Writing about the *ymage* in fifteenth-century England*

Marjorie Munsterberg

Considerable scholarly attention has been given to the ways in which writing about art developed in Renaissance Italy. Michael Baxandall and Robert Williams especially have studied how still-familiar methods of visual description and analysis were created from classical texts as well as contemporary studio talk. This new language spread rapidly through Europe and, over the course of the sixteenth century, overwhelmed every other approach to the visual arts. By the start of the seventeenth century, it had become the only acceptable source of serious visual analysis, a position it still holds in much of art history.[1] I would like to examine an earlier English tradition in which both instructions for how to look at visual objects and historical accounts of viewers looking describe something very different. Beginning in the late fourteenth century and continuing through the fifteenth century, Lollard and other reform movements made the use of religious images a

[1] Essential books on this topic by Michael Baxandall include *Giotto and the Orators. Humanist observers of painting in Italy and the discovery of pictorial composition 1350-1450*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, and *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980, although he wrote much more about verbal descriptions of visual things. Robert Williams also has analysed the language used to describe art in Renaissance Italy in a variety of works, notably *Art, Theory, and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy: From Techne to Metatechne*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Of the many others who have written in this area, Thomas Puttfarken has been especially important to me, including *The Discovery of Pictorial Composition: Theories of Visual Order in Painting 1400-1800,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000.

matter of fierce dispute. These arguments had taken place before in Church history, notably during the Byzantine controversy, but they had been explained in Latin and as part of theological debates.[2] The English reformers and those speaking in support of the Church, on the other hand, deliberately used the vernacular in an effort to reach ordinary people. Furthermore, they emphasized the practical implications of their ideas for worshipers. Writings by two female mystics, Julian of Norwich (1342–c. 1416) and Margery Kempe (c. 1373–1438), as well as transcripts from trials of heretics, treatises and sermons by church figures such as John Mirk (fl. c. 1382–c. 1414) and Bishop Reginald Pecock (c. 1390–1461), poetry by John Lydgate (c. 1370–c. 1451), and popular lyrics give additional evidence for how at least some viewers responded to religious images during this period.[3] Although only a brief episode in the history of writing about art in the West, it nonetheless offers compelling descriptions of other ways of looking.

The major difficulty faced by historians of fifteenth-century writing in English about visual objects is not the absence of texts but the absence of the works they concern. The traditional parish church was richly ornamented with sculptures and paintings of figures and narrative scenes, decorative motifs on walls and ceilings, stained glass windows, and luxury goods and materials everywhere. A detailed reminiscence written by the recusant Roger Martin (1526-1615) describes how the interior of the Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford, Suffolk, appeared after extensive rebuilding and redecorating in the late fifteenth century. A nineteenth-century historian of the church summarized and paraphrased Martin's memories:

> the walls and roofs were bright with paint and gilding, and the great carved reredos, representing the Crucifixion, was resplendent with gold and colours; the high altar glittering with a profusion of plate, jewels, embroidery, and precious hangings: when also, before the great rood, the several minor altars, and the many images of saints, there hung brilliant costly draperies; [...] and how dazzling [was] the brilliancy of colour lighting up this noble church, when in the sunshine, combined with the gorgeous reflected hues of the stained glass with which its 72 windows were then filled.

[2] A very helpful analysis of these arguments can be found in Thomas F.X. Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.
[3] Shannon Gayk discussed some of this material in *Image, Text, and Religious Reform in Fifteenth-Century England*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, as did Sarah Stanbury in *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008, and Kathleen Kamerick in *Popular Piety and Art in the Late Middle Ages: Image Worship and Idolatry in England 1350-1500*, New York: Palgrave, 2002.

Although the church and many of its windows survive, almost everything else had vanished by the end of the sixteenth century.[4] And this was just a parish church. The most popular pilgrimage sites were almost unimaginably rich, as explained in about 1500 by a noble Venetian traveler to Canterbury:

> [T]he magnificence of the tomb of St. Thomas the Martyr, Archbishop of Canterbury, is that which surpasses all belief. This, notwithstanding its great size, is entirely covered over with plates of pure gold; but the gold is scarcely visible from the variety of precious stones with which it is studded, such as sapphires, diamonds, rubies, balas-rubies, and emeralds; [...] the gold is carved and engraved in beautiful designs, both large and small, and agates, jaspers and cornelians set in relievo, [...] but every thing is left far behind by a ruby, not larger than a man's thumb-nail, which is set to the right of the altar.

Other accounts of the tomb from before its dismantling in 1538 confirm the astonishing amount of things that had accumulated there.[5] The most accomplished of surviving pictures from the period, such as the late fourteenth-century altarpiece known as the Wilton Diptych (National Gallery, London) and the late fifteenth-

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[4] Sir William Parker, Bart, *The History of Long Melford*, London: printed for the author, 1873, 45, paraphrasing and condensing Roger Martin,'The state of Melford Church and our Ladie's Chappel at the East end, as I did know it'. The interior of Holy Trinity Church is discussed in the context of late medieval religion in Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c. 1580,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, 37-40. For a vivid description of what the interior of such a parish church might have looked like based on what survives in St. Botolph, Clapton, see Laura Varnam, *The Church as Sacred Space in Middle English Literature and Culture*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018, Epilogue, 241-4. For the specific problems parish churches pose for art historians, see Paul Binski, 'The English Parish Church and Its Art in Later Middle Ages: A Review of the Problem', *Studies in Iconography*, 20, 1999, 1-25.

[5] *A relation, or rather a true account, of the island of England; with sundry particulars of the customs of these people, and of the Royal Revenues under King Henry the Seventh, about the year 1500*, tr. Charlotte Augusta Sneyd, London: for the Camden Society, 1847, 30. The author of the manuscript has not been identified, but internal evidence suggests a Venetian noble (Preface, v). For a detailed study of what could be found at Becket's shrine, see Sarah Blick, 'Votives, Images, Interaction and Pilgrimage to the Tomb and Shrine of St. Thomas Becket, Canterbury Cathedral' in *Push Me, Pull You: Art and Devotional Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, eds, S. Blick and L. Gelfand, Leiden: Brill, 2011, 21-58. A recent general account with many references to the extensive scholarly literature is Kay Brainerd Slocum, *The Cult of Thomas Becket: History and Historiography through Eight Centuries*, New York: Routledge, 2019. The effort to erase St Thomas went far beyond eliminating his tomb. For illustrations of erasures in manuscripts, see https://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2011/09/erasing-becket.html.

century Marian wall paintings in the Eton College Chapel (in situ), demonstrate the fine quality that would have characterized the best work.[6]

Scattered episodes of iconoclasm began in the late fourteenth century, but the sustained destruction of visual images started in the mid-sixteenth century and was the direct result of government policies ordered by Henry VIII (1491–1547; r. 1509–47). The Injunction issued by the King in 1538 commands that clergy should:

> suffer from henceforth no candles, tapers, or images of wax to be set afore any image or picture but only the light that commonly goeth across the church by the rood-loft, the light before the sacrament of the altar, and the light about the sepulchre, which for the adorning of the church and divine service ye shall suffer to remain; still admonishing your parishioners, that images serve for none other purpose but as to be books of unlearned men, [...] which images, if they abuse for any other intent than for such remembrances, they commit idolatry.

The list of prohibited actions in the same document gives a sense of what a wide range of behaviour existed at the time: '[people should not] repose their trust and affiance in any other works devised by men's phantasies besides Scripture; as in wandering to pilgrimages, offering of money, candles, or tapers to images or relics, or kissing or licking the same, saying over a number of beads, not understood or minded on, or in such-like superstition'. Almost ten years later, the Injunctions issued in the name of Edward VI (1537–1553; r. 1547–53) extended these prohibitions to total physical destruction: '[T]hey shall take away, utterly extinct and destroy all shrines, covering of shrines, all tables, candlesticks, trindles or rolls of wax, pictures, paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry and superstition: so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glass-windows, or elsewhere'.[7] Although these edicts were reversed during the brief reign of Queen Mary (1516–1558; r. 1556–8), they were reinstated by Queen Elizabeth (1533–1603; r. 1558–1603), and their enactment had advanced greatly by the end of the sixteenth century. Much of what survived at that point was destroyed during the additional campaigns of iconoclasm in the seventeenth century.[8]

But all of that lay ahead. In the fifteenth century, the rich visual culture of late medieval Christianity was supported by the Church and its rituals involved

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[6] For the Wilton Dyptych, see Dillian Gordon, *The Wilton Diptych,* London: National Gallery Company, 2015, and for the Eton College Chapel paintings, Emily Howe, et al., *Wall Paintings of Eton,* London: Scala, 2012.

[7] 'The Second Royal Injunctions of Henry VIII. 1538.', Item 7, 2:38; Item 6, 2:37; and 'The Royal Injunctions of Edward VI., 1547.', Item 28, 2:126, in *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation,* vol. 2: 1536-1558, ed. Walter Howard Frere, London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1910.

[8] For these developments, see Julie Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm during the English Civil War,* Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003.

extensive interactions with religious imagery. The most dramatic public actions took place on Good Friday and Easter. On Friday, worshipers crept down church naves, barefoot and on their knees, to kiss the sculpted Crucifixion held by priests. Then it was placed inside a sepulchre until Sunday, when it was lifted out and greeted with ceremony to enact the Resurrection. Some of the so-called Easter sepulchres were substantial stone structures.[9] Private acts that involved imagery were many, from gifts of lights to be put in front of a specific depiction in a church to the donation of visual representations of all kinds as well as money for their maintenance. Wills document many examples, and indulgences granted for the remission of sin often linked contributions to particular pilgrimages as well as prayer before specific images.[10] There also were grand patrons during the fifteenth century, which was a time of extensive construction in many parish churches.[11] The rebuilding and redecoration of the Holy Trinity Church, for example, was almost entirely the result of the donations of one man, a wealthy local wool merchant named John Clopton (1423–1497). A few major gifts from the period survive in place. One is the twenty-eight stained glass windows still displayed in the Church of Saint Mary, Fairford (Glocs). Another is the remarkable stained glass window called 'The Pricke of Conscience' (Church of All Saints, North Street, York), illustrating the fifteen signs of doom as explained in the popular fourteenth-century poem of the same name. The lowest row includes representations of the donors, each one modelling an appropriate expression of horrour and fear at the spectacle of the end of the world.[12]

   Although there were many different opinions in the religious disputes of the fifteenth century, the question of imagery produced something close to two opposing positions in theory, even if the opinions of specific individuals were more complicated. Everyone used arguments that had been made many times before. On one side were the Church figures, who often defended religious representations as books for the illiterate. This approach had a long history, but two letters written by

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[9] Pamela Sheingorn, *The Easter Sepulchre in England*, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1987. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 22-37, for the ceremonies of Easter Week.

