

Essays in Medieval Studies 11

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page 103**8. Reading the Body in *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines*****Andrew Taylor**

A body, unless it be but a bodiless abstraction, must be the body of someone. Let us consider then, the figure of Henry Grosmont, first duke of Lancaster, earl of Derby, Lincoln, and Leicester, steward of England, and lord of Bergerac and Beaufort, as he appears in the glory of his Garter robes on a page from the Bruggys Garter Book (plate one). The uncle of Richard II, father-in-law of John of Gaunt, and possibly the richest man in England after the King, he spent the bulk of his career in France as one of Edward III's chief negotiators and leading generals and as his Lieutenant in Brittany. Not content with the war in France, Lancaster also campaigned in Prussia with the Teutonic Knights, fought against the Moors in Spain and Morocco, and was an enthusiastic participant in tournaments and jousts, issuing numerous personal challenges. Both courageous and courteous, he was an exemplar of the chivalric values enshrined in the Order of the Garter, of which he was a founding member.¹

In 1354, during a brief respite from his campaigns, Henry of Lancaster wrote a short moral treatise entitled *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines*, in which he made use of a number of allegorical devices to describe how sin had entered his body and then his heart, threatening his soul.² The governing conceit is that Lancaster's sins and the senses through which they enter are wounds which can only be healed once they have been bathed with the milk and tears of the Virgin, anointed with the blood from Christ's wounds, and bandaged with the Virgin's joys. Throughout, Lancaster shows a recurring tendency to imagine his body as porous; not only does it gush blood and tears but it is repeatedly penetrated by the senses, which are the wounds of sin. Lancaster lists seven wounds in particular, those of the ear, eye, nose, mouth, hand, foot, and heart, but he adds that "tout le corps si est pleyne des plaies, et les avantdites plaies sont si pleines de touz les sept mortels pecchés et de veniaux" (all the body is so full of wounds and these wounds are so full of all the seven mortal sins and the venial sins) that he fears that the Lord will refuse to heal him (p. 8).

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Lancaster follows this governing scheme, working systematically through an account of each of the seven wounds of the senses and then of how each is to be cured, by being bathed, anointed, and bandaged. The work accordingly falls into two roughly equal parts, with the first half describing the sins and the second part the cures, but the division is blurred since in both sections Lancaster intersperses his account with much self-recrimination and lamentation for the hideousness of his sinful wounds and their stench, with numerous appeals to Christ and to the Virgin for their mercy, and with grisly accounts of Christ's wounds. The overall structure is further obscured by numerous digressions into medical lore, and by the elaborate development of a number of metaphors of the body and heart as site a fox's lair, a market place, a castle under siege, a salmon's spawning bed, or a house that must be cleaned before Christ can enter. It is in these passages that Lancaster explores most fully his inner workings and the relation between sensation and spirit. At one point, for example, he likens the sins to the young kipper salmon. Just as the kipper salmon are bred upriver but must swim to the sea before they can truly be called salmon, so the sins breed in the ear, the eye, and other parts of the body, but only become mortal sins when they reach the heart (p. 85). Through these extended analogies, Lancaster testifies to his sense of an inner spiritual core, while at the same time revealing a wealth of information about his more worldly interests.

It is the graphic and much repeated images of Lancaster's and Christ's wounds, however, that provide *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines* with its strong visual unity, a unity the work shares with that of more famous writers. As V. A. Kolve has suggested, medieval poets such as Chaucer sometimes constructed poetry around a "narrative image," a single over-arching image the Flood in the Miller's Tale or the tournament in the Knight's Tale which would be both visually evocative and symbolically resonant.³ The practice is one Kolve associates with memory: the poet or the reader who dwells repeatedly upon a central controlling image shares a mental habit with the rhetorician or mnemonist constructing a palace of memory, that is someone who first memorizes an image of a familiar spot with distinct subdivisions or niches and then mentally places visual icons for the various points to be remembered on this grid. We are increasingly coming to realize that such mnemonic techniques, what Mary Carruthers has called "the architectural

mnemonic," were in widespread circulation in the late Middle Ages, not just as a branch of rhetorical training but also as part of devotional practice.⁴ In the meditations set out in any number of late medieval devotional treatises, the reader was encouraged to "make himself present in his mind" as a witness to the Birth of Christ or the Passion, drawing on techniques of visualization similar to those used in constructing a theater of memory.⁵ Readers were instructed to visualize familiar places, people them with those they knew, and then return to the same mental site again and again. Such deliberate cultivation of internal topography was a recurring feature of late medieval devotion, an interiority invoked by Catherine of Sienna's famous injunction to "make yourself a cell in your own mind from which you need never come out."⁶

