

MUSICA CELESTIS: MYSTICAL SONG IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

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CHAPTER TWO

Liturgical Appropriations, Part 1: Carthusian Mystical Diaries

Near the end of his *Refectorium Salutis*, the final text in a series of three mystical treatises found in Trinity College, Cambridge, MS O.2.56, Richard Methley (1450/1-1527/8), brother of the Carthusian Charterhouse of Mount Grace, does a bit of name-dropping:¹⁵⁰

When I had finished the mass, I grew more and more weak, because I was so totally affected by languor that my whole life consisted in love, languor, sweetness, fervor, song, and, what was even more rare, a sensible fervor which my love had promised me; and I often languished, just like the dear Richard of Hampole who was also frequently in such a passion.¹⁵¹

Methley's explicit reference to Rolle ends a series of mystical experiences patterned after Rolle's. For Methley, as for Rolle, *excessus mentis* was about experience, and his narration often lapses into the alliterative prosopoetics familiar to all students of the Rollean canon.¹⁵² But what is even more interesting about this reference is not that

¹⁵⁰ Mount Grace (1389) was one of the few monastic establishments founded between the Black Death and the Reformation. What is particularly interesting about this is the fact that the few others that were founded also end up using Rolle extensively in their libraries and in their understanding of religious experience.

¹⁵¹ Trinity, MS O.2.56, fol 55v-6r: *Cumque missam finissem, iterum atque iterum defeci totus languidus effectus nam vita mea consistit in amore languore dulcore feruore, canore, rarius tamen in sensibili feruore quia dilectus michi promisit quod frequencius in languore sicut et ille almus Ricardus dictus de hampol frequencius in calore.*

¹⁵² Modern critics have engaged in sustained, if not exhaustive, comparisons of Methley and Rolle, which I will only gesture to here for reasons of space. These include, most recently, including Laura Saetvit Miles, Karma Lochrie, Katherine Zieman, and Katherine Kerby-Fulton. See Hogg, James. *Mount Grace Charterhouse and late medieval English Spirituality, Analecta Cartusiana*, 82:3. (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1980): 1-43; Sargent, Michael. "Methley, Richard (1450/51-1527/8)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Colin Matthew, Brian Harrison, Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-12); Zieman, Katherine, Katherine Kerby-Fulton, Karma Lochrie, and James Hogg, ed. "The Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti" of Richard Methley of Mount Grace Charterhouse," in *Kartäusermystik und –Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana*, 55:2 (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1981);

Methley chose to name Rolle as an authority on his own *languor, dulcor, fervor,* and *canor*, but, instead, that he waited so long to do so. After six years of musical ecstasy, desire, and rumination, and after fifty-five folios of Latin prose, Methley presents his readers with the unnamed base-text for his experience and, indeed, his book: the friendly, nourishing figure of “*almus*” brother Rolle, the inspiration and the director of visions that had inspired his diary. Methley allows Rolle into his work only after articulating, both for himself and for his readership, what *canor* meant in a specifically Carthusian context. This tactical deployment of Rolle’s name gives rise to a number of questions: who were Methley’s readers? What sort of Rollean awareness did he expect them to bring with

Lochrie, Karma. *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), especially pp. 203-236. Diplomatic transcriptions of each treatise in the Trinity manuscript have appeared as follows: Hogg, James, Ed., “The ‘*Scola Amoris Languidi*’ of Richard Methley of Mount Grace Charterhouse,” in *Kartäusermystik und -Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana*, 55:2, (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1981), pp. 138–65; Hogg, ed., “The ‘Dormitorium,’” in *Kartäusermystik und -Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana*, vol. 55:2 (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1981); Hogg, ed., “Richard Methley: A Mystical Diary: The ‘Refectorium Salutis,’” in *Kartäusermystik und -Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana*, 55:1 (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1981), pp. 208–38; London, Public Record Office, MS SP I/239 is diplomatically transcribed in Sargent, Michael G., ed., “Self-Verification of Visionary Phenomena: Richard Methley’s *Experimentum Veritatis*,” in *Kartäusermystik und -Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana*, vol. 55:2 ((Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1981), pp. 121–37. Both of Methley’s translations survive in Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 221 and have been edited in Methley, Richard. *Divina Caligo Ignorancie: A Latin Glossed Version of “The Cloud of Unknowing,”* Clark John H.P., *Analecta Cartusiana*, 119:3 (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 2009); and Clark, John, ed. *Speculum Animarum Simplicium: A Glossed Latin Version of “The Mirror Simple Souls,”* 2 vols., *Analecta Cartusiana*, vol. 266 (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 2010). See also Miles, Laura Saetvit. “Richard Methley and the Translation of Vernacular Religious Writing into Latin,” in *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh. (Turnhout, Belg.: Brepols, 2011), pp. 449–67; Gillespie, Vincent, in “Haunted Text,” in *medieval Texts in Context*, Caie, Graham D. and Reveney, Denis Ed. (New York: Routledge, 288), pp. 138–9.

them into a reading of the *Refectorium*? How was *canor* expressed in this Carthusian production, and how did it differ from its Rollean subtext?

Richard Methley has received some scholarly attention, but what little attention he has been given is focused not on his original Latin works – found only in the manuscript discussed in this chapter – but to his translations of some of today’s best-known medieval mystical texts.¹⁵³ One of these is his translation of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, which has already been discussed as it relates to *canor* – the other is Marguerite Porete’s *Mirror of Simple Souls*.¹⁵⁴ Methley’s hand also appears in the margins of the *Boke of Margery Kempe* (British Library, Additional MS 61823), where he compares Kempe’s experiences to that of his spiritual brother, the Carthusian John Norton (who is the other focus of this chapter). When Methley entered Mountgrace Charterhouse in 1476, he was also entering an order with a strong tradition of mystical commentary and curatorship. Walter Hilton’s texts, Pseudo-Dionysius’ *Mystica theologia*, Hugh of Balma’s *Viae Syon Lugent*, Nicholas Love’s *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, Julian of Norwich’s

¹⁵³ Katherine Zieman’s work is one of the few exceptions, see her “Monasticism and the Public Contemplative in late medieval England: Richard Methley and his Spiritual Formation.” *JMEMS* 42:3, Fall 2012 (699-724).

