Ian Johnson

VERNACULAR VALORIZING:
FUNCTIONS AND FASHIONINGS OF LITERARY THEORY IN MIDDLE
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF AUTHORITY[1]

This is a chapter about functions and reconfigurations of vernacularized literary theory, deriving from a learned tradition of commentary on the Bible and *auctores,* and found in the prologues and self-exegesis of translators of authoritative materials. But the concern here is not confined just to demonstrating the presence of such theory (prologue paradigms, scholastic literary roles, etc.).[2] Rather, the focus is on some turns taken by

[1] I am grateful to the Medieval Institute and to the Symposium Organizer, Jeanette Beer, for the generous hospitality which made it possible for this paper to be given. I am also grateful to Wendy Vacani and Julian Crowe for their help in translating one computer dialect into another.

[2] The highly important tradition of the scholastic prologue has attracted considerable modern scholarly attention. The conventional headings of the *accessus,* under which a text *of* an *auctor* was appraised - *utilitas* (the utility/value of a work), *intentio* (intentionality), *nomen libri* (title), *modus agendi* (procedure/style), *ordinatio/forma tractatus* (structure and order of materials), *nomen auctoris* (name, life [*vita auctoris*]. and status of the author), *materia* (sources/subject matter) - were accorded a range *of* vernacular equivalents and significantly influenced the terminology and ideology of English translators' prologues. The fourteenth century saw this tradition being modified and sharpened up by an Aristotelian scheme founded on the universally applicable philosophical grid *of* the Four Causes. Thus, the efficient cause (*causa efficiens*) was the author; it could be *duplex,* e.g., God and Man, priest and Holy Ghost. The material cause (*causa materialis*) was the subject matter/sources of a work. The formal cause (*causa formalis*) was the form (structure, style, and literary procedures). The final cause (*causa finalis*) was the objective of text and author, thereby equating with *utilitas* and *intentio* from the earlier tradition. For more detailed discussion and examples of the scholastic literary prologue and literary roles see A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar Press, 1984), pp. 9-39, 73-117, 160-65; Richard W. Hunt, 'The Introductions to the 'Acres' in the Twelfth Century," in *The History of Grammar in the Middle Ages: Collected Papers,* ed. G. L. Bursill-Hall (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1980), pp. 117-44; *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c. 1100-c. 1375*: *The Commentary-Tradition,* ed. A. J. Minnis and A. Brian Scott with the assistance of David Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), pp. 12-36; Ian Johnson, "Prologue and Practice: Middle English Lives of Christ," in *The Medieval*

theory as mediated in and by English culture, and in particular some attempted "clinching moments" of self-exegesis; in other words, some of the belaborings, preoccupations, trumpetings, and self-conceptions that stand our scenically, obtrusively, or insistently in the rhetorico-hermeneutic topography of paratextual discourse.

To express hesitancy as to one's fitness for the task was a hallmark of the decorous medieval translator. A particularly intriguing case of ostensibly genuine misgivings is to be found in the *prefacyon* to a fifteenth-century Carthusian meditative Life of Christ, the exegetical, moralizing, and prayerful *Speculum Devotorum*.[3] Its compiler tells us a valorizing tale, claiming that he was discouraged to the point of repeatedly considering abandonment of the whole project not only on account of his own spiritually slight *vita auctoris* but also because St. Bonaventure had written a Life of Christ:

> Also I haue be steryd ofte tymys to haue lefte thys bysynesse bothe for my
> vnworthynesse & also for Bonauenture a cardynal & a worthy clerke made
> a boke of the same matere the whyche ys callyd Vita Christi. (p. 2)

The *Speculum Devotorum* is in the tradition of the mighty *Meditationes Vitae Christi,* an intimidating impediment to his Englishing and a precedent to be matched.[4] The

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Translator: The Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages, ed. Roger Ellis (Cambridge: Brewer, 1989), pp. 69-85; and Ian Johnson, 'The Late-Medieval Theory and Practice of Translation with Special Reference to Some Middle English Lives of Christ" (Ph.D. diss., University of Bristol, 1990), esp. pp. 49-159. For discussion of one of the most elaborate vernacularizations of the Aristotelian prologue in Middle English see Ian Johnson, "Tales of a True Translator: Medieval Literary Theory, Anecdote and Autobiography in Osbern Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen,"* in *The Medieval Translator* 4, ed. Roger Ellis and Ruth Evans (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1994), pp. 104-24.