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The common focus of such mental exercises in Lancaster's day was, of course, Christ's wounded body, which was the recurring site of intense affective and identificatory devotion. As Miri Rubin notes, "the suffering of the human Christ was the image most amenable to personal identification" and his wounds "were hailed as the essence of Christ's humanity."⁷ The wounds were even made the subject of particularized devotion; they had prayers composed in their honor, and were frequently illustrated in books of hours, prayer rolls, and devotional art.⁸ This was especially true of the side wound, which, because it opened on Christ's heart and became a symbol of his love, "had a particular fascination and devotional power."⁹ It was a short step from intense fixation on Christ's image, and the floods of tears it released, to identification with him in his sorrows or to casting oneself as his bride.¹⁰ Christ's body became "a very medium of identification," a means of developing new forms of subjectivity and a new understanding of one's own body.¹¹

One might offer, as an instance of the same key images being used as a focus for strong meditative and affective devotion, the illustration of the kneeling penitent contemplating the wounds of Christ taken from an early fifteenth-century Carthusian collection now in the British Library (plate two).¹² This illustration is in fact one of two, both of which depict a praying figure, in the first a layman and in the second a monk, kneeling before the feet of the wounded Christ, with a large emblem of the wounded heart between them, filling the center of the page. Both pictures are accompanied by a short Passion lyric:

O man unkynde

Hafe *in* mynde

My paynes smert.

Beholde & see

Þat is for þe

Percyd my hert.¹³

This *imago pietatis*, as Rosemary Woolf argues serves "no historical or dogmatic purpose. . . . The intention is merely meditative, to confront the beholder with a timelessly suffering Christ and thus to arouse his compassion."¹⁴ A pious reader, emulating the kneeling figures in the pictures themselves, would return to such images repeatedly, using them as a spur to devotion, and accompanying them with prayers.

Although Lancaster is more temperate than many, it is within this cultural context of affective piety, meditative devotion, and mnemonic internalization that we can understand *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines* and its recurring images of the bleeding heart, and the wounded body of Christ crucified. It is Lancaster's expressed desire to keep these images before him at all times "pur conforter les espiritz, et les sens de la teste mettre a poynt, et ouster toutes deveries et foles pensees qe par frensie de la teste sovent venent" (p. 163; to comfort the spirits and keep the senses of the head in order, and drive out all falsehoods and foolish thoughts which often come through the head's frenzy). In one of his more

intriguing analogies, Lancaster explains that just as a frenzied man can be cured by placing a bleeding cock on his head, so he can be cured by keeping Christ's bleeding body, as covered in wounds as a cock is covered in red feathers, "on his head," i.e., in his mind:

. . . jeo vous prie, beau douz Meistres, qe jeo puisse bone memoire avoir de le rouge cook, et par sa vertue recoverir mon sen en tiele guyse, qe jeo ne pense riens forsqe en vous, ou de vous, ou pur vous, ne ne face chose par frenesie qe vous desplese en nul poynt, tresdouz Meistres; et encontre toutz folees pensees, qe jeo puisse avoir votre dure passion sur ma teste c'est en toutes mes pensees et fermement avoir en mon sen et memoire le sank tout chaude de vostre douz coer par mye fendu, c'est a dire ausi fresche et ausi chaude come si ceo feust ore endroit avenuz; ou les plumes ausi rouges, c'est a dire qe les plaies me soient ausi senglantes et rouges en ma pensee comme elles feurent un jour pur moy. [15](#) (p. 163)

(. . . I beseech you, gentle Lord, that I may well remember the red cock, and through its virtue recover my sense in such a way that I think of nothing but in you, of you, or for you, nor do anything in my frenzy that might displease you in any way, oh gentle Lord; and against all foolish thoughts, may I have your harsh Passion on my head, that is, in my thoughts, and have the red blood of your gentle heart that was shed for me firmly in mind, that is, just as fresh and hot as if it had just been shed; or the feathers just as red, that is to say that the wounds just as bloody and red in my thought as they were on that day for me.)