[10] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* 287-92. Indulgences are discussed in a European context and from various points of view in Robert Norman Swanson, ed., *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits. Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe,* Leiden: Brill, 2006. For the use of visual images, see especially Robert Norman Swanson, 'Praying for Pardon: Devotional Indulgences in Late Medieval England', 215-40.

[11] A detailed study of this in terms of rood screens is Eamon Duffy, 'The parish, piety, and patronage in late medieval East Anglia: the evidence of rood screens', in *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600*, eds, Katherine L. French et al., Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997, 133-62.

[12] For Holy Trinity Church, as in n. 4. For the York windows, see Roger Rosewell, 'The Pricke of Conscience or the Fifteen Signs of Doom Window in the Church of All Saints, North Street, York', https://vidimus.org/issues/issue-45/feature/ For Church of St. Mary, see Sarah Brown, 'Patronage and Piety in a Late Medieval English Parish: Reading Fairford Church and Its Windows', *Journal of Glass Studies*, 56, 2014, 287-301.

Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) in about 600 frequently were cited as authoritative. In the first one, he wrote that pictures allow the illiterate to 'read in them what they are unable to read in books'. He added in the second one that 'it is one thing to adore a picture, another through the picture's story to learn what must be adored'.[13] This reasoning continued to appear even as literacy increased dramatically.[14] Later statements, notably by Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), identify three ways in which images could be helpful: didactic, mnemonic, and affective. This triad reflects the influence of the classical rhetorical tradition, like the famous definition of the goals of an orator according to Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE), cited and explained by Augustine of Hippo (354–430): to instruct, delight, and move an audience.[15] Some Christian formulations even privileged the visual, echoing the classical idea that sight is the most important of the senses.[16] Using Greek terms for the appropriate attitudes to have toward images, the Church defined *latria* as that which was appropriate for God only, and *dulia* for what was to be directed to beings and objects of lesser holiness such as saints and relics. The terms were translated into English in the fifteenth century as 'adoration' and 'veneration' respectively.[17]

These traditional defences of religious imagery had two important consequences for worshipers. In a way not seen again in England until the late eighteenth century, the response of the viewer became one of the most important measures of a work, since it was the response of the person looking that determined the presence of idolatry. Furthermore, because it was the subject of the image that decided whether the correct response was *latria* or only *dulia*, the viewer had to be able to identify it correctly. This led to explanations of how to recognise commonly seen figures and scenes through conventional attributes. Unconventional depictions

[13] Celia M. Chazelle, 'Pictures, books, and the illiterate: Pope Gregory I's letters to Serenus of Marseilles', *Word & Image*, 6:2, 1990, 138-53. For an account of the later influence of the Pope's letters, see Herbert L. Kessler, 'Gregory the Great and Image Theory in Northern Europe during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph, Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, 151-72.

[14] Fundamental to the study of literacy in England is Michael Thomas Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066–1307*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Blackwell, 1993 (3rd ed., 2013).

[15] Paul Crossley, 'Ductus and memoria. Chartres cathedral and the workings of rhetoric', in *Rhetoric Beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Arts of the Middle Ages,* ed. Mary J. Carruthers, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 230. For Augustine, Ryan N.S. Topping, *St. Augustine*, London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010, 56.

[16] For a succinct analysis of this very large topic, see Cynthia Hahn,'Visio Dei. Changes in Medieval Visuality', in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance. Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. Robert S. Nelson, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 169-96.

[17] Priscilla Heath Barnum, ed., *Dives and Pauper*, Early English Text Society, original series, nos. 275, 280 and 323, London: Oxford University Press, 1976-2005, 1: 108-9. This passage, which defines the Greek terms and then translates them, is discussed below. All page numbers refer to this edition.

were discouraged if not outright suppressed, presumably because of the danger of them inspiring unsanctioned emotions. This happened most dramatically with the rushed nighttime removal of the 'Crux horribilis' from London in 1305.[18] But even in much more innocent circumstances, freelance interpretation by the uneducated was discouraged. For example, in the fifteenth-century poem *Tale of Beryn*, a group of pilgrims called 'lewd sotes' speculate on the subject of a window in Canterbury Cathedral. Described as 'counterfeting gentilmen', they are told to 'Let stond the window glased./Goth up and doth yeur offerynge'. So they go to the shrine of Thomas Becket (1119/20–1170) to pray and follow the guide's instructions: 'And sith the holy relikes ech man with his mowth/Kissed, as a goodly monke the names told and taught'. Guides such as this were stationed in churches and at pilgrimage sites to tell visitors what they were seeing and what it meant.[19]

Reformers, on the other hand, believed that Biblical commandment severely limited – if not outright prohibited – the use of religious depictions. The translation of the relevant passage in the Bible associated with Church critic John Wycliffe (1330-1384) reads: 'Thou schalt not make to thee a grauun ymage, nethir ony licnesse of thing which is in heuene aboue, and which is in erthe bynethe, nether of tho thingis, that ben in watris vndur erthe; thou schalt not herie tho [praise them], nether thou schalt worschipe'.[20] Sculpture, considered a 'grauun ymage', was more objectionable in theory than a two-dimensional picture, although the latter also could present a 'licnesse' that deceived and misled. Because of their great concern with 'herie' and 'worschipe', the reformers wanted to minimize the possibility of someone praying to the object itself rather than to what it represented. Such confusion seemed more likely when the representation was deceptively illusionionistic. For this reason, they regarded both actual and seeming three-dimensionality as well as colour with suspicion. But medium in itself was not of much interest, as shown by the most common Middle English word for a visual depiction being the indeterminate 'ymage'. This made particular sense at the time because many sculptures were richly painted, while paintings sometimes mimicked

[18] For the history of this cross, see Paul Binski, 'The crucifixion and the censorship of art around 1300', in *The Medieval World Routledge,* eds, Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson, London and New York: Routledge, 2001, 342-60.

[19] http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/bowers-canterbury-tales-fifteenth-century-interlude-and-marchants-tale-of-beryn ll. 147-67. For visiting cathedrals, see Conrad Rudolph, 'The Tour Guide in the Middle Ages: Guide Culture and the Mediation of Public Art', *Art Bulletin*, 100:1, March 2018, 36-67.

[20] *The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, with the Apocryphal Books, in the Earliest English Versions Made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and His Followers,* eds, Rev. Josiah Forshall and Sir Frederic Madden, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850, 1:238. The passage appears in *Exodus* 20.4–5 and in slightly different form in *Deuteronomy* 5.8–9. At this time it was counted as part of the first commandment rather than as a separate second one. For a history of the numbering, see Jonathan Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue. Religious Identity and the Ten Commandments in England, c. 1485-1625,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 28-36.

sculptural forms. In fact, distinguishing between painting and sculpture as having inherently different visual properties was not of much interest in England until the arrival of Italian art theory in the sixteenth century.[21]

The reformers clearly stated their beliefs in the 'Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards', one of their first public pronouncements, issued in the late 1390s:

> The viii. conclusiun nedful to telle to the puple be gylid [beguiled] is the pilgrimage, preyeris, and offringis made to blynde rodys [blind crucifixions] and to deue [deaf] ymages of tre [wood] and of ston, ben ner of kin to ydolatrie and fer fro almesse dede. And thow this forbidin ymagerie be a bok of errour to the lewid puple, that the ymage usuel of Trinite is most abhominable. This conclusiun God opinly shewith, comanding to don almesse dede to men that ben nedy, for thei ben the ymage of God in a more liknesse than the stok [wood] or the ston.[22]

In other words, 'blynde', 'deue', and without understanding, embodiments of the Biblical definition of idols, all religious representations were false compared to the living creations of God.[23] A needy person was 'in a more liknesse' to God than any image was, and so giving alms to a person was the correct religious response. Depictions of the Trinity were especially troubling to the reformers because, unlike those of the Crucifixion for example, they did not represent a historical event verified by Biblical narrative. The 'ymage usuel', often called the Throne of Grace or of Mercy, shows a bearded old man with a Crucifixion between his knees and the dove of the Holy Spirit hovering somewhere around them. Fundamentally false in their view, this visualisation led those who viewed it into errour.[24] Religious images such as these were a 'bok of errour to the lewid people', a wording that directly challenged the traditional idea of depictions as a book for 'the lewid'.

The passionately disputed status of images of the Crucifixion, physically and symbolically central in the fifteenth-century English church, shows how much these ideas mattered in practise. The traditional opinion was unequivocal: representations

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[21] Marjorie Munsterberg,'The Beginning of Writing about Painting in English. Chaucer to Shakespeare', *British Art Journal*, 18:1, 2017, 22.

[22]'Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards', in Anne Hudson, ed., *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings,* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978, 27. The difference between *dulia* and *latria*, using the Greek terms, is discussed immediately after the passage quoted..

[23] The definition comes from Biblical texts, notably *Deuteronomy* 4:28; *Psalms* 115:5, 135:16; *Daniel* 5:23; and *Revelations* 9:20.