[3] *The Speculum Devotorum of an Anonymous Carthusian of Sheen, Analecta Cartusiana* 12-13, ed. James Hogg (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1973-74). I am very grateful to have had. access to James Hogg's typescript introduction to his edition. Subsequent references are found in the text. For discussion of this work see Johnson, "Prologue and Practice," pp. 75-80; and Johnson, "Late-Medieval Theory and Practice of Translation," pp. 286-386.

[4] The standard edition of this work is still to be found in *Opera Omnia Sancti Bonaventurae,* vol. 12, ed. A. C. Peltier (Paris: Ludovicus Vives, 1868), pp. 509-630. For a modern edition of the Passion-section see *Meditaciones de Passione Christi olim Sancto Bonaventurae attributae.* ed. Sister M. Jordan Stallings (Washington D.C.:

compiler's choice of the word *vnworthynesse* refers not only to his literary deficiencies but also to his moral fallibility: he cannot hope to match up to "a cardynal & a worthy clerke," who is not only scholastically but also morally and spiritually superior, with a hagiographic *vita auctoris* to buttress his works. Note the use of the term *matere* from the scholastic prologue, here referring to the subject-matter of the *vita* and to the meditative *matere* of the tradition of thinking on the Sacred Humanity, a broader conception than that of the single textual source. Ironically, the oft-pious word *steryd* denotes abandonment, not pursuit, of a devotional task.

Worse than having to compete with Bonaventure is having to reckon with an English Carthusian predecessor, for the monk of Sheen was stirred to give up "most of alle whenne I herde telle that a man of oure ordyr of charturhowse had I turnyd the same boke into englyische" (p. 2), a reference, presumably, to Nicholas Love's *Mirrour*.[5] It sounds as if the news came to him as a rather unpleasant surprise after he had started his work. Whether or not after this he managed to see or read the *Mirrour* is not certain. It would, though, be a little strange if this famous and much circulated Carthusian vernacular work, licensed and mandated against Lollardy by Archbishop Arundel himself, and extant in more manuscripts than any other English prose text of the fifteenth century, was completely unseen by the monk of Sheen.

Catholic University of America Press, 1965). For discussion of the huge influence of this work see Johnson, "Late-Medieval Theory and Practice of Translation," pp. 160-65; Elizabeth Salter, *Nicholas Loves "Myrrour of the blessed lyf of Jesu Christ," Analecta Cartusiana* 10 (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1974), pp. 39-46; *Smaointe Beatha Chriost .i. lnnsint Ghaelge a chuir Tomás Gruamdha Ó Bruacháin (fl. c. 1450) ar an Meditationes vitae Christi,* ed. Cainneach Ó Maonaigh O.P.M. (Dublin: Institúid Árd-Léighinn Bhaile Átha Cliath [Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies], 1944), English appendix pp. 325-26; and Michael G. Sargent, "Bonaventura English: A Survey of the Middle English Prose Translations of Early Franciscan Literature," in *Spätmittelalterliche Geistliche Literatur in der Nationalsprache, Analecta Cartusiana* 106:2 (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1984), pp. 145-76, esp. 148-54.

[5] Nicholas Love, *The Mirrour of the blessed lyf of Jesu Christ: A Translation of the Latin. Work Entitled Meditations vitae Christi,* ed. Lawrence P. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908). The standard study of this work is Salter, *Nicholas Loves "Myrrour."* For an examination Love as translator in the light of academic literary theory see Johnson, "Late-Medieval Theory and Practice of Translation," pp. 160-285. See also Michael G. Sargent's new critical edition of the *Mirrour, Nicholas Loves Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* (New York: Garland, 1992).