The frequent descriptions of Christ's passion and the detailed accounts of his mutilation in *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines*, serve exactly this purpose, functioning as a verbal equivalent of the *imago pietatis* and inviting a meditative concentration rather than advancing the allegorical narrative or elucidating doctrine. When, for example, Lancaster reassures himself that Christ will be humble when he returns to judge, since he displays his wounds, he might be describing the very image in the Carthusian manual:

...quant lui douz Jesus Crist vendra ceo jour et nous moustrera tout apertement coment nous l'avons malement defolee, batuz et naufrez, et nous moustera ses mayns cloués et ses piez et la hidous plai de son costé, et tout son corps sanz nombre pleyn de plaies et ceo toutes senglantes, en ceo purrons nous veoir la grande humblese de lui. (p. 39)

(. . . when gentle Jesus Christ comes on that day and shows us openly how wickedly we mauled, beat, and destroyed him, and shows us his nailed hands and his feet and the hideous wound of his side, and all his body filled with bloody wounds without number, in this we will be able

to see his great humility.)

The precise details that Lancaster provides in these passages (the size of the nails, the rust on the lance, the mud on Christ's feet), and the graphic description of Christ's physical mutilation, reinforce their iconic quality.

Heavily imbued with the conventions of late medieval piety, Lancaster's book nonetheless has a rare intimacy. It conveys a sense of the smells and sensations that delight him, the pleasures and pressures of his life as feudal magnate, courtier, soldier, and enthusiastic hunter. At one point, for example, Lancaster compares his heart to a fox's den in which the sins hide during the day. He devotes several pages to describing the various ways in which one can deal with foxes who have retreated to their layers, either by leaving one hole open and smoking them out, or by plugging all the holes and asphyxiating them, or by sending in a terrier:

. . . jeo puisse trop bien comparer mon malveis coer al angle q'est par dedeinz cest court de renars, ou les renars se treient einz et demorent et se muscent de jours, et de nuyt saillent hors pur quere lour proie. Ceux sont les ordes pecchés qe sont en mon coer et les vices qe la se muscent et se reposent de jour et saillent hors de nuytz pur prendre lour proie. (p. 105)

(I might compare my wicked heart to the corner of a foxes's hole, in which the foxes live and hide during the day and come forth at night to seek their prey. It is the foul sins and vices that are in my heart that live and hide and rest during the day and come forth at night to seek their prey.)

Lancaster declares that the holes of his body must be stopped by confession and by covering them with the thorns of penance for the stench of his sins is worse than the stench of foxes. The sins can be stifled by the smoke of Holy Grace (which he goes on to allegorize further), or one can send in a terrier to root them out. The forester who tries to root out sin is the confessor; the terrier he sends in is conscience. The conscience barks when he finds a sin; then the confessor/forester drives in the iron rod of good doctrine and good teaching. If this fails he must dig trenches, pull back the roots of sin, i.e., the pleasures and desires of the flesh, and the stones of hardness of heart, using a pick of two points, one point being hard penance, which drives into the flesh, and the other the fear of hell.

Through such examples, Lancaster transforms the depersonalized allegorical conventions he inherited into an autobiographical account of his own body, that wretched flesh of which he is still rather fond and not a little proud.¹⁶ The book reflects not just his personal tastes his joy in dancing, his interest in markets and fisheries, or his pleasure in the smell of expensive red cloth but also his physical condition. He writes as a man who has been much battered and

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has extensive experience of wounds and of military first aid, as a man who has grown cold with age, so that he is no longer as tempted by lechery as he was in his youth, and now suffers gout as a penalty for his earlier gluttony, and as a man subject to continual temporal pressures and distractions in his efforts to set his soul in order.

In keeping with this personalization, the book also reflects the circumstances of its own writing. Henry is acutely aware of how little time he manages to snatch from a busy life to attend to his personal salvation:

Beau Sire Dieux, homme poet bien veoir par mes journees qe jeo voise mult belement le pas en cest affaire, et si poet hom savoir par cestez journees qe sont si petites qe jeo ne puisse pas bien travailler et nomement en chosez qe vous touchent, douz Sires, de ceo siu jeo, cheitif, tout las et recreuz. (p. 98)

(Good Lord God, one can see by my daily entries that I proceed very slowly in this matter, and one can see from these entries that are so short that I cannot work well, especially in matters that touch you, gentle Lord, where I am a caitiff, weak and recreant.)