¹⁵⁴ The extant translation of the *Cloud* and the *Mirror* were completed in 1509, after Methley and Norton wrote their treatises; this does not mean, of course, that Norton and Methley were not familiar with these texts before this period, of course, but it is important to note this chronological issue nonetheless. Of the four manuscripts that contain the entirety of Methley’s surviving works, there are no duplicated treatises. Each is a sole surviving copy. These are British Library, Add. MS 48965, no. 10 (an autograph letter to Henry, tenth Baron Clifford); National Archives of the United Kingdom, Public Record Office, London, SP I/239 (the *Experimentum Veritatis* and the English *Letter to Hugh Hermit, of solitary life*); Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 221 (the Latin *Cloud of Unknowing* and a Latin translation of Marguerite Porete’s *Mirror of Simple Souls*); and Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.2.56 (the *Scola Amoris Languidi*, the *Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti*, and the *Refectorium salutis*).

Revelations of Divine Love, and Jan van Ruusbroec's *Van den Blinkenden Steyn* all circulated within and were preserved primarily by Carthusian libraries.¹⁵⁵

Scholars of late medieval Mysticism tend to be more interested in Richard Methley's *Hew Heremite*, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and *The Mirror of Simple Souls* than they are in the original texts of the Trinity College manuscript. This probably has as much to do with contemporary accessibility as it does to their perceived relative scholarly and historical importance: *The Cloud of Unknowing* is one of the most beautiful of all mystical treatises in the apophatic vein, and Marguerite Porete's *Mirror* presents a case of misread identity along with its poetic negative theology – in England, the *Mirror* was thought to have been written by a Carthusian or male solitary – this makes it a fecund critical nexus for studies of gender construction in the medieval period. On the other hand, the *Scola Amoris Languidi*, *Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti*, and *Refectorium Salutis* offer no such rewards. They are written in difficult Latin, only the *Refectorium* exists in anything like a modern edition, and, as far as anyone can tell, they seem never to have circulated, or been intended to circulate, beyond the walls of the Charterhouse.¹⁵⁶ Had

¹⁵⁵ Carthusian book-trading networks are important, as Carthusians took seriously the Hugonian injunction that Carthusians “pray with [their] hands.” Note the General Chapter of the Order, a meeting which was held yearly and that allows for us to trace Carthusian vocation and death as well as elections. See Sargent, Michael. “The Transmission by the English Carthusians of some late medieval Spiritual Writings,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 27 (1976): 225-40; as well as Cré, Marilyn. *Vernacular Mysticism in the Charterhouse: An Analysis of BL MS Additional 37790 in its Religious and Literary Context* (University of Fribourg Doctoral Dissertation, 2001) and Gillespie, Vincent, “Dial M for Mystic: Mystical texts in the library of Syon Abbey and the Spirituality of the Syon Brethren,” in Marion Glasscoe, Ed, *The English medieval Tradition in England, Wales and Ireland*, Exeter Symposium 7, (1999): 241-68.

¹⁵⁶ For a discussion that at least tangentially deals with this issue, see Miles as well as Zieman, but perhaps most importantly Gillespie, Vincent. “Women in the Charterhouse.” in Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead, eds. *Writing Religious Women: Female*

any one of these three variables been different: had Methley been a woman, had his Latin been a bit more normative, or had the Trinity manuscript glosses indicated its ownership by Syon or Barking Abbeys, we might be possessed of a critical bibliography ten lines long rather than two. But thinking of Methley's Carthusian productions as inherently hermetic denies a critical fact about the Carthusian order that is fundamentally untrue: that it was a wilderness religion, encircled with impenetrable walls, an order of solitaries without a sense of sociality. This is simply not the case.¹⁵⁷

Spiritual and Textual Practices in late medieval England. (Cardiff and Toronto: University of Wales Press and University of Toronto Press, 2000), pp. 43-62.

¹⁵⁷ The Carthusians continued to think of themselves as a wilderness religious, but as the Middle Ages went on, they increasingly built their monasteries in posh real estate: "deer parks, the edges of major towns, alongside major roads" (Coppack, 168) Coppack goes on to note that the first English foundation (Witham) was in a remote area of Somerset, in the forest of Selwood (1178/9), Hinton (1227) and Beauvale (1343) were in deer parks, London (1371), Coventry (1381), and Hull (1377) were suburban, and Axholme (1397/8) and Mount Grace (1398) were rural but not remote, while the final Charterhouse, Sheen (1414), was not only adjacent to Syon Abbey, but also to London. In addition to this, despite their small numbers – there were probably never more than 200 Carthusians in England at any point in time – as the 1400s wore on, lay burials in Carthusian institutions became more popular (though there were never many of them): Thomas Beaufort was granted sepulture in Mount Grace in 1417 (he was interred there in 1427), William de Authorp (1432), Thomas de Holand (1432), Thomas Lokwood (1436), Eleanor de Roos (1438), Joan Ingleby (1478) By 1460 the church was extended and from 1480 to 1538, there were a series of wills in which burials of devout laymen were requested of the space. For instance, in 1532, Sir Thomas Strangways of Harlsey Castle requested that he "be beriede at Mountgrace where as the Prior of the same house thynkes best" as well as £4 for the priest "that synges at our Lady chapell of Mountgrace" (Coppack, 171-2). Individuals actually provided altars at other Charterhouses, like the London charterhouse. Sir Thomas More lived for a time at the London Charterhouse, William Melton, for whom John Norton's treatise was copied, was one of the leading humanists of early 16th-century England; and Lady Jane Strangways left 10s to Richard Methley and Thurstan Watson in 1500. Thomas Arundel turned to Nicholas Love to translate an English version of Bonaventure's *Meditationes vitae Christi* in defence of Christianity against Lollardy. By the time of the Reformation, Henry VIII found that he needed the support of the Carthusians in England if he wanted to maintain primacy over the English church. See Coppack, Glynn. "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God:" The Carthusians and Community in late medieval England," in *Monasteries and Society in the*