Had he actually looked at Love's *Mirrour,* he would have seen a confident bid for vernacular canonicity buttressed by a comprehensive repertoire of anglicized terminology drawn from Latin prologue paradigms, and naturalized into idiomatic phraseology, whether Love is advertising his own activity or, as here, assessing a tradition/source. The *matere,* with its "pleyne [full and comprehensible] sentence" (p. 8), is "fructuouse." The *utilitas* is the profit to be gained in stirring to the love of Jesus and the edification of simple souls:

> The whiche scrip cure [i.e., biblical text] and writynge [i.e., parabiblical commentary, hagiography, devotional matter] / for the fructuouse mater ther of sterynge specially to the loue of Jesu / and also for the pleyne sentence to comune vnderstondynge / semeth amonge othere souereynly edifienge to symple creatures. (p. 8)

"Fructuouse mater" indicates simultaneous consideration of *materia* and *utilitas.* Love as a rule inter-relates and collocates paradigm categories *ad hoc* as it suits his discussion. There is a similar fluency in combining prologue categories in Love's discussion of his own activity, for example, the care he takes to point out, concerning the *ordinatio/forma tractatus,* that the work may be read according to the days of the week or the church year (pp. 12-13).

One particularly arresting transformation of theory in this *proheme,* however, is the rhetoricizing show that Love makes out of constructing the *translatio* (and I mean that in the senses of both *translation* and *metaphor/transference)* that he enforces on the name of the book.[6] He makes a considerable display in bestowing the new tide-metaphor of *The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ* on the *Meditationes Vitae Christi,* a bestowal highlighted by the decorous marginal gloss "Nomen libri", the appropriate category from

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[6] For further discussion of Love's *nomen libri,* medieval theory of imagination and mirtor-titles, see Johnson, "Late-Medieval Theory and Practice of Translation," pp. 237-44. For an informative study of mirror-titles in medieval and Renaissance culture see Herben Grabes, *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-imagery* in *Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance,* trans. Gordon Collier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). See also Ritamary Bradley, "The Speculum Image in Medieval Mystical Writers," in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition* in' *England,* ed. Marion Glasscoe (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1984), pp. 9-27.

the scholastic prologue. In his new tide, Love seeks to embody the character and *sentence* of his work, as the "suspense-laden" *gradatio,* which constitutes the uncovering of the new name, aims to declare:

> And so for as moche as in chis book ben conteyned dyuerse ymaginaciouns of cristes lyf: the which lyf fro the bygynnyng in to the endyng euermore blessed and with outen synne / passynge alle lyues of alle othere seynres / as for a synguler prerogatyf may worthely be cleped the blessed lyf of Jesu Crist. The whiche also be cause that it may not be fully discryued as the lifes of other seyntis / but in a maner of lickenes as the ymage of mannis face is schewed in the mirrour: therfore as for a pertynent name to this book it may skilfully be cleped the mirrour of the blessed lyf of Jesu Crist. (pp. 9-10)

Exposing and expounding his *titulus* bit by bit with unreluctant rhetorical delay, this exposition marks the climax of the materials original to Love which precede his Englishing of the pseudo-Bonaventurean *proheme.* The language of dialectic, i.e., "synguler prerogatyf" and "skilfully," helps to impose the new name. Argument and syntax are only satisfactorily resolved by the announcement of the full tide, which is a distillation of, and micro-commentary on, the work that follows. At this point it may be recalled that the *Catholicon* defines (chapter) headings ("capitula") as capturing and containing in brief some of the worthwhile teaching to be found in the chapter ("breviter capiant et contineant aliquam sententiam").[7] What Love is doing coincides with this: by a process of argument and definition his title does indeed capture and contain the *sententia* of the source. The "lyf" is "blessed" because it surpasses the lives of all other "mere" saints: this recapitulates the main assertion of the opening passage of Love's *proheme* that "souereynly the wordes and the dedes written of oure lord Jesu crist" predominate amidst all other "ensaumple of vertues and good lyuyng of holy men writen in bookes" (p. 7).

But Love is not satisfied to halt at calling his work "the blessed lyf of Jesu crist." The term "mirrour" is applicable because the life in its supreme excellence and

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[7] John of Genoa, *Catholicon,* s.v. *capitulum* (Mainz, 1460; repr. Westmead: Gregg, 1971), unfol. For the importance of this work in the Middle Ages see Nicholas Orme, *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1973), p. 93.