Although Lancaster does not use any formal markings to indicate where each day's work ends, the choppy and repetitive structure of *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines* tends to confirm the suggestion that it consists of short daily entries made by a harried man.

The pattern emerges clearly in a crucial section composed during Holy Week, where Lancaster actually specifies the pious thoughts that occur to him as he writes each day:

A! Beau Sire Dieux, eietz de moy merci et pité, et me donetz grace par vostre grace, qe jeo puisse avoir pité et dolour de la vileyne et hontous et tresanquiseuse mort qe vous soeffristes pur nous peccheours, de qoi, tresdouce Sires, a nous il doit bien souvenir tout dis, et especialment en temps q'ore est, car asseez poet homme en seinte eglis oier parler et chaunter de tant de peynes et grief turmentz qe en vostre benoit douce et tendre corps soeffretes et droit pur nous...Et comme ceo feu sur cestui meismes jour Mill CCC & XX anz qe jeo estoi cy endroit de mon livre sur un Bon Vendredy matyn, si parle jeo ore de cest matire le plus, pur ceo q'il nous covient de nous plus a remembrer, pur ceo qe nous en ocons chaunter et lire, et si nous aveneroit il mult bien et tendrement plorer. (pp. 95-96)

(Oh, Good Lord God, have pity and mercy upon me, and give me grace through your grace so that I may have pity and sorrow at the villainous, shameful, and most bloody death which you suffered for us sinners, for which, oh most gentle God, we should remember all this, and especially

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at this time, when one can hear them speak and sing in Holy Church of the pains and sorrows you suffered in your blessed and tender body for our sakes....And as it was on this same day 1320 years later [after the death of Christ, i.e., 1354] on a Good Friday morning that I reached this spot in my book, here I will speak of this material some more, because we ought to remember, because we have heard it sung and read aloud, and we have found this good and wept tenderly.)

Here three times come together: the time of the Crucifixion; the time of the Christian calendar, in which this is a period of penance, mourning the Crucifixion; and the time of Lancaster's own writing, Good Friday, 1354. As he moves through Holy Saturday to Easter Sunday, the pattern of short daily entries, a pattern analogous to that in many diaries, suggest how writing became for Lancaster a reassuring personal ritual. As he notes himself, "ils me semblent, par vostre grace, douz Sires, qe par le parler ou soulement penser et escrivre, jeo siu grandement allegee de le doleir de mes plaies" (p. 190; it seems to me, by your grace, gentle Lord, that by speaking, or just by thinking and writing [about the remedies], I am given great relief from my wounds).

Lancaster's self-revelatory treatise provides a rare opportunity to witness the devotional progress of a late medieval layman, a subject which has attracted relatively little attention. As Caroline Walker Bynum observes, "In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, women's piety was a special case of lay piety. Increasingly in the fourteenth century, lay piety *became* female piety and as such, of course, increasingly suspect."¹⁷ Bynum's formulation is persuasive, but it is important to realize that *increasingly* does not mean *totally*. We should also be aware that if recent scholarship has made us conscious of the varieties of women's devotion and devotional reading in the later Middle Ages, this is in part a reflection of our own situation, our desire to find women readers when we can find so few writers, for example, or a less commendable reluctance to interest ourselves in men unless they provide a macho reflection of great heroism or great villainy.¹⁸

Lancaster is not simply a pious person who happens to be a man. On the contrary, his piety is heavily gendered. Throughout the work, Lancaster sets Christ's wounds against his own, in the first instance the wounds of sin which have rendered his body hideous, but also, through his repeated military analogies, the wounds he himself suffered as a young knight at war and in tournaments. Each of Lancaster's wounds is to be cured by the blood from the wounds of Christ, a sustained parallelism that becomes a personalized form of *imitatio Christi*.

