative leanings, and contemplatives who are histrionic parodies of the contemplative life.

Margreta De Grazia's *Hamlet Without Hamlet* (2007) attempts to counter some of the excesses of the romantic authorship tradition and the ways it has abstracted the main character of Shakespeare's play from the text in which he is embedded. My argument is a little closer to the romantic discourses she criticises, but is also critical of them on slightly different grounds. I argue that Hamlet's accidia, rather than being an artistic melancholia, can be read as the malaise of one who has contemplative longings but doesn't recognise

³⁰ *Cloud*, 32

³¹ *Cloud*, 37

them as such. The subversion of the monarchy by his machiavellian uncle has deprived him of a context for his desire, not just in the person of the King, his father, but in the substance he represented.³² Like the *Cloud*-writer, Hamlet has that within which passes show, and experiences it as grief for a lost order. His contradictory sense that the world is more various than it appears, and that all its variety amounts to nothing, seems to express the same queasiness that infects the wonderful ending of *The Winter's Tale*. By 1611 the age of miracles is allegedly over in England, and they have their philosophical persons to make modern and familiar things supernatural and causeless. Yet their writing is filled with the supernatural, depicted through theatrical 'effects'. Theatrical effects are what the devil's contemplatives are good at according to the *Cloud*-writer, and are also what they see when they close their eyes. He doesn't come across like a puritan antitheatricalist, however, and keeps to the topic at hand, which is how to help someone who has received the grace to desire it, to get away from empirical knowledge and learn how to love. Loving involves an ability to forget, in contrast with Hamlet senior's injunction to remember.

The ghosts of the Catholic past in Protestant England as depicted in *Richard III*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *The Atheist's Tragedy* are intent on remembering, as they call for vengeance, and their revenge is a pattern of endless mimesis. These characters try to shore up their own identities by imposing them on others. Their constant remembering involves a great deal of dismembering, as Macbeth's efforts to trammel up the consequences of his actions made them proliferate instead. So it can be seen that their remembering is indistinguishable from an effort to forget a part of themselves, and is

³² Cf. Shwartz, 33, "Haunting the question of whether or not Elizabeth succeeds as a religious icon is the deeper one: does the material embodiment of the state point beyond itself to a transcendent authority."

cognate with what Greenblatt and Tennenhouse think of as ideology or power. Ideology is thus superficially similar to contemplative unknowing, in that it involves forgetting, but this is another case of opposites resembling each other, and might best be understood in the context of Aristotle's *De Memoria and Reminiscencia*, which Frances Yates saw as centrally important to Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In 1.450b.20, Aristotle thinks of a memory as an imprint on the imagination, and asks whether it is of something present or of something absent. He says:

A picture painted on a panel is at once a picture and a likeness: that is, while one and the same, it is both of these, although the 'being' of both is not the same, and one may contemplate it either as a picture or as a likeness. Just in the same way we have to conceive that the mnemonic presentation within us is something which by itself is merely an object of contemplation, while, in relation to something else, it is also a presentation of that other thing.³³

The *Cloud*-writer contemplates the word 'God' as a picture rather than a likeness. He uses it to banish the thoughts that it reminds him of, because they would fragment his being and place him in history and in discourse. The avenging protagonists of a tragedy on the other hand are involved in history, and their actions are a likeness of what has been done to them. They are engaged in mimesis rather than metaphysics, yet their mimesis ends in silence and oblivion, while the *Cloud*-writer's focus on the word in itself produces a book for others interested in following the same path.

In spite of the fact that their opposing practices overlap, the *Cloud*-writer has nothing to say to the herds of 'individuals' populating the theater in which D'Amville expressed himself, and in which Hamlet hoped to catch the conscience of the king, because he knows they wouldn't be able to hear him.³⁴ There is a different kind of

³³ Aristotle, *De Memoria*, 610

³⁴ Young, 31, sees the apophatic rules for meditation in terms of Gronowski's performance theory, and

individualism in the contemplative life, one whose essence is anonymity and solitude, and which recognizes from its humble vantage point that even the works of the devil's contemplatives, those who are concerned with their own individual (im)mortality, can be read as expressions of misdirected love: in the prayer for purity quoted at the beginning of this chapter the writer addressed God as "he unto whom all will speaketh," meaning that even sinners are trying to find God without knowing it. The sacrament of the eucharist was a means for directing the will properly in medieval Catholicism, one that is sometimes seen as having been replaced by the early modern theater. In it the individuals in the congregation were one body, offering itself to the Father in humility. Yet the integrity of the corporate body is also dependent on the personal virtue of its members, and so the solitude that is essential to contemplation, and the love that is its telos, have a social and historical aspect.

Augustine Baker says of the *Cloud*-writer and those like him that

these men do imagine the perfect love of God to be exercised according to the manner that a mother would exercise her love and affection towards her only child, being one that had in it all natural graces and talents that could move and deserve love. For the mother - who perhaps had not seen him for a long time before - looks upon him with an amorous aspect, and for a long time together feeds herself with such looking on him, joying in him and in her having so fair and gracious a child³⁵

The order and hierarchy of gazer and gazee that was seen in Shakespeare's sonnets is reversed here, as maternal love is conflated with erotic love in an example of the holy incest trope that Quilligan has identified as enabling Elizabeth's regime. It is a conflation that enables both hierarchical and horizontal relationships, such as we saw in the ending

reads it in terms of authentic performance as distinct from bad acting: "The method of contemplative practice is a rehearsed behavior that readies the aspiring mystic, through transcendence of thought, for an experience which is itself spontaneous, and ultimately dependent upon the grace of God."