incarnational mystery may not be fully described, unlike the lives of other saints. The mirror metaphor, then, is used, somewhat paradoxically, to advertise, on one hand, the veracity of the work to the *Vita* and, on the other, its inevitable insufficiency. The work has an imaginative *modus agendi* of "maner of lickenes," which is necessary because the divine nature of Christ and other ghostly substances integral to the *Vita* cannot be represented unless by fleshly imaginations, which humans can refract through what they "kyndely knowe." The temporally-bound *kynde knowynge* which constrains the human imagination allows only for an insufficient notion of the divine to be implanted in the soul, with all the incompleteness of the mirror-image instead of the complete reality. A further imaginative insufficiency born of necessity involves the provisional sundering of the divinity from the humanity. In instructions prefacing the commencement of the Passion the readers are told to "depart in manere" (p. 216) the godhead from the manhood, but to do so only for the time being. Thus might they meditate on the Passion, even though, it is asserted, it would be false to declare that the manhood was ever at any time parted from the godhead. To sum up, Love's choice and *translatio* of vernacular title for the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* is his most overarching and concentrated *expositio sententie per aliam linguam* (to invoke the authoritative contemporary definition of translation from the *Catholicon).*[8] For him, though the literal sense of the original title and its *matere* is "meditaciouns of cristes lyf" (p. 8), the *sentence* of the work is the *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ.*

The repackaging of biblical *matere* embodied in the metaphorical reworking of Love's *nomen libri* would doubtless have infuriated the Wycliffites, for whom the only real mirror worth looking at was the "speculum voluntatis" of God, Holy Writ itself.[9] The Lollard Bible was fighting for the same audience as the *Mirrour,* but with a very different strategy. Whereas Love's readers are enabled by a licensing directive to meditate on the Sacred Humanity under the careful supervision of a priest-translator, the Lollard Bible readers are presented, in the General Prologue to the second version of the Wycliffite Bible, with a take-away home exegesis kit (complete with instructions for fourfold exegesis, Tyconian rules, figurative language, *caritas* and all), each and all of which

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[8] Catholicon, s.v. glosa, unfol.

[9] John Wycliffe, *De Veritate Sacme Scripturae,* ed. Rudolf Buddensieg, 3 vols. (London: Trübner, 1905-07), 1: 377.

attempt to empower vernacular readers as autonomous interpreters of Holy Writ.[10] Fourteen long chapters belabor such enabling precepts, yet modern attention generally focuses on the final chapter dealing with the business of the translation itself. We should not regard these chapters as just a rather long run-up to the wicket of Chapter 15. On the contrary, many of the Lollards' most important concerns and contentions are elaborated therein, especially their approach to teaching biblical reading and interpretation.

Though the translators flouted the ecclesiastical establishment, they were all the more dangerous for their impeccable exegetical orthodoxy, particularly their insidious brandishing of the Augustinian doctrine of charity as a *modus agendi* and final cause of reading and translating the Bible and their equally Augustinian conception of the New Testament as readily comprehensible to all:

> Therfore cristen men and wymmen, olde and zonge, shulden studie fast in the newe testament, for it is of ful autorite, and opyn to vndirstonding of simple men, as to the poyntis that be moost nedeful to saluacioun; and the same sentence is in the derkiste placis of holy writ, whiche sentence is in the opyn placis; and ech place of holy writ, bothe opyn and derk, techith mekenes and charite; and therfore he that kepith mekenes and charite hath the trewe vndirstondyng and perfectioun of al holi writ, as Ausryn preuith in his sermoun of the preysing of charite. Therfore no simple man of wit be aferd vnmesurabli to studie in the text of holy writ. (p. 2)

This co-opting of Augustine as Spin-Doctor of the Church owes much to, and is buttressed by, Augustine's presence in Lyre's *Postillae,* for Lyre's quotations and expansions of the Saint furnish the General Prologue with key material.[11] These are the

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[10] For this prologue see *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 Wyc!iffe and his Followers,* ed. Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850), 1: 1-60. For a modern edition of the final chapter of this prologue see "Prologue to Wycliffite Bible, Chapter 15," in *Selections from English Wyc!iffite Writings,* ed. Anne Hudson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 67-72. Quotations from the final chapter are cited from Hudson.