Alas! Bien deverons de profond coer plorer et lesser entrer en nostre malveis et orgoillous coer un poi de celle lance qe passa par mye vostre coer, siqe, en remembrance de precieuse sanke qe de vostre humble et debonair coer a grande foison issi, je vous prie, tresdouz Sires, qe de mon malveis dur coer puisse issir grand plenté de lermes et coure par

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russeaux hors a mes yeux pur vous, sicom le sank qe raia hors de ceo benoit cost' pur nous. (p. 96)

(Alas! Well should we weep with our whole heart and let enter into our wicked and proud heart a little of that lance that passed through my friend your heart, thus, in memory of the precious blood that issued freely from your humble and debonair heart, I pray you lord that from my wicked heart there may issue plentiful tears in a stream from my eyes just like the blood that issued in a stream from your blessed side for me.)

In his account of the remedies for his sins in the second half of the work, Lancaster develops the parallelism at length. He wishes for his ears to be washed with the tears that the Virgin shed when she saw her son's ears buffeted; his eyes washed with the tears that the Virgin shed when she saw her son's eyes dimmed by torment and death; and so on, through each of the senses. It is when he turns to the tears she shed for her son's nose that his personal involvement becomes most marked:

Et la tierce plaie qe j'ai a laver grant meister, c'est les narilles. Et, tresdouce Dame, de ceo faire, en estes vous bien purveue d'assez de grosses lermes qe vous espendistes quant vous, Dame, veistes le douz nees vostre filtz si ledement escrachez et gettés de bowe si ledement et si puant, sur ceo nees qe si suef feroit et qe si beal et si blank par mesure et de taille si avenant estoit un poi devant, et donques estoit si chaungee de colour, de taille et de toutez choses pur les greves turmentz et peynes, qe vous, douce Dame, ne conustes pas bien, a ceo qe j'ai oÿ dire, vostre benoit douz enfant, si estoit il deffait et ledement apparaillee, quant vous l'enconcrastes a carfouk. Et sicome un homme qe va moelt a ces turnoys plus y piert au nees sovent qe autre part, et si pense jeo de ceo bone seigneur qi turnya tant pur nous et venquy le turnoy, et si dure luy estoit la journee qe ceo eust estee merveille s'il n'eust eu le nees grandement defolez et debrisez. Le turnoy estoit pur nous quant il par turment tourna nostre dolour en joie et venquy mort par mort. A! Douce Dame, deignetz mone orde nees de ces lermes si laver qe rien ne ny demeure d'ordure ne de venym. (pp. 137-38)

(And the third wound I have to wash is the nostrils. And, gentle Lady, you are well prepared to do this with all the large tears that you shed when you saw, Lady, the gentle nose of your son so foully spat upon and pelted with foul and stinking mud; that nose that smelt so gently and was so beautiful and so white, and then had so changed color and size through its sufferings that, from what I have heard, gentle Lady, you could not recognize your blessed child when you met him at the crossroads, he was so abused and marred. And just as a man that often goes to tournaments is wounded in his nose more often than any other

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part, so I think it was for this good Lord who tourneys so often for us and wins the tournament, and it was so hard for him that day that it would have been a marvel if he had not had his nose greatly battered and broken. The tournament was for us when he turned our sorrow into joy through his torment and conquered death with death. A! Gentle lady, deign to wash my filthy nose with those tears so that none of the dirt or poison is left.)

The Passion itself becomes a tournament and Christ's wounds match those of that scarred old campaigner, master of innumerable tournaments, Henry of Lancaster. Throughout this section, the details of Christ's mutilation are matched by Lancaster's hard-won experience of wounds and their treatment, his knowledge of the recipe for a rosewater lotion, the dispute over the merits of bathing wounds in water or white wine, or the effects of gangrene. Lancaster and Christ become blood-brothers, linked by a homo-erotic union of the warrior band, the competitive exchange of pain, and the mutual display of their wounds, while the Virgin, like a court lady at a tournament, valorizes the male display.¹⁹

Lancaster's body is not just the subject of *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines* but also the condition of the book's production. Although *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines* was written in part to benefit others, as Lancaster explains on several occasions, it was in large measure a personal religious exercise, both devotional and penitential, which served to focus Lancaster's mind on Christ's Passion and keep it from wicked thoughts. Writing his treatise was an alternative to prayer and meditation and perhaps even an alternative form of prayer and meditation. As such, this writing, like other forms of devotion, had a physical basis.