[24] For fifteenth-century attitudes toward the Trinity, see Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, 544-52. Even more distressing was the version called the Vierge ouvrante, a sculpture that could be opened, revealing the 'ymage usuel' of the Trinity contained within Mary's body.

of the Crucifixion as well as related relics required *latria* just as God did.[25] As Thomas Arundel (1353-1414), Archbishop of Canterbury and a passionate opponent of the Lollards, said at the heresy trial of William Thorpe (fl. 1381–1407), 'a crucifix owith to be worschipid for the passioun of Crist that is peyntid thereinne, and is brought therethorugh into manus minde'.[26] The reformers, on the other hand, argued that the best image of God in any circumstance was a person. According to the transcript of his trial, Sir John Oldcastle (1378–1417), Lord Cobham, who was executed for heresy, expressed it physically during his interrogation. When asked if he 'will worship the crosse of Christe that he died on', he answered "Where is it?" [...] Then said the lorde, and spred his armes abroade [wide], "This is a very crosse."'[27] Similarly, one of the charges made against the Lollard Margery Baxter at her trial in 1429 was that she spread her arms out in front of a neighbor and declared that this was the true cross.[28] Bishop Reginald Pecock, a strong defender of the Church, explained the Lollards' position: 'Ech Cristen man is a perfiter and a fuller and a speedier ymage of Crist than is eny stok or stoon graued'. His denial of this claim was blunt: '[N]o Cristen man now lyuying . . . [so much resembles] the persoon of Crist in his manhode, as hath a stok or a stoon graued into the likenes of Crist hanging on a cros nakid and woundid [. . .] except whanne a quyk man is sett in a pley to be hangid nakid on a cros and to be in semyng woundid and scourgid.' This answer was a double hit on reformers, who also voiced disapproval of miracle plays.[29]

These questions and disagreements spawned an extensive – and very repetitive – literature in English during the long fifteenth century. The surviving texts include treatises, sermons, dialogues, and poetry discussing what sort of relationships worshipers should have with religious images. Most interesting for art historians are those that offer instructions in how to look, teaching those who had little or no Latin how to participate correctly in religious rituals. It is not that the ideas advanced were novel, but they had not been expressed in the vernacular

[25] Margaret Aston, 'Lollards and the Cross', in *Lollards and Their Influence in Late Medieval England,* eds, Fiona Somerset et al., Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003, 104. A contemporary text that discusses the two terms is *Dives and Pauper*, discussed below.

[26] Anne Hudson, ed., *Two Wycliffite Texts: the Sermon of William Taylor 1406*, *the Testimony of William Thorpe 1407,* Early English Text Society, no. 301, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, 57. See xlv-lix for a discussion of Thorpe and the genre of this text.

[27] Alfred W. Pollard, ed. and intro., *Fifteenth Century Prose and Verse,* Westminster: A. Constable, 1903, 125.

[28] Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428–31,* London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1977, 44.

[29] Reginald Pecock, *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, ed., Churchill Babington, London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860, 1:219, 1:221. All page numbers refer to this edition. For a sermon against miracle plays, see 'Here bigynnis a tretise of miraclis pleyinge' in *Reliquiae Antiquae. Scraps from Ancient Manuscripts, Illustrating Chiefly Early English Literature and the English Language,* eds, Thomas Wright and James Orchard Halliwell, London: John Russell Smith, 1845, 2:42-57.

before or explained for a lay audience. Those writings that supported Church doctrine tended to have a large circulation, and some of them were among the first books printed by William Caxton (c. 1422–1492) in the last decades of the century. Two very popular works present arguments in especially accessible form. The *Festial,* composed by the Augustinian canon and prior John Mirk in the late fourteenth century, contains sermons covering the major feasts of the year. The *Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, written in the mid-fifteenth century by Bishop Pecock, defends the Church against Lollard attacks with logic and reason rather than learned disputation. The Benedictine monk and celebrated poet John Lydgate wrote about looking at religious images from a traditional point of view. Finally, the anonymous prose dialogue *Dives and Pauper* (1405–10), which circulated widely in manuscript as well as print into the sixteenth century, addresses reformist challenges in the course of explaining the ten commandments. Popular poems and songs, transcripts of trials for heresy, and two personal accounts of mystical visions further document contemporary attitudes. Explanations of the positions of the reformers also survive in a variety of texts, although many are of a more miscellaneous nature.[30]

In *Festial*, John Mirk firmly defended the use of religious images.[31] He cited the centuries-old argument that representations were important because they were books for the illiterate: 'ymages and payntours ben lewde menys bokys, and I say boldly ther ben mony thousaund of pepul that couth not ymagen in her hert how Crist was don on the rood, but as thai lerne hit be sight of ymages and payntours'. Furthermore, in a direct attack on his opponents, he advised that 'the mynde of Cristis passion is the best defence agens temptacions [...] And therfor roodes and othyr ymages ben necessary in holy chirch, whateuer thes Lollardes sayn'. (171) To help the 'lewde menys' who might not be able to identify what they saw, Mirk explained some of the conventional iconography found in churches. For example, 'Margret ys payntyd othur [or] coruen wher scho ys wyth a dragon vndyr her fete and a cros yn her hond', while Mary is associated with the lily and roses. (201; 108-9) Sometimes Mirk directly contradicted what 'lewde men hauen an opynyon and sayne', such as why one of the Magi is shown turning back and with his hand up on the way to Bethlehem. It was not because he had murdered a man, as some thought, but because he was pointing to the star above them. (49) That information like this was needed gives a sense of how ubiquitous imagery was in churches as well as how uneducated the audience was. Once the subjects were understood, a preacher

[30] A useful summary is Fiona Somerset, 'Wycliffite Prose', in *A Companion to Middle English Prose,* ed., Anthony Stockwell Garfield Edwards, Cambridge: DS Brewer, 2004, 195-214.
[31] John Mirk (Johannes Mirkus), *Mirk's Festial: a Collection of Homilies*, ed., Theodor Erbe, Early English Text Society, no. 96, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd, 1905. All page numbers refer to this edition.

could use a familiar depiction to emphasize a point in a sermon or add other meanings to the usual one.[32]

But some of Mirk's sermons recount an entirely different type of engagement with religious representations. In the vivid exempla for which he was famous, he told stories taken from earlier sources such as the immensely popular *Legenda aurea* about inanimate images speaking, moving, bleeding. For example, a sermon intended to be given on Good Friday includes a dramatic episode that took place during the ritual of creeping up the nave to the Crucifixion in the front of the church. The anecdote is about a knight who encountered the murderer of his father and forgave him, after which they went to church together. 'Then, when thys knyght com crepying to the cros and kyssud the fete, the ymage losyd [loosened] his armes, and clyppyed [clasped] the knyght about the necke, and kyssyd him, and sayde thus that all the chyrch herd: I forgheue the[e], as thow hast forgeuen for me'.[33] (124) In another story, a bishop prayed for help in demonstrating the sanctity of the sacrament, and so blood from the Crucifixion above the altar dripped into the chalice. When the 'mysbeleuet' saw 'his fyngurys blody and blod rane of Cristis body into the chalis', they cried 'We beleue now fully'. (171) One of the most poignant stories is about a mother whose only son was imprisoned, and so she prayed to Mary for his release, but to no avail. Then she went to 'an ymage of our lady' in the church, and said: '"[O]ft I haue prayde [to] the[e] for delyuerance of my sonne, and am not holpen. Wherfore, so as the[e] wyll not helpe me to haue my son, I wyll take youris ynstyd of myn, tyll the[e] send myn home", and toke the ymage that was on oure lady kne[e], and bare hit home'. The next night Mary appeared in the prison, freed the son, and told him to go home to his mother and say 'as I send to hir hor sonne hole and sownde, so bryng scho my sonne'. (248) Of course such stories confirmed exactly what the reformers criticised, that worshipers were led to regard images as living, responsive presences. Sometimes representations were destroyed just to prove that they were not alive. For example, a story from the late 1380s told of two men who beheaded a discarded sculpture of St. Katherine and, when it didn't bleed, threw the pieces into the fire that was cooking their stew.[34]

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[32] Miriam Gill, 'Preaching and Image: Sermons and Wall Paintings in Later Medieval England', in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages,* ed., Carolyn Muessig, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002, 160 and 176.

[33] Discussed in Varnum, *The Church as Sacred Space*, 214-5. In the mid-1480s, William Caxton translated and published the *Golden Legend* in a multi-volume, illustrated folio edition.

[34] The incident is discussed in Sarah Stanbury, 'The Vivacity of Images: St. Katherine, Knighton's Lollards, and the Breaking of Idols', in *Images, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm in Late Medieval England: textuality and the visual image,* eds, Jeremy Dimmick et al., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 131.

Bishop Pecock's treatise *Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy* is very different in form and style from Mirk's sermons.[35] Written as a reasoned defence of the clergy and a refutation of specific Lollard attacks, the book contains arguments directed at each of the points being contested. Pecock's discussion about imagery begins by stating that the Lollard understanding of the Biblical commandment as forbidding all depictions is incorrect, contradicted in multiple places within the text itself. (137; 144-5) In any case, idolatry was not a problem because anyone would say if asked 'whether this ymage is God in heuen' that 'this ymage is not he, but that this ymage is the ymage of him'. (149, 154) Furthermore, something good and useful should not be eliminated out of fear of 'ech moral vice which myghte rise thereby'. (160) Again and again, the treatise returns to the traditional idea that visual depictions on public display aided worshipers by offering 'rememoratijf or [re]mynding signes or tokens' (154, 165; similar statements, e.g., 162, 193, 219), and the more they look like the subject, the more useful they are. (163) They also function as books for the illiterate: '[T]hei schulen not fynde men so redi for to rede a dosen leeuys [leaves] of a book to hem, as thei schulen fynde redy the wallis of a chirche peintid or a clooth steyned or ymagis sprad abroad in dyuerse placis of the chirche'. (213) And the images even benefit literate viewers because of the immense power of things seen: 'the ighe [eye] sight schewith and bringith into the ymaginacioun and into the mynde withynne in the heed of a man myche mater and long mater sooner, and with lasse labour and traueil and peine, than the heering of the eere dooth'. (212-3) In other words, visual representations fulfilled the three purposes outlined by Augustine and Aquinas (discussed above, 6), of being instructive, memorable, and affective.