Katherine Zieman's recent study on Richard Methley focuses on the Trinity manuscript, but she reads its contents in the context of the 15th century's decreasing need for heremitic spirituality. With the increasing popularity of the chantry economy, Zieman asks, how did Methley's obscure and sometimes tortuous Latin make a contribution to the spiritual needs of the English nation?¹⁵⁸ Methley combines immediate experience of God as a form of "embodied knowledge inextricable from its experience;"¹⁵⁹ Methley, who focuses on languor throughout the *Scola*, the *Dormitorium*, and the *Refectorium*, places his experience in the refectory, "one of the few common spaces in any Carthusian charterhouse," rather than in a hermit's cell, and Zieman suggests that Methley's corporeal experience of God requires the incorporation of the monastic community for its effectiveness.¹⁶⁰ When Methley breaks out in monosyllabic expressions of heightened *oratio* produced during languor (A, A, A!) or (O, O, O!), Zieman posits that this is a sort of short-hand introduction and admonition to break out into ecstasy. This shorthand, she claims, would have been known to Carthusians as well as other solitaries and monastics, but more importantly, only to those who had also already experienced *canor*.¹⁶¹ Zieman's reading suggests that Methley's Latin text is as closed to communication as the monk himself.

British Isles in the Later Middle Ages, Janet E. Burton and Karen Stoeber, Eds (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008).

¹⁵⁸ Zieman, Katherine. "Monasticism and the Public Contemplative in late medieval England: Richard Methley and his Spiritual Formation." *JMEMS* 42:3, Fall 2012 (699-724).

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 700-1.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 711.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 715-7. Perhaps she does this so that she can focus primarily on the ways in which Methley does and does not live up to a Rollean ideal in his critical appropriation of *musica celestis*.

How does John Norton figure into this analysis? Norton (d. 1520/21) took orders as a Carthusian at Mount Grace around 1482 and eventually became prior there, serving in this office from 1509 until his death.¹⁶² Norton's work is, in a textual sense, more private, his archival traces even smaller than Methley's. Where Methley is frequently overlooked in scholarship, Norton is almost always ignored, mentioned, if ever, only as a means to discuss Methley, his confrere. In addition to this, Norton's archive, small as it is, has been made even smaller by the critical negation of one of his two potential manuscript productions.¹⁶³ Zieman discards Norton's unpublished work as "primarily

¹⁶² Beckett, W. N. M. "Norton, John (d. 1521/2)" in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁶³ The disbarred manuscript, Bodleian Library, MS Lat.th.d27, is a Carthusian collection from Coventry which includes among its Rollean and Hiltonian material a collection, a series of authoritative quotations on the worth of the solitary life supposedly written by Norton. This treatise, titled *Utrum religio solitariorum sit preferenda religioni in societate vivencium*, is listed in a colophon as having been written by Norton, "a monk of the order of the Carthusians near Coventy, who wrote after his own experience concerning the social life of the cloister" (Bodleian Library, MS Lat.th.d.27. *Explicit quoddam scriptum deuoti in christo prioris dominum Johannnis Norton quidam monachi de domo ordinis Cartusiensis iuxta ciuitatem Countrii, qui post experienciam vite socialis de gencium in claustro feruenter optauit ducere vitam solitariam in heremo*). Doyle gives no reason for his rejection of this collection. While there is no record of Norton ever having been enrolled in the Coventry Charterhouse of St Anne, Carthusian ascriptions are frequently inaccurate or incorrect, and there is no reason to imagine that this one has done a particularly precise job of locating its author (British Library, Additional MS 37790 is the perfect example: it neglects to recognize that the author of *Van den Blinkenden Styen* (Jan van Russbroec) is not a Carthusian, and includes Marguerite Porete's *Mirror* and yet is ignorant of its author's biography. Ruusbroec shows up almost everywhere in Carthusian miscellanies as a Carthusian.). The inclusion of the *Utrum religio solitariorum* among works ascribed to Norton makes sense when his other manuscript is taken into account: Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 57. Like Methley's collected works in the Trinity manuscript, this one contains three treatises on various aspects of Carthusian spirituality: obedience, the solitary life, the hermitage, the liturgy, and the role of each one of these things in hierophanic experience. Norton spent his days contemplating on the worth of the solitary life as opposed to the cenobitic religious one.

visionary in nature,” and then refrains from mentioning him again.¹⁶⁴ While Norton does not have a corpus of translated texts like Methley does, and while he does rely on visionary experience in structuring at least one of his treatises – the *Thesaurus* – disbarring him from the realm of serious religious writing for either of these reasons is both cursory and unfair. It denies Norton critical validity for the same reasons that Margery Kempe was denied identification as a “mystic,” both in her day and in ours.

In order to understand Carthusian *canor* – and thereby Carthusian mystical experience – Norton and Methley should be read together, as co-authors of a post-Rollean *musica celestis*. Both men are deeply invested in critical, analytical, and manuscriptal enactments of *canor*, as well as in a sort of textual expressivity that broadens the potential practitioners of *canor* to all readers as long as they read carefully, obediently, and charitably. Methley and Norton do this by expressing their revelatory experience as texts aware of their nature as texts, and moreover, as intertextual: as commentaries, dialogues, and epistles. Not only do they comment on Rollean *canor* while simultaneously interweaving Walter Hilton’s work and *The Cloud of Unknowing*’s critical views of embodied song – both Methley and Norton are deeply concerned with the way in which *canor* can be practiced while remaining obedient to a monastic order, and the mystical body they propose to resolve this tension is a unique answer to a recurrent problem: what does a mystic do with his body? – but they also comment on each other: the textual relationship between Methley’s manuscript (Trinity, MS O.2.56) and Norton’s (Lincoln,

¹⁶⁴ Zieman, Katherine. “Monasticism and the Public Contemplative in late medieval England: Richard Methley and his Spiritual Formation.” *JMEMS* 42:3, Fall 2012 (699-724), p. 720.

Cathedral MS 57) reveals a spiritual friendship between the two monks, a friendship that was, like their mystical experience, not completely captured by the written word.