Devotional reading and meditation was a social custom that was not merely focussed on the body but was also literally *embodied* in the physical habits of the reader. As Pierre Bourdieu has shown, reading was a "technique of the body," a culturally constructed disposition, or *habitus*, that involved subjecting oneself to particular disciplines and was acquired as part of a broader social formation.²⁰ Thus the act of reading was bound up with the reader's time and space, with devotional postures, with daily rhythms, such as those afforded by the liturgy, and with the construction of private rooms and chapels.²¹ Devotional reading was also a mark of class, a fitting activity for an aristocrat as a sign of purity of soul and the emotional tenderness or "pite" that Chaucer tells us "renneth soone in *gentil* herte."²²

Such dispositions eventually became internalized, but initially they were acquired through collaboration, often with favored clergy. It is worth stressing this point, since lay literacy is often depicted as an assertion of lay independence against the clergy. K. B. McFarlane, for example, in his account of literate Lollards, claims that in the late Middle Ages, "the literate laity were taking the clergy's words out of their mouths."²³ We should hesitate, however, before accepting too readily a Whig theory of history linking the rise of individualism and the decline of institutionalized religion. Many pious gentlefolk, developed

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close ties with personal religious advisers, who both provided them with books and taught them how to use them.²⁴ Devotional reading flourished as a form of cultural collaboration, rather than as an act of solitary defiance. This seems no less true of Lancaster's devotional writing. An awkward writer, he was probably set to work on *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines* by his confessor; he certainly depicts his spiritual self-scrutiny as one in which his confessor played a key role.²⁵ It is the confessor who is the forester who sets the terrier of his conscience to work rooting out sins.

Lancaster's assisted self-construction is just one moment in the long historical transformation that brought many of the techniques and mental attitudes of monastic literacy to a broadening circle of lay people. This was a crucial part of the development of what is too often simplistically called the "modern" or "early-modern" subject.²⁶ For all that, it is not a collaboration we would necessarily wish to glorify. Taking our direction from Foucault we might see in the promotion of affective piety by the religious an example of a coercive social formation. Lancaster anticipates what

Angèle Kremer-Marietti has called Foucault's dominant metaphor, that of the anatomic gaze,²⁷ when he wishes that his heart, a ditch in which robbers lurk, might be laid bare, as a criminal's body is when it is dissected.

Tresdouz Sire, jeo vous prie qe vous plese qe jeo puisse estre ensi defait et overt par devant vous, mon seignur et mon meistre, com sont ascuns devant ces surgens qe sont a ces escoles de Monpelers et aillours, qe quant un homme est mort par le droit de juggement, il lour est donee pur overir, a veoir et conoistre coment les veynes, les nerfs et les autres choses gisent dedeinz un homme et la manere. (pp. 85-86)

(Most Gentle Lord, I pray you, if it please you, that I may be taken apart and opened up before you, my lord and master, as people are before the surgeons at Montpellier and elsewhere, who, when a man has been executed and given to them, open him up to learn how the veins and nerves and other parts inside a man are put together.)

Lancaster's depiction of himself as a body open to dissection because it has been condemned by law illustrates the interconnection of the social construction of the body, the social construction of the subject, and the various forms of social coercion that Foucault analyzed at such length. Just as the modern soul is "born out of methods of punishment, supervision, and constraint" that need not be imposed with direct brutality, so Lancaster's self-exploration and his elaboration of an identity beyond that of his public feudal roles take place through the confessional and penitential mechanisms to which he willingly submits.²⁸ It is part of the efficiency of power that its subject assumes the task of policing himself, inscribing in himself "the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles" and becoming "the principle of his own subjection."²⁹

What is so disturbing about Foucault's analysis is that it can all too easily

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become totalizing, evoking a pervasive and unassailable force that obliterates any possibility of human agency or resistance.³⁰ It is perhaps encouraging, then, to recognize how badly Lancaster performed the task of self-dissection, chastising himself for his sins but never fully abandoning them. To the end Lancaster remains all too clearly a hunter, and his penitence is tinged with nostalgia and even a certain pride. Age may have given him gout, but in his day he was a dancer of note. "Ceo estoit quant jeo fui joesnes et me senti fort et legier, et me plesoit ma bealtee et ma taille ou ma gentillesce et les vertus et graces qe vous, Sire, m'avetz ordenee pur salver m'alme" (pp. 15-16; this was when I was young and felt myself strong and light, and was pleased with my beauty and size, my gentleness, and the virtues and graces that you, Lord, gave me to save my soul). In the pigheadedness of this man, who, despite all his religious instruction, remained perversely attached to his own sinful body, we have a reminder that "we mustn't take people for fools."³¹

Plates

Plate One: MS Stowe 594, fol. 8, by permission of the British Library. The manuscript contains portraits of Edward III and the twenty-five other founding members of the Order of the Garter, based on windows commissioned by Sir William Bruggys, Garter King of Arms.