Pecock, like Mirk, also conceived of a more intimate relationship between the worshiper and religious images. Unlike Mirk though, he was careful to present the depictions as decidedly inanimate. In a variation of the venerable adage that portraits make an absent friend present, he explained that '[i]t is esier forto ymagyne a thing absent to be present in an other thing lijk therto, than without eny other thing lijk therto'. (268) '[I]f the beholder ymagineth Crist to be straight abrode bodily thorough the bodi of the same ymage, heed to heed, hond to hond, breste to breste, foot to foot, –therefore the oolde practik of deuoute Cristen men was forto so ymagyne'. (269) In defence of the practise of kissing the Crucifixion on Good Friday, Pecock wrote: 'thei kessiden the feet of the ymage; not as that the feet of the ymage weren al that thei there kissiden, but that ther with thei kessiden the feet of Crist whom their ymagineden to be there in bodili maner present. [...] [T]his is doon to Cristis persoon in his manhede, which is ymagined there to be in and with the ymage crucified'. (270) He also included repeated reminders that the worshipers only should imagine an actual presence in these representations, warning that while it is acceptable to 'knele and preie and bere light and sette up candelis bifore an

[35] An interesting analysis of Pecock's place in the development of Middle English is Mishtooni Bose, 'Reginald Pecock's Vernacular Voice', in Somerset, *Lollards and Their Influence,* 217-236.

ymage, whilis these deedis ben not doon to the ymage but to God and to a Seint'. (170) Even with all of Pecock's clarifications, however, it is easy to see how these passages might cause confusion among worshipers about the status of the objects.

The writings by Mirk and Pecock are explicitly doctrinal, intended to address specifically religious issues. Very different is John Lydgate's 'Testament', a long confessional poem written during the late 1440s.[36] Memory of a painted crucifixion the narrator saw many years earlier inspired the composition, although that image only appears once in the almost 900 lines of verse. The poem opens with an allusion to the presence of Jesus in memory – 'O howe holsom and glad is the memorie/Of Cryst Iesu' – and a confirmation that he will be present in the future to pardon those who have truly repented. (I.1.1-2; I.3.17-24) The inherent limitations of the verbal are introduced at once, to explain how they prevent the communication of his nobility: 'Ther is no speche nor language can remembre,/Lettre, sillable, nor word that may expresse'. (I.8.57-8) However there is an appropriate physical action every true penitent should do, suggested in the last line of each stanza in this section, and that is to kneel before him. (Stanzas 1-30, last line) Although the admonition to kneel clearly suggests a physical image (before which one kneels), it is not explicitly evoked for another few stanzas, until the reader is told: 'Toward Iesu alwey that thow beholde,/With eyghe fyx, loke on hys vysage; Crovned with thorn'. Interestingly though, despite the command to behold, fix eyes, and look, the narrator immediately removes the depiction into the mind: 'Haue this in mende'. (I.11.83-6) There is nothing remarkable about images that are to be seen in the mind, especially for a monk, but it does eliminate a possibly controversial aspect of the topic.[37] Then the narrator's confession begins, a vivid account of his life (Section II and IV) and pleas for mercy addressed to Jesus directly (Section III). An unexpected reference to Pygmalion appears in the midst of his admission of lacking virtue when he was first in the Benedictine order. In that the work 'shewed lyfly and was made but of ston', it duplicated the spiritual emptiness of the correctly attired narrator. (IV.92.696-7) Since the reformers used Pygmalion's sculpture coming to life as symbolic of the idolatry of contemporary Church practise, Lydgate's use reclaims the story with his different meaning.[38]

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[36] John Lydgate, *The Minor Poems*, ed., Henry Noble MacCracken, Early English Text Society, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd, 1911, 329-62. All page numbers refer to this edition. For a very different approach to this poem, see John T. Sebastian, 'The Idea of Public Poetry in Lydgatean Religious Verse: Authority and the Common Voice in Devotional Literature', in *Medieval Poetics and Social Practice. Responding to the Work of Penn R. Szittya,* ed., Seeta Chaganti, New York: Fordham University Press, 2012, 95-108.

[37] The function of images in Lydgate's poetry as prompts for remembrance is discussed in Shannon Gayk, 'Images of Pity: The Regulatory Aesthetics of John Lydgate's Religious Lyrics', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 28, 2006, 175-203.

[38] For a general survey of the use of Pygmalion by English Renaissance poets, see Geoffrey Miles, ed., *Classical Mythology in English Literature: A Critical Anthology,* London and New York: Routledge, 1999, 332-6.

In the last section of the poem, 'remembrying in my later age,/Tyme of my childhode', the narrator describes seeing a painting of the Crucifixion: 'Myd of a cloyster, depicte vpon a wall,/I savgh a crucifyx, whos woundes were not smalle'. The word 'Vide' written beside the figure and the accompanying sentence instruct the viewer what to see and how to respond: 'Behold my mekenesse, O child, and leve thy pryde'. (IV.99.741-6) It is this text that the narrator now remembers. Inspired by the recollection, he decides to write 'On this word,"vide", with humble diligence,/In remembraunce of Crystes passioun,/This litel dite, this compilacioun'. (IV.100.751-3) Thus the depiction appears very much at a remove, carefully located in another place and time, and specified as two-dimensional ('depicte vpon a wall') rather than the potentially more problematic three-dimensional. Furthermore, the poem makes clear that it was the word 'Vide' written beside the picture rather than the picture itself that guided the narrator's thoughts. Once again, the effect is to carefully distance the narrator from the image while also demonstrating its traditional usefulness as an aid for memory and devotion. But then, after this careful set-up, Jesus suddenly becomes 'lifly', and speaks for the rest of the poem.[39] Entitled 'Vide', the section begins: 'Beholde, o man! lyft vp thyn eye, and see/What mortall peyne I suffre for thi trespace'. (IV.101.754-5) This is followed by more than 100 lines in which 'Behold's and 'See's direct the reader to specific details of the Passion narrative. Variants of 'like a lambe offred in sacryfice' and 'my blood I gaf [gave] in sacryfice' are repeated as the last line of each stanza. The poem ends with a final appeal for repentance: 'Kome on, my frend, my brother most entere!/For the[e] I offered my blood in sacryfice!' (IV.118.896-7) This brings the exchange between the two protagonists full circle, with the narrator's plea for forgiveness at the start of the poem answered by this plea for repentance at the close.

In its structure and content, the list of things to behold in the last section of Lydgate's 'Testament' resembles many fifteenth-century texts, especially lyrics of the type called 'Appeals to Man from the Cross'. Some of them are translations of older Latin verses or from Old English, while others are closely related to contemporary plays as well as the increasingly popular prymer or lay prayer books.[40] Typically they begin with a command that the reader look, thus transforming the reader into a viewer, and continue by pointing out things the reader/viewer should look at. One lyric begins with an appeal close to that made in Lydgate's poem: 'Vnkinde man, take hede of mee!/Loke, what peyne I suffer for the[e]' and continues with a list of things to 'Behold'. It includes: 'Behalde, the blode fra me downe rennes,/Noght for my gylt, bot for thi syness [sins]./My hende, my fete, with nayles er fest [fast]./Syns [sinews] & vayns [veins] al to-brest [burst]'. Another one of this type begins: 'Wofully araide [arrayed],/My blode, man,/For thee

[39] Lydgate wrote other poems in this genre, such as *Minor Poems*,'Cristes Passioun', 216-21,'The Dolerous Pyte of Chrystes Passioun', 250-2, and 'A Prayer upon the Cross', 252-4.
[40] Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968, 77. For the relationship to the prymer, see Alexandra Barratt, 'The Prymer and Its Influence on Fifteenth-Century English Passion Lyrics', *Medium Aevum,* 44:3, 1975, 264-79.

ran,/It may not be naide [denied];/My body blo and wanne,/Wofully araide./Beholde me, I pray thee'. Physical details are frequently graphic, as in these lines: 'With panys my vaynys constreyned to crake' or 'Of sharpe thorne I haue worne a crowne on my hede,/So paynyd, so straynyd, so rufull, so red'.[41] One such text, filled with 'take hede's and 'behold's, can be found on a page in the mid-fifteenth century English manuscript called the Carthusian Miscellany (BL Additional 37049). The page (f. 68v) contains a meditation on the Passion divided into the seven hours of prayer, with an illustration of the scene for each section. They suggest the sort of visualisations that these poems were to create for their readers.[42]

      Dives and Pauper (1405-10), an immensely popular dialogue about the ten commandments, is the most interesting of these texts for art historians. In the course of explaining the Decalogue, the anonymous author presents Church doctrine while addressing reformist challenges to it. In this way, many issues important during the period are brought up without necessarily being answered with traditional explanations. Especially some of the positions taken in relation to visual imagery come very close to those advocated by the Lollards. Also like their writings is the importance given to how to look at religious images and the fact that the work was written in English. These characteristics indicate that the concern is with practise and behaviour rather than abstract theological issues. The procedure it describes resembles those discussed above in being so specific that it might be called looking without seeing, looking only to find particular visual details which set off learned responses in the viewer. But, and this is the aspect of the argument that suggests Lollard ideas, empathetic identification with the figures represented in ways different from that taught by the Church is specifically and repeatedly rejected. These frequent warnings to worship in front of rather than to an image have the effect of distancing what is seen. In this way, *Dives and Pauper* objectifies the visual depictions to a greater degree than is found in most contemporary texts.

      The speakers in *Dives and Pauper* are a rich layman Dives (or 'rich' in Latin, often used in Christian writings as a name for such a figure) asking a poor but religiously educated Pauper (possibly meant to be a Franciscan cleric) questions about the commandments. The dialogue begins with Pauper reassuring Dives that his wealth does not bar him from being a good Christian. Then they take up the commandments in their Biblical order, which puts the contentious issue of visual representation first. Dives begins by observing that although the Bible seems to forbid making and using religious images, he sees it being done all around him. (1:81) This is one of the most fundamental challenges that the Lollards brought against the church, and it allows Pauper to explain the Church's answer: 'God

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[41] Carleton Brown, ed., *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939, 158; 156-8.