Because so little scholarship has been done on Methley and Norton, it is appropriate to set out, very deliberately, the structure and main points of their manuscripts before moving on to a more thorough discussion of them. The most important dates are as follows:

1476 : Richard Methley enters Mount Grace Priory

1481 : Methley writes the *Scola Amoris Languidi* (Trinity MS O.2.56 fols 1r-22v)

1482 : John Norton enters Mount Grace Priory

1485 : Norton has the vision that will become his *Devota Lamentatio* (Lincoln Cathedral MS 57 fols 77r - 95v)

Methley writes the *Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti* (Trinity MS O.2.56 fols 25r – 48r)

1487 : Methley writes the *Refectorium Salutis* (Trinity MS O.2.56 fols 49r – 70v)

1491 : Methley translates the *Cloud of Unknowing* and *Mirror of Simple Souls* into Latin

1509 : Norton becomes prior of Mount Grace

1521/22 : Norton dies

1528 : Methley dies.

Richard Methley and Cambridge, Trinity, MS O.2.56

Methley's manuscript is divided into three separate treatises; on closer inspection, each one has connections with the others:

The *Scola Amoris* (fols 1r – 22v) never mentions Carthusian spirituality specifically, but it does suggest that it was originally meant as a text for solitaries, a school-text dedicated to a specific contemplative subject: the analysis of the languor of love.¹⁶⁵ Throughout the text, the phrase “*amore languet*” is subjected to repeated interpretation and re-definition. The *Scola* is set up like a dialogue between teacher and student: Christ instructs the lover on an aspect of *languor* in one chapter, and Methley responds in the next chapter. Some aspects of *amore languet* are beneficial (such as the Christian who repeats Jesus’ name out of love for him), whereas others stem from an imperfect faith (*languor* can be a product of spiritual torpor). Christ, in turn, responds to Methley in revelatory visions, which the Carthusian frequently encodes in the mnemonic terms of specific liturgical places and times: rooms of the cloister and church festivals structure the *Scola*, another characteristic which serves to make this seem like a pedagogic treatise.¹⁶⁶ What makes this most like a schoolbook, however, are the marginal notations that Methley employs around the outside of the manuscript. These marginal glosses are mostly recapitulations of information that occur elsewhere in the text, doubling important points for the sake of emphasis.¹⁶⁷ These explanatory notes look

¹⁶⁵ Trinity MS O.2.56, *SAL*, fol. 20r: *Ibi autem (ni fallor) efficacissimis deliciis nutritus, scilicet contemplacionibus curie celestis, multo lucidius, quam unquam in mundo, ut sic habilitetur celo, sed vobis non dico solum. O amatores mundi. scilicet dei, viri religiosi heremi incole seu cenobite, qui magna fugetis peccata parnependentes minima. Rememoramini quod scriptum est. die pro anno dedi tibi: O quantum est ibi desiderium videndi deum, et quam longum est.* This is the way that the solitary knows how much can be accomplished in a year.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, *SAL*, fol. 7r is a good example: *In festo sancti petri aduincula in monte gracie corporaliter fui in ecclesia. Et dum peracta quam celebram missa deo gracias reddere curarem.*

¹⁶⁷ For instance, when the treatise declares that it is impossible for the true lover of God to be fatigued, the margin responds by saying “for God will either provide you with

much like the recension of information a student might take while listening to a lecture or reading carefully for the first time. This school-text closes with a creative exercise: an effusive poem of love-longing for God in which the mystic ascends into the angelic choir.

Like the *Scola* before it, Methley incorporates effusive song into the pedagogy of his next text, the *Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti* (fols 25r – 48r). Also like the *Scola*, the *Dormitorium* interprets and reinterprets another short phrase, this time, from the Song of Songs: *Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat*.¹⁶⁸ Not nearly as dialogic as the *Scola* nor as personal as the *Refectorium*, the *Dormitorium* presents Methley as a teacher ready to expound on mental liquescence and the spiritual benefits of sleep (and sitting – both are nods to Rolle’s influence).¹⁶⁹ Sleep, far from being a sign of spiritual torpor, instead provides a test-case for the rejection of the flesh all true contemplatives should seek. Sleep provides a freedom from the affairs of the world, and in this way frees the obedient mind to think of God.¹⁷⁰ In other words, the *Dormitorium* ponders the meaning of corporeality in relation to mystical ascent, while operating as a bridge between the *Scola* and the last text in the manuscript, the *Refectorium Salutis*.

sweetness or with patience.” Ibid, *SAL*, fol 5v, “*Quia amore langueo, impossibile est ut fatigeris;*” and later, “*Quia aut dulcedinem subministrat aut pacienciam.*”

¹⁶⁸ *Canticum Canticorum* 5:2.

¹⁶⁹ Trinity MS O.2.56, *DDD*, fol 34v and elsewhere. Methley begins by saying that he did not think he could speak about spiritual wakefulness in corporeal sleep until Christ assured him that he would be speaking *through* him, using him as a mouthpiece. For instance, see Ibid, *DDD*, fol 25v: *Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat cum in principio littera impossibilitatem habeat de necessitate ad spiritualem intellectum vertimus stilum. Et quia non discipulum sed magistrum decet docere. Peto et obsecro, ut doceas me et alios per me; scio et vere scio voluntatem tuam quia hic scribere me vis tecum nouo loquendi modo (quisquis verissime) tuum secundum aliquid non ut prius per inspirationem tuam proposito nomine utriusque ut patet in libris multis quos scripsi per te.*

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, *SAL*, fol 28v *Qui dormit corporaliter non cogitat naturaliter sicut vigilantes de amore mundi, et qui sic delectatur in amore dei ut obliiscatur amorem mundi, et dormit ab amore mundi.*

The final treatise in the collection, the *Refectorium Salutis* (fol. 49r – 70v), is a mystical diary that decodes the mnemonic framework of liturgical place and time encoded in the *Scola*: each chapter opens with a note about the specific Church feast on which each vision occurred, and where in the monastery it happened.¹⁷¹ Like a capstone to Methley’s project, this text also circles through the points of discussion Methley highlighted in the *Scola* and the *Dormitorium*: mystical song, liquefied corporeality, dialogues with Mary, Christ, and the Angels, temptation by the devil, the sustained repetition of the name of Jesus, the tension between the body and soul, the virtues of sleep and of sitting in the contemplative life, and the agglutination of *ego dormio* with *amore languo* in mystical song and effusive outpourings of “Ahs” and “Ohs.” It is both record and performance, a textual play meant to be interpreted as visionary by the reader, who has already gone to school in the first two texts of the manuscript.