Plate Two: MS Additional 37049, fol. 20, by permission of the British Library.

Notes

1. The standard biography is Kenneth Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant* (London, 1969). On Lancaster's role in the formation of the Order of the Garter, see also N. H. Nicolas, "Observations on the Institution of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, illustrated by the Accounts of the Great Wardrobe of King Edward the Third," *Archaeologia* 31 (1846), 1-163, esp. 109, 113, 115-18, and on the Order in general, Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven, 1984), pp. 179-85.
 2. E. J. Arnould, ed., *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines*, Anglo Norman Texts 2 (Oxford, 1940) and, for notes and commentary, *Étude sur Le Livre des Saintes Médecines du Duc Henri de Lancastre* (Paris, 1948). The title is provided just before the explicit in both manuscripts. Further references are given in the text; the translations are my own.
 3. See V. A. Kolve, *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: The First Five Canterbury Tales* (Stanford, 1984), ch. 1, drawing on Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London, 1966).
 4. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, England, 1990); see p. 71 for the term "architectural mnemonic."
 5. See, for example, the injunction in *The Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ*, Nicholas Love's early fifteenth-century translation of the pseudo-Bonaventurean *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, to "make þe in þy soule present to þoo þynges þat ben here writen seyð or done of oure lord Jesu; & þat bisily, likyngly & abidyngly, as þei þou herdest hem with þi bodily eres, or sey þaim with þin eyen don" (Michael G. Sargent, ed., *Nicholas Love's Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* [New York, 1992], p. 13).
 6. Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Saint Catherine of Sienna*, trans. G. Lamb (London, 1960), p. 71. See further Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1988), p. 46 and the introduction to James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European*
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- Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (Kortrijk, Belgium, 1979). I echo here points I have raised in "Into His Secret Chamber: Reading and Privacy in Late Medieval England," in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in Britain*, ed. James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor (Cambridge, forthcoming).
7. Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, England, 1991), pp. 302, 303.
 8. See Douglas Gray, "The Five Wounds of Our Lord," *Notes and Queries* 208 (February-May, 1963), 50-51, 82-89, 127-34, 163-68, and Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c.1580* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 238-48.
 9. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 244. On the association of the wounds of Christ with the sins of man, see Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins; An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept* (East Lansing, Michigan, 1952), pp. 167-68, *et passim*.
 10. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987), especially pp. 245-59.
 11. Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture, and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London, 1993), p. 41.
 12. On the manuscript, see Thomas W. Ross, "Five Fifteenth-Century 'Emblem' Verses from Brit. Mus. Addit. MS. 37049," *Speculum* 32 (1957), 274-82; Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 185-86, and Derek Pearsall, *Old English and Middle English Poetry* (London, 1977), pp. 138-39. On Carthusian meditative practice and its influence on the laity, see in particular G. R. Keiser, "'Noght How Lang Man Lifs; Bot How Wele': The Laity and the Ladder of Perfection," in *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, ed. Michael G. Sargent (Cambridge, England, 1989), pp. 145-59 and Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 296-97.
 13. Ross provides complete transcriptions of all the poems in "Five Fifteenth-Century 'Emblem' Verses."
 14. Woolf, *Religious Lyric*, p. 185.
 15. Such a pattern of use is made explicit in some of the *Arma Christi* rolls, where icons of the Passion accompany prayers which confer spiritual benefits depending on the number of times they are repeated. See Gray, "The Five Wounds of Our Lord."
 16. Arnould (*Étude*, p. lxxix) finds no direct antecedent, but rather a general debt to didactic literature. The closest single parallel is to Robert Grosseteste's *Château d'Amour*.
 17. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York, 1992), p. 77.
 18. A striking exception is offered by the collection of essays edited by Clare A. Lees, *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*

(Minneapolis, 1994), essays which draw on the approaches developed by feminism and

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gender studies to explore a range of masculine identities. On women's devotional reading, see, in particular, Susan Groag Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," *Signs* 7 (1982), 742-68, rpt. in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Erler and Maryane Kowaleski (Athens, Georgia and London, 1988) and Ann Hutchinson, "Devotional Reading in the Monastery and in the Late Medieval Household," in *De Cella in Seculum*, ed. Sargent, pp. 215-18. Some of the more comprehensive studies include Carol Meale, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500* (Cambridge, England, 1933), and the proceedings of the conference "Women and the Book" held at St. Hilda's College, Oxford, 1993 (forthcoming).