[11] This is acknowledged, for example, in Forshall and Madden: "Heere Lire rehersith the sentence of seinr Ausryn, and of Isidre in these reulis, and declarith hem opinly bi holy

key contentions. Anything expressed darkly outside the New Testament is stated openly within it: "the same sentence is in the derkiste placis of holy writ, whiche sentence is in the opyn placis" (p. 2). Here the governing exegetical concept is that of the so-called *sententia litterae,* according to which the literal sense, as revealed in the "opyn placis," is the basis for elucidating the deeper understanding of the "derkiste placis" of the text.[12] This deeper understanding by its very nature coalesces with *caritas,* because it is born of "charite." Thus, charity and biblical meaning dovetail with one another and ate within the grasp of all. For the Lollards' Carthusian rivals, the compilers *of* the *Mirrour* and the *Speculum Devotorum,* there is a different version of reader-enablement based on textually stimulated thinking on the Sacred Humanity, which is intended to continue after reading. As meditative translations the *Mirrour* and the *Speculum Devotorum* aim to render not just edifying *matere* but to translate into the soul of the reader a portable and permanent *modus agendi* with which to establish a post-textual devotional relationship with Christ or*,* as the *Speculum Devotorum,* playing on the term "drawe" ("translate"), puts It:

> Thowgth hyt be schotdy seyde here vndyr a compendyus manyr, zyrr hyt may be drawe ful loonge in a soule pat can deuoutly thynke & dylygently beholde the werkys of oure Jorde that be comeynyd therinne. (p. 146)

Translation and meditative exposition in writer and reader alike attempt to capture and ingenerate *sentence.* The Wycliffite Bible, on the other hand, claims a twin exegetico-spiritual foundation and directive of *translatio auctoritatis* and *translatio caritatis.*

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scripture and resoun, and countrith not Austin, but declareth him ful mychel to symple mennis witt; and addeth more bi scripture and resoun, that Austin touchith not" (p. 55)

[12] Hugh of St. Victor made a famous distinction that stratified three levels of textual meaning, whereby the "letter" (*littera*) involved linguistic construction, the *"sense"* (*sensus*) was the straightforward, open meaning, and the *sententia* was a deeper level of understanding requiring an effort of exposition or interpretation; see *Didascalicon* iii.8, ed. Charles H. Buttimer (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1939), p. 58. By the time of Nicholas of Lyre, there is increased emphasis on the *sententia litterae,* "the profound meaning of the literal sense." For illustration of Nicholas of Lyre's development of exegetical tradition see the importam article by M. B. Parkes, "Punctuation, *or* Pause and Effect," in *Medieval Eloquence: Studies* in *the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric,* ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California *Press,* 1978), pp. 127-42, esp. 131-32.

Charite puts originary force into vernacular culture and makes an exegete of the reader in the best Lyrean-Augustinian fashion, thereby challenging and expropriating the Latin ecclesiastical establishment's ownership and control of authoritative discourse. That *charite* could mean and do so much in English and do so with such potently Augustinian sanction was incendiary, to say the least.

By the time that Chapter 15 is reached, the emphasis is not on the empowerment of the self-starting charitable reader but on the valorization of the translators themselves. This is done on the basis of their scholarly and ethical credentials and their invocation of divine grace, each of which is held to inform the very performance of their translating. This final chapter self-exegetically justifies the genesis of the English Bible by parading all the best scholarly literary attitudes. The gathering and consultation of experts and commentaries, especially Lyre (the most prestigious and authoritative exegete of the literal sense), the attention to linguistic difficulties, the willingness to correct, the recourse to *originalia,* to *Hebraica Veritas* and the moral living and *charite* of the translators themselves (echoing and appropriating the *accessus*-category of *vita auctoris)* all play their parts.[13] Only then will "pe Holi Spiryt, autour of wisdom and kunnyng and tcupe, dresse him [the translator] in his werk and suffre him not for to erre."[14] The strategic bid for enhanced efficient causality through the intervention of divine grace is present in the implication that the translators are subject to being helped to full cognition by God: "God of his grete merci zeue to vs grace to lyue wel and to seie pe tcupe."[15] This does not mean that the Lollard translators are mystically inspired, yet the grace sheds light on what the human mind is attempting to judge.[16]

Concomitant strategies concerning efficient causality, in a different form, solve decorously the problems of the self-doubting Carthusian of Sheen, who, it will be recalled, considered abandoning the completion of the *Speculum Devotorum* altogether. First, *auctoritas* and responsibility are piously offloaded onto his Prior, whom he consults

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[13] See Hudson, "Prologue," passim. For discussion of the important concept of *originalia* (works of *auctores* in complete form) see Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship,* pp. 153-59; and J. de Ghellinck, "'Originale' et 'Originalia'," *Bulletin du Cange* 14 (1939): 95-105.