John Norton and Lincoln, Cathedral MS 57

Lincoln Cathedral MS 57 contains three treatises written by John Norton for which William Melton (d. 1528) provided introductory epistles.¹⁷² The entire manuscript

¹⁷¹ These include: The feast of the translation of St Hugh of Lincoln (49v), St (Pope) Mark the Confessor (fol 51r), St Dennis (fol 51v) St Wilfrid (fol 54r), St Crispin (fol 54v), Feast of Simon the Apostle (fol 56v), the feast of all Saints (fol 57v), all Souls (vol 58v), the Feast of Abbot Leonard, for whom he has special affection and after which he talks about his spiritual *canor* (fol 59v), the feast of relics (fol 60r), the Feast of St Theodore, Martyr (fol 60r), St Brice (fol 59v), St Edmund of Canterbury (fol 60r), and then again St Hugh of Lincoln (fol 62r), St Edmund, King of England (fol 63v), the Vigil of St Andrew (fol 64v), Saint Nicholas (fol 66v), the Sunday after the feast of the conception of the virgin (fol 67v), St Eulalie (fol 68r), St Lucy (fol 68v), the Third Sunday of Advent (fol 69v). Methley cycles through the whole church year twice.

¹⁷² The fullest biography of Melton can be found in Rex, Richard. “Melton, William (d. 1528)” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). A theologian, Catholic priest, and authority on Euclid whose lectures at

was copied by one “Frater Flecher” – an unidentified monk – at some point in the first half of the 16th century. There is quite a bit of rubrication, both by Flecher and by another hand, which also made interlinear corrections and wrote the text on fols 75r -76v. Flecher often places a “*maria*,” “*ihc*” and, rarely, more extensive pious ejaculations in the margins next to new sections of the text; there are also a number of small marginal pen-drawings.¹⁷³ The three treatises are connected by an overarching theme: all describe Norton’s experiences of God after taking up the Carthusian habit in 1482. Each treatise, like Methley’s, is structured around a Latin ostinato; unlike Methley, however, who sublimates an implied ethos of monastic obedience to the general rubric of devotional pedagogy, Norton makes his project clear: each text explicitly addresses the theme of obedience.

The first treatise is the *Musica monachorum* (fols. 1–27), a text written specifically for Carthusians and in praise of the Carthusian life (a divergence from Methley, who never explicitly champions the order), which culminates in the song of angels. The repeated phrase in this treatise, *pura obediencia*, highlights a number of ways in which monastic obedience draws the devout man from satanic temptation to holy love, and a central section with specific examples of obedience comprises the majority of the

Cambridge were remarked upon by contemporaries. This reforming humanist had ties to John Fisher, John Constable, Ralph Collingwood, and John Colet; he became the chancellor of York in 1496, and at the time of his death owned over 100 books, among them new favorites of the humanist movement, from Plato and Thomas More (*Utopia*) to Pica della Mirandola, Jacques Lefevre d’Etaples, and Erasmus, and John Fisher (contra Luther). That a humanist scholar had chosen to write an introduction to Norton’s work indicates the degree of respect his visionary experiences garnered.

¹⁷³ Lincoln, Cathedral Library MS 57, *MM*, fol. 22v, includes an *ihc* in a heart, on a shield, fol. 40v has a shield with the five wounds of Christ, fol 41r a ladder with seven rungs, fol 63v a manucula, and fol 66r an *ihc* inscribed within a heart.

text.¹⁷⁴ Norton describes his visitation by devils, angels, Christ, and Mary; Christ and Mary have a similar topic of discussion: the virtues of obedience the Carthusian rule, which “the angels call most excellent.”¹⁷⁵ The final section of this treatise is a recension of Pseudo-Dionysius’ *Celestial Hierarchies* commingled with his *Ecclesiastical Hierarchies*, as Norton outlines his ascent to the Trinity, through obedience, to the ranks of priests, prophets, apostles, and angels. Unlike Methley’s *Scola*, however, this treatise ends with a simple prayer rather than a pious poem; Norton has not yet begun to practice what he delineates in a formulaic manner in this treatise.

The second selection complicates the themes of the first. The *Thesaurus cordium vere amantium* (fol 28r – 76v) is an extended explication Matthew 11:28, “*venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis et ego reficiam vos*”: every chapter ends with a repetition of this verse after exploring some aspect of it: *O vos omnes qui laboratis*, he says, reading, chapter by chapter, in turn the *O* (what does it mean to call?) *vos omnes* (who is “everyone?”), *laborant* (what does it mean to work?), *onerati* (what is a spiritual burden?) *venite ad me* (how does one come to Christ?), *ego reficiam vos* (what sort of refreshment should the devout person expect?).¹⁷⁶ This treatise, like Methley’s *Scola*, is structured as a series of dialogues which aid in celestial ascent, but the most memorable portion of this book is the middle section, fols 53r – 69v, in which Norton is carried out of his body to a holy mountain. Here, he sees a golden castle, replete with singing bodies

¹⁷⁴ Noah, Abarham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel, as well as Mary and Elizabeth.

¹⁷⁵ Lincoln, Cathedral Library MS 57, *MM*, fol. 16r. *Angelis vocatus est excellentissimus*.