[42] For an extended analysis of this page in the 'Carthusian Miscellany', see Marlene Villalobos Hennessy, 'Passion Devotion, Penitential Reading, and the Manuscript Page: "The Hours of the Cross" in London, British Library Additional 37049', *Mediaeval Studies*, 66, 2004, 213-52.

forbedys nought vttyrly makyngge of ymagis but he forbedith vtterly to makyn ymagis to wurshepyn hem as godys'. In response, Dives offers the extreme Lollard opinion: 'I wolde they weryn brent euerychon'. But Pauper disagrees and presents the long-established Church position of images having three uses: 'They seruyn of thre thynggys. For they ben ordeynyd to steryn manys mende to thynkyn of [religious topics] [...] Also they be ordeynyd to styren mannys affeccioun and his herte to deuocioun, for often man is more steryd be syghte than be heryng or redyngge. Also they been ordeynyd to been a tokene and a book to the lewyd peple, that they moun redyn in ymagerye and peynture that clerys redyn in boke'. He cites the letters from Pope Gregory as his authority. (1:82-3)

   With the legitimacy of religious images established, Dives moves to the proper use of them. This was a crucial question since the answer might determine whether the viewer was guilty of idolatry, and here the text comes closest to presenting a Lollard position. Continuing the allusion to books, Dives asks how he should 'rede in the bok of peynture and of ymagerye'. (1:83) Pauper answers here and elsewhere that the priest provides the correct model of response: 'He knelyth, he staryth, he lokyth on his book, he heldyth vp hese hondys and for deuocioun in caas he wepyth and makyth deuowte preyerys'. (1:86) But, and Pauper stresses this point again and again, he spoke 'nought to the ymage that the carpenteer hath mad and the peyntour peynted [...] for that stok or stoon was neuere king'. (1:89) Dives wonders, however, if when 'meen knelyn aforn the ymage [...] for they staryn and lokyn on the ymage wyt wepyngge eyes. they heldyn vp here hondys, they bunchyn here brestys [...] they doon it to the ymage'. Pauper is firm: 'Yf they doon it to the ymage they synnyn wol heyliche in ydolatrie [...] But as I seyde ferst, they moun doon al this aforn the ymage and thow nought to the ymage'. (1:85-6) Pauper also defines the appropriate attitudes to take, using the theological terms *latria* and *dulia* and, after a lengthy and sometimes contradictory discussion, translates the words as 'adoracyon' and 'veneration'. (1:102; 1:107-9) The first '[be]longyth only to God [...] [while the other] is a seruyse & a wurshepe comun to God and to creature[s] resonable and intellectuel, that is to seyne, to man, womman and aungel'. When the 'dyuyn seruyse that is clepyd [called] latria [is given] to ony creature, to ony ymage, or ony forme or figure, he dooth ydolatrye'. (1:102)

   Dives then asks Pauper to 'teche me yet a lytyl betere to knowe this tokene & to redyn this book'. (1:91) In answer, Pauper outlines two different methods of looking at visual images. The less complicated one is identification in terms of iconography. Like Mirk and Pecock, Pauper explains at length how to recognise and understand some of the most popular subjects. For example, saints 'haue dyuerse figurys in her handys & other placys for dyuerse vertues and martirdomys that tho seyntes suffredyn & haddyn in her lyfs'. Thus 'Seynt Petyr is peyntyd wyt keyis in his hond in tokene that Crist betoke Seynt Petyr the keyis of holy cherche and of the kyngdam of heuene'. (1:91-2) Margaret is explained as she was by Mirk, recognised by the dragon under her feet and the cross in her hand. Some aspects of physical appearance are symbolic, such as 'alle the apostelys been peyntyd barefoot in tokene

of innocencye and of penaunce'. The 'rounde thynggys that been peyntyd on here hedys [...] betokenyn the blisse that they han wytouten ende, for as that rounde thyng is endeles, so is here blisse endeles'. (1:93-4) There also was the question of how one could know the appearance of things that were unseen, and generally symbolism provided the answer. Angels, for example, have no bodies, but are depicted as beardless young men to show that they are eternal and always mighty and strong. Their wings 'been also peyntyd fedryd and wyt wenggys in tokene of lyghtheid [...] for in a twynck of oon eye they moun been in heuene and in erthe, here and at Rome and at Iherusalem'. (1:95) This larger topic of how to represent holy beings leads Dives to remark that he supposes that 'seyntys inn herthe weryn nought arayid so gay, wyt shoon of syluer and clothys of gold [...] ful of brochis and rynggys and precious stonys, as here ymages been'. Interestingly, this is one of the only questions that Pauper turns away: 'Lete sueche woordys pasyn at this tyme, and speke we of sumqhat ellys more to purpoos'. (1:100-1)

The other way of looking is explained most fully in relation to the Crucifixion, as always central. Representations of this subject gave the priest as well as worshipers 'a special mende makyng of Cristys passioun, and therfore he hath aforn hym a crucifix to doon hym han the more fresh mende as he owyth to han of Cristys passioun'. (1:86-7) Then Pauper lists specific details to look at, each one of which should inspire particular thoughts in the viewer. Most of them are introduced with the phrase 'Take heid be [by] the ymage' which places more emphasis on the object as well as the cognitive action taken by the viewer in relation to that object than do the single imperatives 'Behold' or 'See'. The top of the figure comes first: 'Take heid be the ymage how his hed was corownyd wyt the garlond of thornys tyl they wentyn into the brayn and the blod brast out on euery syde'. This sight should 'destroyth the heye synne of pryde'. Pauper then proceeds down the 'naked and pore' body to explain how to think about the outstretched arms, nailed hands, wound in the side, body, nailed feet. For example, contemplation of the nailed hands which 'stremedyn on blode' should recall both Adam and Eve and all the other sins 'of wyckydde dedys and wyckydde werkes that meen and wommen doon wyt here hondys'. Sight of the nailed feet should 'destroyin the synne of slaughte [sloth] in Godys seruyse'. Finally, using a well-established trope, Pauper says: 'as Seynt Bernard byddyth, take heid be the ymage how his heide is bowyd doun to the[e], redyn to kysse the[e] and comyn at on wyt the[e]. See how hese armys and hese hondys been spred abrod on the tree in tokene that he is redy to [...] kyssyn the[e] and takyn the[e] to his mercy'.[43] Of course, this action is just what did happen in the story about the knight in Mirk's *Festial*, but animation most definitely does not happen here. The figure is shown as 'redy' to take action, but not more. Even the sort of imaginative identification explained in Pecock's treatise is not suggested. And again and again the same warning is given, which further

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[43] Sara Lipton traced the history of this in '"The Sweet Lean of His Head": Writing about Looking at the Crucifix in the High Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 80:4, 2005, 1172-1208.

emphasizes the physical object: 'thanke thin God that wolde doon so mechil [much] for the[e], and wurshepe hym abouyn alle thyngge, nought the ymage, nought the stok, stoon ne tree, but hym that deyid on the tree for thin synne and for thin sake, so that thu knele, yf thu wylt, aforn the ymage nought to the ymage [...] for it seeith the nought, it heryth the nought, it vnderstondyth the nought'. (1:83-5)

Each 'take heid be the ymage' in *Dives and Pauper* functions as a pointer to one essential visual detail in the depiction, followed by what the viewer should think about while looking at it. The garland of thorns should destroy the sin of pride, the nailed hands remind of the sins done with hands, and so on. These elements are not what is needed to envision 'how Crist was don on the rood', although they sometimes are that too. Rather they are selected to guide the viewer to a more intense affective experience. The visual work only matters for its significant parts and they are what structures the viewer's response. This resembles the late medieval devotional practise of concentration on individual elements instead of the whole of the Crucifixion or the Passion narrative. Manuscripts include pictures that only show details, like the Five Wounds or the Arma Christi. Sometimes they include a small kneeling figure, modeling the correct response of the reader/viewer. Similar prompts also existed on the scale of church wall paintings intended to instruct viewers how to worship. Some included the visual equivalent of all the instructions to take heed, using arrows to point to the details on which the viewer should concentrate. Others added lines to connect the visual elements to a viewer, showing good and bad responses.[44] All of these aids led viewers to a conventional, learned response.

Two remarkable writings in English by the female mystics Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe describe versions of the mental process involved in such directed viewing. Part of a larger development of late medieval contemplative writing in the vernacular, these texts can be understood as guides to devotional practise for religious as well as lay audiences.[45] Each woman identifies a physical

[44] Hennessy, 'Passion Devotion', discusses this in relationship to manuscript pages. A detailed study can be found in *The Broken Body. Passion Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture,* eds, Alasdair A. MacDonald et al., Groningen: Egbert Forstein, 1998. Some of the best preserved of these paintings are in Danish parish churches, such as the depiction of the rich and poor man praying in Astrup Church, Falster, Denmark. Very visible red lines extend from the mouths of the two worshippers to the focus of their prayers. For the poor man, that is the five wounds shown in the figure of Jesus standing between them, while for the rich man it is a money chest and other inappropriate things. This example is illustrated and discussed in Soren Kaspersen, 'Wall Paintings and Devotion: The Impact of Late Medieval Piety on Danish Murals' in *Images of Cult and Devotion: Function and Reception of Christian Images in Medieval and Post-Medieval Europe*, ed., Soren Kaspersen, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2004, 205, fig 13b. Another wall painting showing the same subject survives in the Eastern Archway, Härnevi church, Uppsala, Sweden, illustrated in http://christermalmberg.se/pictor/kyrkor/harnevi.php