³⁵ Baker, 156/7

of *The Winter's Tale*. Although it might tempt one to see the mystical state as a reversion to an infantile sense of omnipotence, we have seen many opposites that look alike in the course of this dissertation, and to assume that the prepersonal is the same as the transpersonal is an assumption that only a thoroughgoing materialist like Freud could make.³⁶ One could perhaps see the orientation of *The Faerie Queene* towards Elizabeth, and its orientation towards God, as representing opposite contemplative aspects of the poem, but to make its adoration of Elizabeth that of an infant, or of a Devil's contemplative, might be too simplistic, since monarchy, divinity and individuality are so closely bound together in medieval political theology. It might be truer to say that both its orientation to God and to Elizabeth potentially have divine and infernal, selfless and infantile, contemplative and imperialistic aspects. Furthermore, any one of the terms in these pairings can be material or ideal. Materialism can be about exploitation, victimhood and retributive justice, or it can be about physis, poesis and distributive justice. Idealism can be about selfish libertarianism and fascism, but it can also be about personal responsibility and forgiveness.

The turn to religion in early modern studies is now recognized as a movement that attempts to correct the secularist bias of the previous few decades.³⁷ Symptomatic of that bias was the interpretation of Aristotelian physics and metaphysics as being about the imposition of form on matter.³⁸ This happened simultaneously with the consignment of the language of substance and accident to the realms of obscure scholastic philosophy

³⁶ Cf. Heidegger, 11, "Every essential form of spirit is open to ambiguity"

³⁷ Cf. Jackson and Marotti, *The Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Studies* (2004).

³⁸ I have discussed this in relation to Kalas' and Teskey's work. Cf also *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, 5, "The form/matter relation of Aristotelian metaphysics is thereby provisionally reversed: it is the material object that impresses its texture and contour upon the noumenal subject. And this reversal is curiously upheld by the ambiguity of the word "sub-ject," that which is *thrown under*, in this case - in order to receive an imprint.

even by early modernists who are versed in premodern thought.³⁹ David Harvey has said in relation to Marx that reductionism can be heuristic for intellectuals, allowing them to see things that might otherwise be unclear. His remark can equally apply to the scholars whose innovative work this dissertation critiques but is also comprehensively indebted to. They often take it for granted that readers share their assumption that metaphysics is a discredited field of study, but their dismissal of metaphysics in favour of ideology is the measure of their own ideological blindness.

In an attempt to distance themselves from the metaphysical, De Grazia and Stallybrass in *The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text* (1993), make paper the locus of the text's meaning because it is the product of multifarious forces and practices, but in doing so they make matter symbolic of an idealistic liberalism. Their essay can be seen as participating in the same idealist, materialist and nominalist categories that I have been describing in the religious literature of premodernity, except, as with the Ramist logic, the premodern hierarchy of being has been mapped onto the printed page. In describing the variation that is produced by mechanical reproduction of artworks, these critics produce a version of the platonic notion of copies of a transcendent/immanent original, each copy being distinguished by typographical and orthographical accidents. They don't note that the term 'accident' was adapted from metaphysics to describe those typographical details which don't signify, except perhaps to the people who make typographical fonts. Otherwise these details are a kind of nothing that we perceive when we repeat a word or a prayer so often that it ceases to have lexical meaning. In their privileging of copies and accidents over authorial substance, De Grazia and Stallybrass champion a nominalistic

³⁹ Michael Witmore, *Culture of Accidents* (2001)

textuality that itself has a kind of romantic allure for them. In wanting to replace the solitary genius with the accidents of his transmission, they say

This genius is, after all, an impoverished, ghostly thing compared to the complex social practices that shaped, and still shape, the absorbent surface of the Shakespearean text. Perhaps it is these practices that should be the objects not only of our labors but also of our desires.⁴⁰

They are perfectly correct to equiparate the terms 'genius' and 'ghostly,' because, 'genius' is originally a platonic term, and as the *Cloud*-writer shows us, the 'ghostly' is what is most real to a contemplative in the Christian neoplatonist tradition. The witches in Macbeth and ghost of Hamlet senior are the distorted remnant of a reality that has been swept away by the English reformation, as the romantic author has been sent packing by post-structuralism. But like the ghosts of the Catholic past, this author hasn't gone away, despite being made to work in the mines with scribes, printers and actors. Perhaps he has benefitted from being taken off his pedestal, and having his work made into something more akin to the accidents of Hooker's liturgy than a directly divine creation.

Nevertheless De Grazia and Stallybrass's sense of the text as absorbent surface is strikingly similar to the *Cloud*-author's sense of the darkness of God as a kind of unsignifying 'nothing' that is equivalent to All. These critics have not superseded Aristotelian and Platonic metaphysics, but are unconsciously reproducing them. If we ask where their normative "should" comes from, and why their project matters, the answers to these questions can best be found in a history that includes rather than excludes the middle ages.⁴¹

⁴⁰ De Grazia and Stallybrass, 283

⁴¹ Alastair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* makes the argument that modernity's inability to coherently theorize its own ethical imperatives stems from an amnesia about the medieval Aristotelian philosophy that its ethics are based upon. In the absence of objective standards of behaviour that everyone can agree on, ethical

arguments are based on criterionless decisions to take particular positions that are then defended emotionally rather than rationally.

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