¹⁷⁶ Norton adds a Methlian echo, perhaps as a direct quotation of his spiritual brother’s didactic method Norton, fol 9r: “*O vos omnes qui transitus per viam attendite et videte si est dolor sicu dolor meus*” and Methley on fol 31r: “*O vos omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis venite ad me et ego reficiam vos*.” Compare this with the Latin from Matthew 11:28: “*Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis, et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos*.”

of men and women, saints and angels, who present into his mind a “miraculous melody of the heart.”¹⁷⁷ The remainder of the *Thesaurus* is devoted to constructing a simulacrum of this palace within Norton’s heart, a project accomplished through a second series of dialogues in which Christ himself glosses the meaning of the heavenly palace both for the reader and the visionary.¹⁷⁸

The third and final treatise in the Lincoln manuscript, the *Devota lamentatio* (fols. 77–95v) is a mystical diary akin to Methley’s *Refectorium Salutis*. Like Rolle’s semi-autobiographical *Incendium Amoris* and Margery Kempe’s autobiographical *Boke* and like Methley’s *Refectorium*, Norton’s is a chronological record articulating a series of visions beginning in his cell after mass on the Friday before Whitsunday in 1485. Norton is visited by the Virgin Mary, who, accompanied by a glorious choir of angels, appears to the monk; she is on a mission to grant him the gifts promised to the faithful in both the *Musica Monachorum* and the *Thesaurus*.¹⁷⁹ This short treatise is comprised of a long prayer to the Virgin on the destitution of the flesh, an excursus on the angelic order, and instruction on how a Carthusian, in silence, rejects corporeality for the eternal phenomenon of angelic song.¹⁸⁰ Here, repeated over and over again are the lines “I languish for love” : *amore languero* (a la Rolle, and Methley), a repeated “O O O!” and

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, *DL*, fol. 64r: *Mira melodia cordis*.

¹⁷⁸ Chastity leads to pure contemplation, which in turn leads to the gift of the light of the three suns: clarity, fervor, and radiance without division. Just as the sun illumines the Castle on the Mountain of God, so the pure contemplative will be lit up from without, and made capable of ascending, without the weight of flesh, to the heavenly supper (Lincoln, Cathedral Library MS 57, fol 76v).

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, *DL*, fol 80r.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, *DL*, fol. 95r: *Et in custodiendo cellam et silentium et ceteras obseruancias sue religionis deuotissime secundum statum suum. Et ego iam corontaus est inter summos choros angelorum, ubi nulla cogitacio animam sine bona et amorosa absque sempiterna renummeratione transit.*

“A A A!” (again, like Methley), and lyric prayer (like Methley’s *Scola* or many of Rolle’s lyrics).¹⁸¹ Like Methley’s *Refectorium*, the structure of the text is based around the liturgical calendar. However, unlike Methley’s diary, there is only one entry, and only one – long – revelation. In this final treatise, Norton has taken one distinctly monastic visionary experience and used all of Methley – and Rolle, and his own – critical didactic textual apparatus to interpret the event.

From this general overview, the broad similarities between Methley and Norton’s texts should be obvious.¹⁸² Tripartite in structure, sometimes expository, intent on the dialogic form, sometimes effusive, they structure their narratives around moments of rapture that cause ascent into the hierarchy of the angels while still allowing for liturgical participation and monastic obedience. While Norton is much more explicit about his specifically Carthusian program, Melton’s long introductions in the Lincoln manuscript suggest that Norton eventually saw a broader readership, and Methley’s texts were from the beginning directed to all devout readers. In that case, how do these two texts take Rollean *canor* and make it specifically Carthusian?

¹⁸¹ Norton dates this vision to 1485, which means that he was having visions and putting them to paper at exactly the same time as Richard Methley. The first two treatises do not have a date appended, and so we cannot know for sure if they date from the same time, but their content and the way they work together as a group suggests that they were probably written in the 1480s as well. If not, Norton felt no reason to differentiate his experience by means of a temporal shift, and it seems unimportant to controvert him. Ibid, *DL*, fol. 79v: *In die veneris ante festum pentecostes anne tercio ingressione mee ad hanc sanctam religionem. Anno v. dium Mo ccco lxxxv immediate post missam sedenti in cella apparuit mihi in spiritu repente raptio gloriosissima domina angelorum maria mater iesu veri dei et veri hominis.*

¹⁸² This chapter is not particularly concerned with identifying which text influenced which author; causal connections could find arguments heading in the other direction. However, the most plausible option is that Methley finished writing all of his treatises before Norton began his own. Other scenarios are possible, though, and throughout this chapter I have kept these possibilities open in an attempt to show the possibilities these texts hold for mutual exchange.

The *Scola Amoris Languidi*, the *Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti* and Norton's *Thesaurus Cordium Vere Amantum* all engage in formal structural elements that imbue their prose with a poetic element, engaging closely with formal rhetorical structures that mimic a type of lyrical or musical repetition. Methley and Norton wanted to make their writing more memorable, and they employed at times a highly alliterative, metrical style that mimicked the intercalated lyrics of Rollean *canor*. The mystical vagations of Methley's *Scola Amoris Languidi* and Norton's *Devota Lamentatio* both end in euphoric representations of *canor* that is rarified – representational of epiphanic experience – and familiar. However, where Carthusian *canor* differs from Rolle's version of it is in another formal element: both Methley and Norton use short repeated phrases – *amore languedo*, *ego dormio*, and *o vos omnes* are the three most prevalent ones – that they weave through the argumentative logic of their texts. These phrases, like verbal *ostenatos*, heighten the “musical” nature of these Carthusian treatises in some very important ways, as I hope to show.

Carthusian *canor* and *amore languedo*: verbal *ostenatos*

Methley's *Scola Amoris Languidi* begins with a discussion of heavenly music. Is reception of heavenly song active or passive, it asks?¹⁸³ Is *canor* attained by voluntary mental exercise, or is it a special gift of grace, received while at rest? These are the sorts of questions a reader of English mysticism, well-versed in the *Cloud of Unknowing*, Walter Hilton, Marguerite Porete, and Richard Rolle would have been primed to ask. For Methley, heavenly music appears in an instant, and then withdraws itself. The means by

¹⁸³ Trinity MS O.2.56, *SAL*, Fol 4v: *Quomodo deus operatur in homine et de exercitiis quibuscumque debitis seu voluntariis?*

which it does this are harder to ascertain than the lasting effect, which is, namely, lovesickness, which is marked in this text by a repeated phrase: “*amore languet*.” How does the writer, Methley asks, having experienced the ineffable, describe it to another person? “*Disce ergo per signa*,” he concludes: we “speak about it according to its signs.”¹⁸⁴ But what is the textual sign of mystical experience?