19. On the erotics of the tournament and male display, see Helen Solterer, "Figures of Female Militancy in Medieval France," *Signs* 16 (1991), 522-49, especially 526-31, and Louise Olga Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament: Arts of Rule in Late Medieval Scotland* (Madison, 1991), ch. 11, "Soft and Silken War," especially pp. 209-12. On homoerotic themes in Renaissance devotional literature, see Richard Rambuss, "Pleasure and Devotion: The Body of Jesus and Seventeenth-Century Lyrics," in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham and London, 1994), pp. 253-79, especially pp. 260-64, where Rambuss challenges Bynum's claim that Christ's body was not perceived sexually.

20. I draw here on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, notably *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, England, 1977) and *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984). The "habitus" is "a system of dispositions" governing virtually all socially conditioned habitual activities, e.g. eating, shopping, or any number of recreations, including reading or the appreciation of "high culture." The habitus is "the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations" (*Outline*, p. 78) which explains how these dispositions are "collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor" (*Outline*, p. 72), i.e., why people of the same social class shop, read, or eat in such remarkably similar ways. The habitus is socially conditioned and in turn socially defining: it acts as a mark of class distinction and internalizes the perception of class distinction (*Distinction*, p. 170) through such notions as "good taste," which Bourdieu would categorize as a class distinction masquerading as an aesthetic one. The habitus is physically embodied in systems of characteristic gestures, postures, and facial expressions, or bodily *hexis* (*Outline*, p. 87), which are further related to the social formation of physical space, e.g. the symbolic divisions of space within a house (*Outline*, p. 89 ff.).

21. See Marion Glasscoe, "Time of Passion: Latent Relationships between Liturgy and Meditation in Two Middle English Mystics," in *Langland, The Mystics and the Medieval English Religious Tradition: Essays In Honour of S. S. Hussey*, ed. Helen Phillips (Cambridge, England, 1990), pp. 141-60.

22. Larry D. Benson, gen. ed., *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. (Boston, 1987),

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"The General Prologue," *The Canterbury Tales*, I (A), 1761 *et passim*. As Benson notes, this is Chaucer's favorite line.

23. K. B. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford, 1972), p. 204.

24. An early instance may be the two Dominicans depicted in the margins of the *de Brailles Hours*, who may have assisted the book's owner, an anonymous laywoman from Oxford, in the use of this, the earliest extant English book of hours. See Claire Donovan, *The de Brailles Hours: Shaping the Book of Hours in Thirteenth-Century Oxford* (Toronto, 1991).

25. The suggestion that Lancaster's confessor set him the task is attributed to Dominica Legge by Fowler, *King's Lieutenant*, p. 289, n. 18.

26. For a harsh critique of this tendency, see David Aers, "A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the 'History of the Subject'," in *Culture and History, 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, ed. David Aers (Detroit, 1992), pp. 177-202.

27. Angèle Kremer-Marietti, *Foucault et l'archéologie du savoir* (Paris, 1974), cited in J. G. Merquior, *Foucault* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), p. 141.

28. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1979), p. 29.

29. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 202-203.

30. Frank Lentricchia, "Michel Foucault's Fantasy for Humanists," in *Ariel and the Police: Michel Foucault, William James, Wallace Stevens* (Madison, 1988), pp. 69 ff. Similar criticisms of cultural poetics and its emphasis on the social construction of the subject are raised by Nancy Partner, "No Sex, No Gender," *Speculum* 68 (1993), 427; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 65 (1990), 74; and Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison, 1987), pp. 64-67.

31. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984), p. 176, pointing to the misappropriation ("braconnage" or "poaching") of texts as a form of local resistance.