[14] Hudson, "Prologue," p. 71.

[15] Hudson, "Prologue," p. 69.

[16] For a short summary of Augustinian attitudes towards such illumination see Frederick C. Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy* (London: Methuen, 1972), pp. 36-37.

with his qualms: "he ful charytably confortyde me to parforme hyt wyth sueche wordys as cam to hys mynde for the tyme" (p. 3). Care is taken to show the Prior's correct attitude to the production of devotional texts. The Prior does what he does "ful charytably," with a loving intention, thus blessing the book with the purity and authority of his own *entent,* which, by virtue of his office and his personal spirituality, raises the level of authority higher up the scale of efficient causality than that which could be offered by the writer alone. The avowed instrumentality of the compiler is further underscored by his choice of the term "parforme" to describe his literary role. Revealingly, he later refers to himself three times at least as the "fyrste wrytare" of the meditations (pp. 5, 11, 21), that is, a mere *scriptor,* as Bonaventure put it - the lowest form of medieval literary role.[17] But by requiring that the prayers go in aid of the *"fyrste wry tare"* he is ensuring that they benefit him 9.nd do not go astray to any scribe who might copy his work in the future.

The compiler is also "sumwhat bore vp" by the advice of others and the merits of those who are intended to profit from the work:

> And so on the mercy of god trustynge to whom ys no thynge vnpossyble wyth drede of my vnkunnynge & vnworthynesse, also sumwhat bore vp be the conseyil of goostly faders & the merytys of hem that be pe mercy of god mowe be profytyd be my sympyl traveyle in sueche tymys as I mygth traueyle be my conscyence wythoute letrynge of othyr excersysys and othyr dyuerse occupacyonys & letryngys that mygth falle in dyuerse wysys I thowgth be the grace of god to make an ende therof, & so an the laste oure lorde of hys mercy zaf me grace as I hope to parforme hyt. (pp. 3-4)

Written as part and parcel of actual monastic duties, the *Speculum Devotorum* displays an authorized and "real-life" *vita auctoris.* Again, as with the Wycliffites, it is necessary to have the "grace of god" to "parforme" the work (p. 3). There is also another intriguing aspect to the conception of the efficient causality of the *Speculum Devotorum.* Its fruitful future reception helps teleologically to pull it into being, for its readers' merits impart a finally causal efficiency of their own. So, the actual production of the text is not just a

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[17] For discussion of Bonaventure's definition see Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship,*

matter of authorial push but also readerly pull. Further justifications for carrying on with the work are provided by the exculpatory purity of *entent* of the compiler and by the celebrated precedent of four beneficially complementary treatments of Christ's life in four different but divinely ordained gospels (pp. 4-5). The superabundant *sentence* of the *Vita* cannot be contained in anyone version, therefore this further version is permissible and even useful.[18] Perhaps, in the end, the Carthusian of Sheen does feel he can *quyte* Love at least a little, for he constructs his own title in a manner not dissimilar (p. 5), thereby positioning his work at the commanding and canonical heights of all human discourse. Though an enormous claim, it is no more than orthodox, correct, and credible.

In drawing together some of the threads of these attempted so-called clinching moments, it seems that all three texts aim to bestow vernacular autonomy and authority on themselves and their reception-lives. Each self-exegetical moment, however, stresses a different yet related aspect of textual production, mediation, or reception, invariably drawing on and rhetorically exploiting chosen materials from traditional academic literary theory to give it resonance. Such invocation and deployment of theory helps theory in its turn to keep its puissance by virtue of its being accorded a prominent profile in highly valued textual activities of considerable cultural power. Thus the Wycliffites emphasize their own application of the doctrine of *charite,* their access to grace and efficient causality, and their correct array of academic literary attitudes and procedures- all of which combine to make not just vernacular Bibles but also vernacular Bible readers. Through a theoretical sensibility the *Speculum Devotorum* justifies its genesis. Though its writer feels pressured by the *Mirrour* and the *Meditationes Vitae Christi,* he is able to resort inventionally to a version of grace and efficient causality refracted though the social relationships and transactions of monastic life, in which God, his first reader the "gostly syster" (p. 1), the rest of his readers, and his Prior all have their agency in the production and validation of the work. These agents of his text are also act ants in his autobiographical paratext, his moralized *vita auctoris/compilatoris.* The compiler's literary transactions seem real, however affectedly conventional some of them may be. He uses the overlap between conventions of conduct and of authoritative discourse. His paratext is a zone of transaction and translation between the text and the outside world,