Methley’s Latin prose switches into a semi-poetic register in response:

*Quomodo deus languet amore,
Ut coronet gloria et honore,
Quem diliget in multo et mirifico dulcore,
Immo aliquando angelico amore.*¹⁸⁵

The memory of the ineffable affects the formal structure of Methley’s language; it shifts the relationship words have with each other from one of signification and connotation, as in prose, to one of sonority, highlighted by the poetic form. Rollean *canor* is in part about the production of song as poetics, and about the shift from prose into lyric; Methley’s own prosopoetic production operates similarly. Though the poem above is inchoate, incomplete, even bad – it doesn’t follow a particular metrical scheme and its feminine rhyme is not typical of late Latin poetics – it is still a gesture towards poetic language, an attempt at *canor*. Whether or not the initial experience of *canor* comes about through passive or active mental exertion, Methley seems to say, the production of musical poetics pursuant upon this experience is proof of attainment of angelic

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, *SAL*, fol 7v-8r: *Quomodo potest aliquis intelligere quomodo languor amoris est in dilacione nisi didicerit diligere? Multa signa: multum esse alicuius amorem erga liquem ostendunt, sed precul dubio qui expertus est amoris dilacionem plus discit in momento, quam aliquis per signa in toto vite sue tempore. Quid igitur? [...] Experiencia a deo datur, suis tum ei per iusticiam via paratur; disce ergo per signa.*

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, *SAL*, fol 7v-8r: Whoever loves God / Will be crowned with glory and honor. / If he loves him in great, marvelous sweetness, / He will suddenly be taken into the angelic love.

indwelling. *Languor* – longing – suggests the pain of absence, a silence pregnant with possibility, and although *languor amoris* defers immediate presence of the beloved, the *Scola Amoris Languidi* makes up for this absence in the form of textual presence, providing a lyrical supplement for it.

In the final chapter of the *Scola*, this lyric impulse appears again. Here, soul and the flesh engage in an increasingly staccato dialogue until, finally, the text breaks into song, tracing the body of a crucified Christ as it does so:

<i>Iesu bone rector morum</i>	
<i>Et saluator seculorum</i>	
<i>iubilius merencium</i>	
<i>Manus dextere vulnus sanctum</i>	
<i>cordis viri fugat planctum</i>	5
<i>more diligencium</i>	
<i>Eterne rex altissime</i>	
<i>Atque panis dulcissime</i>	
<i>Esus te seruentium</i>	
<i>Vulnus nos sinistre manus</i>	10
<i>Benedicat ne vulcanus</i>	
<i>iurat cor credentium</i>	
<i>Salve Jesu salve Jesu</i>	
<i>Melos auri mel in esu</i>	
<i>sanitas amantium</i>	15
<i>Dextri pedi vulnus latum</i>	
<i>nostrum expurget reatum</i>	
<i>salus infirmantium</i>	
<i>Vestre igni sancti flatus</i>	
<i>Benes noster aduocatus</i>	20
<i>vita te videntium</i>	
<i>Pedis leui vulnus patens</i>	
<i>cordis pandat vulnus latens</i>	
<i>More confitentium</i>	
<i>Salve iesu iesu bone</i>	25
<i>In amoris unione</i>	
<i>Sanctitas viventium</i>	
<i>Vulnus cordis lanceati</i>	
<i>Sanet vulnus desperati</i>	
<i>Corda quod canentium.</i> ¹⁸⁶	

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, *SAL*, 21v-22r:

Jesus, good governor of virtues
And savior of the ages
You are worthy of *iubilus*.
Your holy right hand was wounded
The heart of man might flee plaints
and be moved to diligence.
Eternal king most high
You are the bread most sweet
Your servants eat you.
Your left hand was wounded
Bless those – do not wound them –
who swear that their hearts are faithful.
Salve, Jesus, *Salve*, Jesus
Honey in my ears, and honey in my mouth
You are the lovers' health.
Your right foot was wounded
To purge all those who are guilty from sin
And bring health to the sick.
Your holy fire blows
As a good advocate
And the life of those who see you.
Your left foot was wounded; your heart
spread out through your side-wound,
As I am moved to confess.
Salve, Jesus, Good Jesus
The holy live in
the union of love.
Your heart was lanced
And this brings health to the desperate;
Therefore, our hearts sing.

These lines trace Christ's body, mapping divine hands and feet onto the heart as well as onto the rhythms of poetry. This poem is not itself the *iubilus* referred to in the opening stanza of the poem (*iubilus mirencia*, l. 3) – this is an ecstatic “A! A! A!” that will come later – but this is what music sounds like outside of the *corpus*, when flesh dissolves into the mystical body of Christ, itself pierced, perforated, tearing, and wearing away. As the lover's body dissolves into song, the body of Christ dissolves alongside it in heartfelt tunefulness (*vulnus cordis lanceati... corda quod canentium*, ll. 28-30). This is a sung transubstantiation, the product of a life of meditation. But this production has not sprung from the *Scola ex nihilo*; it has its precursors and its tradition: the leonine verse invokes the rhymed votive offices in vogue in the late medieval period, its references to *iubilus* recall the poetics of Richard Rolle, and its repeated *salves* are well-known from the writings of the Cult of the Holy Name.¹⁸⁷ Methley is not unlike other authors he has translated – like Marguerite Porete – whose ultimate expressions of divine love take the form of poesis.¹⁸⁸ The *Scola* ends in poetic proof that the mystic has returned to his spiritual home in devotional textuality. But there is another technique by which Methley (and, a little later, John Norton), create a specifically monastic effect of *canor* in their texts: the verbal *ostenato*.

¹⁸⁷ Hughes, Andrew. *late medieval Liturgical Offices*. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of medieval Studies, 1996). On the Cult of the Holy Name, see Renevey, Denis, *The Moving of the Soul: Function of Metaphors of Love in the Writings of Richard Rolle and the medieval Mystical Tradition*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); New, Elizabeth Anne, *The cult of the Holy Name of Jesus in late medieval England, with special reference to the Fraternity in St Paul's Cathedral, London c. 1450-1558*. (London: University of London, 1999).