[45] For discussion of Julian's writings in terms of possible audiences, see Diane Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing. Works by and for Women in England, 1100-1500,* Cambridge and Malden:

object as the initial inspiration for at least some of her visions, and then outlines the progress from that start to the full revelatory experience. Julian explained hers in terms that resemble the three categories of sight posited by Augustine and repeated in Church writings for centuries.[46] Julian wrote that her visions occurred:

> by bodily syte, and by word formyd in myn understondyng, and be gostly sight. For the bodily sygte, I have seid as I saw, as trewly as I can; and for the words, I have seid them rith as our Lord shewid hem to me; and for the gostly syght, I have seyd sumdele, but I may never full tellen it, and therefore of this syght I am sterrid to sey more as God will give me grace. (148; Chap 73)

The first is what she saw in the physical world, the second is defined by words in her mind, and the third described as spiritual, not yet fully told. In Augustine's terms, these correspond (albeit not exactly) to the corporeal, the spiritual, and the intellectual, or knowledge gained from the eyes, knowledge from dreams and the imagination, and an intuition of divine truth based on rational understanding. Kempe, by contrast, also acknowledged different kinds of sight, but it made little difference since 'sche saw owr LC Jhesu as verily in his sowle wyth hir gostly eye as sche had seyn beforn the crucifixe wyth hir bodily eye'.[47] (Chap 78, ll. 4438-40) In effect, she bypassed the physical object almost entirely, leaping immediately from a visual prompt to her affective experience of it.[48]

Polity Press, 2007, 108-15. For an account of the historical development as well as explanations of particular techniques used in this sort of devotional literature, see Liam Peter Temple, 'Returning the English "Mystics" to their Medieval Milieu: Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe and Bridget of Sweden', *Women's Writing*, 23:2, 2016, 141-58, and Barbara Newman, 'What Did It Mean to Say "I Saw"? The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture', *Speculum*, 80:1, Jan 2005, 1-43, esp. 29-33 about Kempe and Julian, 7 n. 14, 35.

[46] Barry Windeatt, ed., *Julian of Norwich. Revelations of Divine Love, The Short Text and the Long Text*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. He discusses the question of the relationship between the two texts, xix-xxiv. All page numbers refer to this edition. Augustine's argument is explained and placed in the context of its medieval use in Hahn,'Visio Dei', 171.

[47] Lynn Staley, ed., *The Book of Margery Kempe*, TEAMS, Middle English Texts Series, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996. All text citations refer to this edition. https//d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/staley-the-book-of-margery-kempe

[48] The idea that the 'beholder's share' in the late medieval period was affective, not perceptual, is discussed at length in Jeffrey F. Hamburger, 'Seeing and Believing. The Suspicion of Sight and the Authentication of Vision in Late Medieval Art and Devotion', in *Imagination und Wirklichkeit: zum Verhältnis von mentalen und realen Bildern in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit*, eds, Klaus Krüger and Alessandro Nova, Mainz: P. von Zabern, 2000, 47-69. Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary. Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval*

Julian of Norwich was a well-known anchoress, visited in her cell at St. Julian's Church by many, including Margery Kempe. While seriously ill in 1373, she had sixteen visions that were written down later in a short version and then in a long version, usually called *Revelations of Divine Love* or *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich.* Julian's visions began as she lay dying and her curate came to her. As was common practise, he held up a crucifix and

> sett the cross before my face and seid, "I have browte thee the image of thy maker and saviour. Louke thereupon and comfort thee therewith". [...] I assented to sett my eyen in the face of the crucifix if I might, and so I dede [...]. After this my sight began to failen, and it was all derke about me in the chamber as it had be night, save in the image of the cross, wherein I beheld a comon light. (31-2; Chap 3)

Then 'sodenly' (a word often used to introduce visions) 'I saw the rede blode trekelyn downe fro under the garlande, hote and freisly, plenteously and lively, right as it were in the time of his passion that the garlande of thornys was pressid on his blissid hede'. (33; Chap 4) Beginning with the blood and the crown of thorns is like the description of the Crucifixion in *Dives and Pauper* as well as the religious lyrics that deal with this subject, all quoted above. But despite the intense physicality of what she sees, she makes it clear that it exists in another time and place. Not only did her 'sight began to failen' but she specified that the scene was 'as it were in the time of his passion'. This combined with 'sodenly' places the vision firmly within her imagination.

Julian's account repeatedly distinguishes between bodily and ghostly sight, but the imagery associated with both is creative and fresh, especially in terms of shape and colour.

> [I]n ghostly sight I saw the bodyly sight lesting of the plentious bledeing of the hede. The grete dropis of blode fel downe from under the garland like pellots [pellets] semand as [if] it had cum out of the veynis, and in the comeing out it were browne rede, for the blode was full thick, and in the spredeing abrode it were bright rede, and whan it come to the browes, than it vanyshid; notwithstondying the bleding continuid till many things were seene and understondyn.

She continued to develop these images:

> The plentioushede is like to the dropys of water that fallen of the evys [eaves] after a great showre of reyne, that fall so thick that no man may

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Germany, New York: Zone Books, 1998, has much relevant material, including about Julian, 322; 363-5.

> numbre them with bodily witte. And for the roundhede [roundness], it were like to the scale[s] of heryng [herring] in the spreadeing on the forehead. These iii come to my mynde in the tyme: pellotts, for roundhede in the comynge out of the blode; the scale of heryng, in the spreadeing in the forehede, for round-hede; the dropys of evese, for the plentioushede inumerable. This shewing was quick and lively and hidouse and dredfull, swete and lovely. (39; Chap 7)

At subsequent points, the reader is reminded of the presence of the sculpted crucifix. However, it is not that the image itself comes alive as it does in all those popular stories and lyrics, but that it serves as a stimulus for an inner vision of the divine. Whether or not the clear separation between the two realms was a response to contemporary reformist criticisms, it provides a constant reminder that Julian was not describing what was in the physical world in front of her.

As is characteristic in late medieval devotional texts, Julian described the crucified body with especially vivid details.[49]

> And after this I saw, beholding the body plentiously bleeding in semes of the scorgyng, as thus: the faire skynne was brokyn ful depe into the tender flesh with sharpe smyting al about the sweete body; so plenteously the hote blode ran oute that there was neither sene skynne ne wound, but as it were al blode. (49; Chap 12)

The description of the changing colour in Jesus's face as he died is especially striking:

> I saw his swete face as it was drye and blodeles with pale deyeng; and sithen more pale, dede, langoring, and than turnid more dede into blew, and sithen more browne blew, as the flesh turnyd more depe dede. For his passion shewid to me most propirly in his blissid face, and namly in his lippis. There I saw these three colowres, tho that were aforn freshe, and lyvely to my sigte. (56; Chap 16)

Although Middle English had plenty of terms for colours, and both paintings and sculptures of the time were brightly coloured, they rarely appear in visual descriptions.[50]

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[49] For essays about this topic, including discussion of the visions of Julian of Norwich, see *The Broken Body*.

[50] See, for example, the colours listed in Mark Clarke, ed., *The Crafte of Lymmyng and the Maner of Steyning. Middle English Recipes for Painters, Stainers, Scribes, and Illuminators*, Early English Text Society, original series, no. 347, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. But her mention of colours here might be conventional since similar descriptions can be found in

Kempe's book is very different. Often read today as an autobiography, it is described in the manuscript itself as a 'schort tretys'. (Prologue, l. 1; 113) Probably dictated to a scribe during the late 1430s, the text recounts many instances of direct communication with a variety of holy figures as well as God. Only sometimes does she indicate whether the image was seen with her 'bodily eye' or a vision seen with her 'gostly eye'. The stimulus might be something as apparently unrelated as a man on the street with 'a wownde' that reminded her of the Passion or a boy who reminded her of 'Crist in his childhoode'. (28.1586; 35.2011-3). Such sights could cause 'plentyouws terys and boystows sobbyngys, wyth lowde cryingys and schille schrykyngys'. (44.2514-6) Not everyone appreciated these responses, despite the fact that there were many examples of similar actions by women especially in Christian devotional practise. In Kempe's case, the outbursts might last for hours, and the behaviour earned her criticism and even banishment from particular churches.[51]

The Booke of Margery Kempe describes Kempe's visions and actions in the third person. In this way the text models the response, physical and emotional, that a devout worshiper might have as well as the response those watching might have. This places her very much in the physical world, her actions presented as being between a tangible visual element and a watching audience existing in the same time and place. For example, when

> sche cam into a fayr cherch wher sche behelde a crucyfyx was petowsly poyntyd and lamentabyl to beheldyn, thorw whech beheldyng the Passyon of owr Lord entryd hir mende, wherthorw sche gan meltyn and al to relentyn be terys of pyté and compassyown. Than the fyer of lofe kyndelyd so yern in hir hert that sche myth not kepyn it prevy, for, whedyr sche wolde er not, it cawsyd hir to brekyn owte wyth a lowde voys and cryen merveylowslyche and wepyn and sobbyn ful hedowslyche that many a man and woman wondryd on hir therfor. Whan it was ovyrcomyn, sche goyng owt at the chirche dore, a man toke hir be the sleve and seyd, "Damsel, why wepist thu so sor?" "Ser," sche seyd, "it is not yow to telle." (46.2606-15)

She only needed to 'behelde a crucyfyx' and the Passion 'entryd hir mende', which led directly to loud cries and weeping.

Another dramatic incident occurred in response to her seeing a sculpted pieta in a Norwich church:

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other mystics. See, for example, Temple, 'Returning the English "Mystics"', 146-7, for Bridget of Sweden.

[51] For a detailed essay on the topic, with notes that provide a guide to the immense scholarly literature, see Vibeke Olson, 'Blood, sweat, tears, and milk: "Fluid" veneration, sensory contact, and corporeal presence in medieval devotional art', in Emily Kelley and Elizabeth Richards Rivenbark, eds, *Binding the Absent Body in Medieval and Modern Art: 'Abject, virtual, and alternate bodies',* New York: Routledge, 2017, 11-31, and for Kempe, 22-4.