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pp. 94-95.
[18] For further discussion of this matter see Johnson, "Late-Medieval Theory and Practice of Translation," pp. 313-24; and Johnson, "Prologue and Practice," pp. 73-76.

between theory and praxis. Final, Nicholas Love, wishing to embody and enforce the meditativeness, *auctoritas* and generic sovereignty of his work, exploits a theoretical category when he renders its *nomen libri* anew, a sign of conformity to pseudo-Bonaventurean priorities and the particular ecclesiastically driven vernacular exigencies of his day.

All three texts attempt to structure reader access to, and ingestion of, biblical *sentence.* As bids for cultural sites, they inter-relate and compete in varying ways. The Wycliffite Bible is an outright challenge to ecclesiastical authority. Its fight is not so much with the Latin Bible and *Latinitas* but with texts such as Love's *Mirrour,* which, with its anti-Lollard polemic and its added coda of a treatise and prayer on the Eucharist, seeks to control the same ground. The theory invoked by both books serves a vernacular directive, the biblical enablement/containment of those without Latin. Ironically, Love's enormously successful *Mirrour* probably prevented an allied text, the *Speculum Devotorum,* from getting much of a hold in late medieval codices. The two meditative Carthusian *Vitae Christi* were just too similar. Sometimes, however, a text aims to match or displace another text that is palpably dissimilar in genre or even in content - as is the case with the *Mirrour's* claim to outdo the different but related genre of saints' lives. John Walton's voguish verse Boethius overgoes Chaucer's prose *Boece,* matching its *sentence* by recourse to Nicholas Trevet's commentary and exceeding it in the field of eloquence by being rendered in lofty stanzaic form.[19] More complexly, though, Walton reveals in his preface that he is competing not so much with another Boethius as with Chaucer's

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[19] See Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae,* trans. John Walton Canon of Oseney, ed. Mark Science, EETS, *o.s.,* 170 (London: Oxford University Press, 1927). For demonstrations of Walton's use of the commentary of Trevet and his use of exegetical methodology see A. J. Minnis, "Aspects of the Medieval French and English Traditions of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae,"* in *Boethius: His Life, Thought, and Influence,* ed. Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), pp. 312-61, esp. 343-47,350-51; Rita Copeland, "Rhetoric and Vernacular Translation in the Middle Ages," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 9, ed. Thomas J. Heffernan (Knoxville: New Chaucet Society, 1987), pp. 41-75, esp. 57-62, 66-75; Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 145-49; and 1. R. Johnson, "Walton's Sapient Orpheus," in *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of De Consolatione Philosophiae,* ed. A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewet, 1987), pp. 139-68, esp. 144-54, 165-68.

Troilus by disparaging its (or its narrator's) anti-Boethian unenlightenment.[20] Similarly, Osbern Bokenham, in his hagiographic *Legendys of Hooly Wummen,* serves up a complement to Chaucer's *Legend of* [merely] *Good* [pagan] *Women.*[21] Moreover, in what is conceivably a moralized *translatio* of the *Canterbury Tales,* he postures as a pilgrim-translator, journeying laboriously through devout textual duties as if he were visiting the shrines of the saints concerned. In Bokenham's version of pilgrimage-literature his tales display no Chaucerian variety, being reverentially similar and univocally rehearsed with pardon-seeking predictability by a sturdily non-fictional pilgrim-compiler.