[S]che went to the cherch […] sey a fayr ymage of owr Lady clepyd [called] a pyté. And thorw the beholdyng of that peté hir mende was al holy ocupyed in the Passyon of owr Lord Jhesu Crist and in the compassyon of owr Lady, Seynt Mary, be whech sche was compellyd to cryyn ful lowde and wepyn ful sor, as thei sche schulde a deyd.

When a priest in the church objected to her loud cries, remarking 'Damsel, Jhesu is ded long sithyn,' Kempe replied (once her crying had ceased): 'Sir, hys deth is as fresch to me as [if] he had deyd this same day'. (60.3491-8) As had happened with the 'petowsly poyntyd' crucifix, it was the act of 'beholdyng' alone that inspired her to be 'holy ocupyed in the Passyon'. She only needed to see enough to identify the subject as a pieta for her to experience the historical event as if it were in the present.[52] The appearance of the work, beyond being referred to with the common phrase 'fayr ymage', is irrelevant. It's hard to imagine that Kempe would have cared whether she was looking at a German pieta replete with details of suffering or a less expressive pieta, because she saw the subject of the representation rather than the object, and her response was to that subject. Even the use of 'fayre' in the phrase 'fayre ymage' most likely relates to the beauty of Mary rather than to anything about the work. It is an epithet often used to describe one of her fundamental characteristics.[53]

These vivid descriptions of religious experiences that were guided by visual objects could not be more different from how the Lollards wrote about imagery. Where the established church saw the ability of a visual representation to engage a worshiper as one of its major purposes, the reformers saw those same qualities as lures to commiting idolatry. To their mind, the details the traditional viewer was trained to notice were actively dangerous, enticements away from what should be the true focus of worship. Instead the reformers concentrated on three very different aspects of the images: that they were physical objects made by human hands, that the cost of their materials took money from the poor, and that they deceived with illusion, colour in particular increasing lifelikeness. All three of these things – the making, the materials, and the deception – shifted attention away from the depiction as a means of educating or inspiring a worshiper to the object itself. This also caused the maker rather than the viewer to become the person of most importance.

The first idea, that all religious images are made by people using natural materials, was fundamental to reformist views. Repeatedly, the processes by which

[52] Kempe also responded this way to the sight of an actual mother with her child. For discussion of all three responses as well as a guide to the extensive literature on this topic, see Laura Varnum,'The Crucifix, the Pietà, and the Female Mystic: Devotional Objects and Performative Identity in *The Book of Margery Kempe*', *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, 41:2, 2015, 208-37.
[53] For example, see Mirk, 302, where the "wondur fayre ymage of our lady" causes a Jew to convert.

the representations were made was used to define the objects. For example, during the examination in 1407 of the Lollard priest William Thorpe, both Thorpe and his questioner Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, presented depictions as the result of specific acts. Thorpe said: 'the keruynge, the setynge [casting], neither the peyntynge of ymagerie with mannus hond [...] owith not be worshipid'. In their defence, the Archbishop said it was 'a greete moovynge of deuocioun to men to haue and to bihoolde [...] images [...] koruen, soten [cast], and peyntid'. For Thorpe though, nobody 'shulde triste that there were ony vertu in suche ymagerie maad with mannys honde; and herfore no liif shulde avowe to hem, neither seche hem, ne knele to hem, ne bowe to hem, ne preye to hem, neither offren ony thinge to hem, ne kissen hem, ne encense hem'.[54] This is the same list that appears so often in *Dives and Pauper* and is one of the ways in which that dialogue comes close to Lollard positions. The new focus on the human hand inevitably led to consideration of the spiritual status of the person engaged in 'the sinful and vain craft of painting, carving, or casting'. That was not the focus of attention until the middle of the next century, however, and by then the *Book of Common Prayer* was clear: 'Cursed is the man that maketh any carued or molten image, [...] the worke of the handes of the craftesmanne'.[55]

The act of making was blasphemous, but the use of rich materials made it even more reprehensible. Attacks on the use of luxury materials appeared repeatedly in Church history, and reflected a constant concern with the tangible riches accumulated by the Church and its clergy.[56] These attacks gained new intensity among fifteenth-century reformers. For example, in the Lollard text called a 'Tretyse on ymages', the anonymous author wrote: 'men erren foul in this crucifixe makyng, for thei peynten it with greet cost, and hangen myche siluer and gold and precious clothis and stones theronne and aboute it, and suffren pore men, boughte with Cristis precious blode, [...] that shulden be holpyn by Cristis lawe with this ilke tresour that is thus veynnely wastid on thes dede ymagis'. And again, 'Dere Lord! what almes is it to peynte gayly dede stones and rotun stokkis with sich almes that is pore mennus good and lyfelode'.[57] In the same spirit, many also criticized the rich ornamentation found in churches and suggested that its true purpose was to attract pilgrims and generous donors. For example, the author of *The Lanterne of Light*, a Lollard work that appeared in about 1410, wrote in a long section about the material church: 'Manye bilden wowis [walls] & pilars of the chirche. thei vndirputten schynyng marbel stoones. the beemes glistiren al in gold. the auters ben

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[54] Hudson, *Two Wycliffite Texts*, 56-7; 60.

[55] Quoted in Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, Thrupp, Stroud: Sutton, 2004, 275.

[56] The presence and problem of luxury materials is one of the themes of Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality. An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*, New York: Zone Books, 2011, 58-65 for example.

[57] The text is included in Hudson, ed., *Selections*, Selection 16, 83; 85.

dyuerseli araied with preciouse stoones. but of the mynystris of God ther is no choice'.[58]

Although the Bible as read by the reformers identified the three-dimensional image as the most dangerous sort of representation, their concern was really with any sort of deceptive visual illusion. Kathleen L. Scott has argued that these concerns caused the slowness with which perspective and other Italian Renaissance artistic techniques were adopted in England, and that they resulted in Lollard manuscripts having no illustrations at all.[59] More generally, the idea that 'simple' styles might have been used in both England and the Continent to diminish the likeness of representations has been suggested by a number of scholars. A less complicated image will communicate its content to less educated viewers more directly than one that distracts with the possible ambiguities of sophisticated visual techniques. The same is true of professionally-applied colour. Michael Baxandall, for example, suggested that the absence of painted colour on the wooden sculptures of Tilman Riemenschneider (c. 1460–1531) was a deliberate artistic choice intended to avoid accusations of idolatry. 'The monochrome medium is like black-and-white engraving in that it declares itself as a convention, not fully identifiable with the actual person or event.' In this way, it reduces any empathetic connection the viewer might feel with the image.[60]

Lollard writers definitely regarded colour as an especially troubling element of visual depictions. As the author of *The Lanterne of Light* explained: 'The peyntour makith an ymage forgid with diuerse colours til it seme in foolis iyen as a lyueli creature'.[61] This probably refers to the painting of a statue, but the particulars were not of great concern to the writer, whose attention was on the convincing illusion rather than the medium. And it was the 'diverse colours' that completed the trickery. Or, as it was explained in a contemporary sermon: 'A peyntur penteth now [h]is ymage with white colours, now with blake, now with red colours, now with mydle colour aftur that it be-commes ye ymage'.[62] Similarly, the Lollard Margery Baxter said in 1429 at her trial for heresy: 'Lewed wrightes [workers] of stokkes

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[58] Lilian M. Swinburn, ed., *The Lanterne of Lizt,* Early English Text Series, original series, no. 151, London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1917, 37.

[59] Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts, 1390-1490,* London: H. Miller Publishers, 1996, 1:44-7. See Rebecca Wilson Lundin, 'Rhetorical Iconoclasm: The Heresy of Lollard Plain Style', *Rhetorical Review,* 27:2, 2008, 131-46, for the argument that this extended to their writing style too.

[60] Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors*, 186. Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, 246-8, summarizes some of the specific arguments made by art historians for such uses of a 'simple' style. Maurice Howard, *The Tudor Image,* London: Tate Gallery, 1995, 24, discusses the possibility in relation to Tudor portraits. The popularity of hand colouring prints suggests that the color made them seem more lifelike, or at least more appealing.

[61] *The Lanterne of Lizt,* 84.

[62] Woodburn O. Ross, ed., *Middle English Sermons,* Early English Text Society, original series, no. 209, London: Oxford University Press, 1940, 283.

hewe and fourme suche crosses and ymages, and after that lewed peyntors glorye thaym with colours'.[63] Of course she did not regard this glorying of them as good, but rather as another way in which they were objectionable. Brightly shining colours might even make the image 'delectable', but that too was not desirable. In the lengthy narrative poem about St. Katherine by John Capgrave (1393–1464), the saint rejects even a 'fayre' statue of her 'for thow it were to the syth [sight]/Ful delectable, with coloures schynyng bryth [bright]', it will 'profyth' neither her life nor her soul.[64]

The idea that colour made an image seem more lifelike has a long history in the west.[65] Both Plato (c. 428–c. 347 BCE.) and Aristotle (384–322 BCE.) mentioned it, perhaps the earliest Greek writers to do so. In the *Statesman* (277c-d), for example, Plato introduced it as an analogy:'Our discussion might be compared to a picture of some living being which had been fairly drawn in outline, but had not yet attained the life and clearness which is given by the blending of colours'. One of the countless later examples found in classical writers is by Plutarch (c. 46–c. 120), writing in *Moralia*: 'in pictures, colour is more stimulating than line-drawing because it is more life-like and illusionistic, and creates an illusion'.[66] The Church Fathers developed this idea into a favorite analogy. One of the earliest to use it was Origen of Alexandria (c. 185–c. 253), who likened the process to salvation: 'this preliminary sketch in outline is found to prepare the way for the laying on of the true colors of the painting; so, in a measure, an outline and sketch may be traced on the tablets of our heart by the pencil of our Lord Jesus Christ. [...] [T]o those who possess in this life a kind of outline of truth and knowledge, shall be added the beauty of a perfect image in the future'. John Chrysostom (347–407) likened it to the change from Judaism to Christianity: 'For as in a painting so long as one draws the out-line marks, it is a sort of shadow: but when one has added the bright painting and laid in the colours, then it becomes an image. Something of this kind also was the Law'. This idea that Judaism was the underpainting or the sketch, which the rich colours of Christianity not just displaced but obliterated, became a defence of pictures.[67] Thus the Lollard distrust of colour was yet another issue on which they opposed what the church had supported for centuries.