We have, with Bokenham, further extraordinary transformation of literary theory, used to valorize not so much his sources as his own work, the theory being intertwined with autobiography and petition. Refracting one theoretical discourse through another, he produces an intriguing three-levelled *expositio* of the *littera, sensus,* and *sententia* of the Aristotelian Four Causes and applies them garrulously and autobiographically to his own literary activity (lines 1-240). He tells us under consideration of the formal cause (lines 107-22) how he gathered his sources when he went on a pilgrimage to Italy (and how the local wine-sellers fleece pilgrims). While expounding the final cause (lines 123-74) he relates his motivation for translating the Life of St. Margaret: she saved him from a tyrant and a nasty end in a Venetian fen. In the same prologue (esp. lines 1-28) he draws on the earlier tradition of prefatory *circumstantiae,* which he uses to gloss the Four Causes.[22] So,

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[20] Walron, *Boethius, Prefacio Translatoris,* stanza 8. See Johnson, "Walton's Sapient Orpheus," pp. 159-63; and Johnson, *"This Brigous Questioun:* Translating Free Will and Predestination in Walton's *Boethius* and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde," Carmïna Philosophiae* 3 (1994): 1-21, for discussion of Walton's competition with Chaucer.

[21] Osbern Bokenham, *Legendys of Hooly Wummen,* ed. Mary S. Serjeantson, EETS, o.s., 206 (London: Oxford University Press, 1938). For more detailed discussion of Bokenhaim's use of theoretical attitudes, see generally Johnson, "Tales of a True Translator."

[22] The tradition of making prologues and appraising texts according to a scheme ofj *circumstantiae* is most notably associated with Remigius of Auxerre and owes its origins to ancient rhetoricians' belief char anything subject to discussion could be examined by a series of questions: "who" (the author), "what" (the actual text), "why" (the objective of the text), "in what manner" (in what fashion the work was composed), "where" (the place it was written), "when" (the rime of composition), and "whence/by what means" (the matter from which the work was composed). Nor all headings would always be deployed, as is the case with Bokenham, who simplifies the schema down to "what" and "why." See Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship.* pp. 16-17, 19; Copeland, *Rhetoric,*

Aristotelian discourse is seen to confirm and elaborate the discourse of *circumstantiae,* which in turn encompasses and distils the Aristotelian. Furthermore, in that his paratext contains not only explication and valorization of his *matere* but also petitions and prayers for his own sake, it could be said that his "mainstream" hagiographic narrative is marginalized and becomes the threshold into a centralized text of prayer, thereby reversing the text/paratext relationship. Concomitantly, the women saints who are the ostensible *matere* become efficiently causal in the production of the work, for their aid is routinely invoked. It is in the paratext where Bokenham, his female "patrons," and his readers have their transactions with the saints (for succor, pardons, etc.); so his display of theory here may be seen as a form of decorum, bordering perhaps on reverential ritual.

To conclude, vernacularized theory, a palpable and flexible system of criteria, helps vernacular culture toward textual self-articulation and toward enhanced sophistication and reflectiveness in textual production and reception. It helps to bestow autonomy and value and foster forms of rivalry/complementarity, not only with regard to Latin culture but also with regard to textual inter-relationships and sitings within vernacular culture. Such theory can also, perhaps, be seen not just as empowerment of the vernacular but also as the export of ideological capital by the source-superculture on its own agenda. The directive for disseminating such vernacular texts as sermons, preachers' handbooks, devotional works, hagiography, and Lives of Christ such as Love's *Mirrour* comes frequently from above and outside. So, when Boethius is apparently "appropriated" by English culture, should we not say also that English culture has Boethius visited upon it and is accordingly "Boethianized," "Virgilianized," "Bonaventureanized," "rebiblicized," even "latinized" from outside? The interaction of the priorities of source-culture and target-culture have a homologue in the dialectic between the rhetorical and hermeneutic aspects of translations as both reworkings and exegetical interpretations. When it comes to making texts, both hermeneutics and rhetoric, for all the ostensibly innocent coherence and neutrality of their learned provenance, have to negotiate "loaded" *sentence* as conditioned by the individual contingencies of particular texts. The various theoretical forms and turns these dealings assume in paratexts specify and valorize transactions whereby the translator packages his text for the outside world and whereby the outside world, in the form of the reader, passes

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Hermeneutics, and Translation, pp. 66-73, 161-66; and Johnson, 'Tales of a True Translaror," passim.

over the threshold into the text and, as here, out again.

Source: *Translation Theory and Practice in the Middle Ages*, 1997, 239-254.