[63] Tanner, *Heresy Trials*, 44.

[64] https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/winstead-capgrave-life-of-saint-katherine-book-5, 5.499-502.

[65] I am indebted to Professor Daniel Sherrin for introducing me to much of this material.

[66] Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato,* tr. Benjamin Jowett, 3rd ed., New York, 1937, 2:304. Plutarch, quoted in Wesley Trimi, *Muses of One Mind. The Literary Analysis of Experience and Its Continuity,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983, 316. Aristotle also assumed a two-step process, as for example his comment that painters 'first of all sketch in the figure of the animal in outline, and only after that go on to apply the colours'. Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, tr. Arthur Leslie Peck, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943, 225 (743b).

[67] Origen, *De principiis*, 2.11.4, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04122.htm; John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom*, [etc.], London: W. Smith, 1883, 210-11. This

These arguments about the proper role of religious imagery continued without pause into the sixteenth century, albeit with a shockingly abrupt change in the protagonists. In 1534, the disputes between Rome and King Henry VIII culminated in a complete break when Parliament declared that the King was the Supreme Head of the Church of England. Suddenly attitudes toward visual imagery that had been regarded as dissident only a few decades earlier, even leading to the execution of some of their Lollard proponents, became the official positions of the new Church. And what had been defended by the traditional church during the fifteenth century as legitimate uses of visual representation became arguments confined to Rome and the Catholic church, excluded from power in England except during the brief reign of Queen Mary. Although the development was not continuous in terms of politics or religion – it was not the Lollards who formed the Church of England – the positions adopted in relation to religious imagery were remarkably similar. This is clear from the first statement of doctrine issued in 1536 by the Church, the so-called *Ten Articles*, which included restrictions about imagery and pilgrimages. The strictures were made much stronger in 1538 (quoted above, 4) and extended to all possible types of behaviour. Another official list from the same year stated that there was to be no 'decking of images with gold, silver, clothes, lights, or herbs; nor the people kneel to them, nor worship them, nor offer candles, oats, cake-bread, cheese, wool, or any such things to them,[...] only to behold, or look upon them, as one looketh upon a book'.[68] Just as the reformers had written repeatedly.

The main points made by each side in this new round of public disputes were the familiar ones. So, for example, the well-known Elizabethan sermon called 'The Homily Against the Peril of Idolatry and Superfluous Decking of Churches', first published in 1563 and a vigorous defense of the Church of England, brings an impressive range of historical texts to prove that 'the corruption of these latter days [which] hath brought into the church infinite multitudes of images [...] and glorious decking of the temple [...] have thereby greatly hurt the simple and the unwise, occasioning them thereby to commit most horrible idolatry, and the covetous persons [to worship] [...] not only the images but also the matter

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development is discussed in Herbert L. Kessler,'"Pictures Fertile with Truth": How Christians Managed to Make Images of God without Violating the Second Commandment', *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 49/50, 1991-2, 53-65. The idea of the important part of a painting being the colour, which obliterated the drawing beneath, gained new relevance with the controversies around sixteenth-century Venetian painting.

[68] '[Nicholas] Shaxton's Injunctions for Salisbury Diocese, 1538.' in *Visitation Articles*, Item 14, 2:57.

of them, gold and silver'.[69] The defences of Catholic practise included the well-established arguments of images being needed for devotion, used as books for laymen, and properly approached with either *dulia* or *latria*, depending on what they represented. The exiled English Catholic priest Nicolas Sanders (c. 1530–1581), for example, attacked the Protestants for hypocrisy in his *Treatise of the Images of Christ* (1567), since 'he that hath pulled down Christes Image, and the Signe of his healthfull Crosses in all Churches and Chapels [...] setteth foorth unto us a most bawdy [inappropriate] spectacle' by including printed images of 'Antiques and Gorgons' in books. Therefore, 'one who speaketh against good Images, and in his face permitteth nawghty [wicked] representations: as though God had only forbidden the good Images to be made, and had only alowed the euil'.[70]

Even if these sixteenth-century texts advance the same arguments, some of the language indicates that the debates occurred in a new context. For example, Thomas Bilson (1547–1616), Bishop of Winchester and a fierce supporter of the Church of England, wrote in a treatise published in 1585:

> [M]an himselfe is a perfecter and truer Image of Christ than any can bee made with hands, [...] [I]f [anything] ought should be worshipped in the painted and carued Images of Christ, it must be the matter, or the forme. The matter is wood, stone, brasse, siluer or some other metal: in which is no religion. The forme is nothing but the skill and draught of the crafts-man, proportioning a shape not like vnto Christ whom he neuer sawe, but as his owne fansie leadeth him: and in that case you worshippe not the similitude of our Sauiour, but the conceite of the maker. [...] And since no man boweth to the workman, why should you kneele to the work of his handes?[71]

These are the same points that Lollard writers had advocated more than 150 years earlier. The idea that people are 'a perfecter and truer Image of Christ' than anything made by human hands is very familiar. So is the emphasis on the material matter from which the image is made. And because an image represents something

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[69] *The Book of Homilies. A Critical Edition,* ed., Gerald Bray, Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2015, 217-8. A useful collection is David J. Davis, *From Icons to Idols: Documents on the Image Debate in Reformation England,* Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2016.

[70] Nicholas Sander [sic], *Treatise of the Images of Christ*, London, 1567, 166r, 167. Discussed in David J. Davis, *Seeing Faith, Printing Pictures: Religious Identity during the English Reformation*, Leiden: Brill, 2013, esp 61-8.

[71] Thomas Bilson, *The true difference betweene Christian subiection and unchristian rebellion* [etc], Oxford, 1585, Early English Books Online, Phase 1, 'The Fovrth Part', 557, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A16152.0001.001:1:11?rgn=div1;view=fulltext

the maker had never seen – the favorite reformist example of this case being the Trinity – it cannot convey religious truth to the viewer.

But there also are important differences between the Lollard pronouncements from the previous century and Bishop Bilson's text. In his formulation, the work is now a 'forme' which results from 'the skill and draught of the crafts-man, proportioning a shape' that comes from his 'fansie' and 'conceite'. This maker who uses skill, draught, fancy, and conceit is worlds away from the Lollard Margery Baxter's 'lewed wrightes' and 'lewed peyntours' (quoted above, 25-6). Instead the 'crafts-man' resembles the poet described by Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586) in his *Apologie for poetrie* (c. 1580; publ. 1595) as someone who 'onely bringeth his owne stuffe, and dooth not learne a conceite out of a matter, but maketh matter for a conceite'. Or the description of Henry Howard (1517–1547), Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503–1542) given by George Puttenham (1529–1590) in *The Art of English Poesie* (1589): 'the two chief lanternes of light to all others that haue since employed their pennes vpon English Poesie, their conceits were loftie, their stiles stately, [...] their meetre sweete and well proportioned'.[72] Explicitly likening the poet to the painter, a well-established classical trope that was used by many Elizabethan authors, even appeared in some contemporary religious texts. In the published exchanges between John Jewel (1522–1571), Bishop of Salisbury and the Catholic priest Thomas Harding (1516-1572), Jewel cited Horace (65-8 BCE.), Cicero, and Plato, among others, to prove that both painters and poets are liars. This showed conclusively that the image was an unreliable source of knowledge.[73]

This new concept of the artist as a uniquely gifted creative figure had developed in Italy within a lively humanist discourse about poetry and the nature of art. During the late fifteenth and sixteenth century, these ideas spread rapidly through Europe, reaching England by the mid-sixteenth century. One of the most influential sources was the immensely popular *Il Libro del Cortegiano* (1528) by Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529), in which he argued that knowledge of the arts and the ability to analyse visual art in particular were essential attributes of a gentleman. It appeared in England almost at once in its original Italian text, and was published in an English translation by Sir Thomas Hoby (1530–1566) in 1561.[74] The book offered by specific example a new way to write about visual objects in English. It was not that the earlier religious methods of analysis were modified, but that they became entirely irrelevant. In all manner of poetry, plays, and prose, Elizabethan

[72] Philip Sidney, *An apologie for poetrie*, London, 1595, Early English Books Online, Phase 1, np, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A12224.0001.001/1:5?rgn=div1;view=fulltext and George Puttenham, *The arte of English poesie*, London, 1589, Early English Books Online, Phase 2, 1.31, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A68619.0001.001?view=toc

[73] John Jewel, *The Works*, ed., Richard William Jelf, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1847, 2:660.

[74] Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier, The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano,* University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1996.

writers assumed that a visual image, now defined first of all in terms of medium, was a work of art and its maker was an artist. But the full richness of the Italian discussion took longer to travel north. It was not until the publication in 1598 of the (partial) translation by Richard Haydocke (c. 1570–c. 1642) of *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura et architettura* by Gian Paolo Lomazzo (1538–1600), that writing about art in English finally caught up with developments in Italian Renaissance art theory. This new language, which included a vocabulary and methods of visual analysis as well as a tendentious history of western art, became the primary way of writing about art in English by 1600. It continued to hold that place for the next two centuries.[75]

Marjorie Munsterberg – now an independent scholar, she has been studying writing about art in English since her dissertation (Columbia, 1983). Her most recent articles are: 'The Beginning of Writing about Painting in English. Chaucer to Shakespeare', *British Art Journal*, 18:1, 2017, 12-25, and 'The Beginning of British Art Criticism in the 1760s', *British Art Journal*, 15:1, 2014, 82-94. More information can be found on her website, http://writingaboutart.org/pages/abouttheauthor.html

mmunsterberg@gmail.com

[75] For a summary of this history, see Munsterberg, 'The Beginning of Writing about Painting in English', 12-25.