¹⁸⁸ Porete, Margaret. *The Mirror of Simple Souls*. Colledge, Edmund, J.C. Marler, and Judith Grant, ed. and trans. (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1999).

Scola Amoris Languidi means “The School of the Languor of Love,” and the *Scola* should be read as a didactic text, one that teaches its reader the full unitive force of the treatise’s final musico-poetic lines. Though these lyric moments are striking and memorable and have a precedent in mysticism, there is another, more subtle lyricism which weaves its way through the *Scola*. Throughout the text, Methley repeats the phrase *amore langueo* (I languish for love). Each time he provides a slightly different interpretation of the line, which ends up operating as a rondeau or refrain. The term “refrain” is not inaccurate: *amore langueo* was a popular refrain in late medieval religious lyric, and some of the most beautiful poems in the English repertoire employ it.¹⁸⁹ And, like Methley’s final lyric, these poems typically trace the body of Christ crucified as he cries after his ungrateful lover, the Soul of Man, the Church, or the fallen sinner. Typical of such poems is “In The Valley of the Restless Mind,” a fifteenth-century affective lyric.¹⁹⁰ “Loke unto myn hondis, Man,” says Christ,

¹⁸⁹ See Richard Rolle’s *Form of Living*. Note that *amore langueo* appears in the Rollean canon in the text most germane to the solitary life. Among these is a poem found on British Library, MS Douce 322, fol 8v, *Quia amore langueo*.

¹⁹⁰ “In the Valley of the Restless Mind” appears in two 15th-century manuscripts: London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 853, and Cambridge, Cambridge University Library Hh.4.12, fols. 41b-44a. Editions can be found in Furnivall, F. J., ed. *Political, Religious, and Love Poems*. (London: EETS, 1903); Alexander, Michael and Felicity Riddy, Eds. *The Middle Ages (700-1550)*. (New York: St. Martin's, 1989). St. Martin's Anthologies of English Literature. Vol. 1, pp. 416-21; Beckwith, Sarah. "Limens, Boundaries and Wounds: Corpus Christi as Rite of Passage." In *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in late medieval Writings*. (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 55-63; Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 110-69; Cross, J. E. "The Virgin's *Quia Amore Languo*." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 73 (1972), 37-44; Dronke, Peter. "The Song of Songs and medieval Love-Lyric." *The medieval Poet and His World*. Storia e Letteratura Raccolta di Studi e Testi 164. (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1984), pp. 209-36; Gillespie, Vincent. "Strange Images of Death: The Passion in Later medieval English Devotional and Mystical Writing." in *Zeit, Tod und Ewigkeit in der*

These gloves were yove me whan y hir soughte –
 Thei ben not white, but rede and wan,
 Onbroudrid with blood. My spouse hem broughte.
 Thei wole not of, y loose hem noughte.
 I wowe hir with hem wherevere sche go –
 These hondis for hir so freendli foughte,
*Quia amore languet.*¹⁹¹

Throughout the “Valley” the stigmata are refigured as bloody garments, the Church depicted as a faithless lover; this is a tradition that goes back at least as far as Bernard’s sermons on the Song of Songs, but was known just as well in England through Richard Rolle’s *Form of Living*, a text that highlights the importance of the solitary life and obligation to a rule and repeats the *amore languet* throughout his text.¹⁹² It also has striking similarities to the Latin poem at the end of Methley’s *Scola* quoted above. However, Methley also takes this received tradition and turns it into Christ’s own plaintive prosody:

O, man, I languish in love (*amore languet*) for you, because your ingratitude crucifies me, O man, *amore languet*. Listen to me, I implore you, so that I might teach you about this languor so that you will no longer be ungrateful to your lover: there is nothing lower than to be ungrateful because of my love, because I am good and have given you your will. If it

Renaissance Literatur. Hogg, James, Ed. (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1987), pp. 111-59; Gray, Douglas. "The Five Wounds of Our Lord — I-IV." *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 10 (1963), 50-51, 82-89, 127-34, 163-68; Heimmel, Jennifer P. *God is Our Mother: Julian of Norwich and the medieval Image of Christian Feminine Divinity*. (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1982), pp. 34-45; McGinn, Bernard. "The Language of Love in Christian and Jewish Mysticism." in *Mysticism and Language*. Katz, Steven T, Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 202-35; Rubin, Miri. "Christ's Suffering Humanity." in *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in late medieval Culture*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 303-16; and Woolf, Rosemary. "The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in medieval English Literature." *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 13 (1962): 1-16.

¹⁹¹ “In a Valley of this Restless Mind,” ll. 41-8.

¹⁹² Song of Songs 2:4-5 reads *Introduxit me in cellam vinariam ordinavit in me caritatem, fulcite me floribus stipate me malis quia amore languet*.

please you, O man, I beg you, deign to love me, because *amore languet*.¹⁹³

Part of the point of the *Scola* is the recognition of the full pain that Christ suffered on the cross, a pain that is, like *canor*, ineffable in lexical terms, and yet remains communicable through form or in inarticulate cries.

As Christ repeats the “*O homo*” from the cross, the vocative address conditions the reader to expect heavenly speech to sound a certain way: it is a repeated plea that builds expectation of verbal return in the recognition of its absence. It is also language that calls the reader to attend, that is, to wait for it:

Who is able to understand how much pain Christ suffered on the cross? It excels all other sadness that one might speak of. *O vos omnes qui transitus per viam, attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus*. Deservedly, then, he says, *amore languet*.¹⁹⁴

The *amore languet* is also an appeal: “Look and see if any pain is like mine!”¹⁹⁵ The *amore languet* is an unceasing affect towards a private object of love. At the same time, the *O vos omnes* connects the private languor of love to the public performance of the liturgy: *O vos omnes* would have been familiar to anyone who attended the Tenebrae service for Holy Saturday – the middle of the Passion sequence.¹⁹⁶ Christ’s call to attend

¹⁹³Trinity MS O.2.56, *SAL*, fol. 5v: *O homo amore languet propter te, quia ingratitude tua nimis cruciat me. O homo amore languet. Audi me precor languidum nimis et docebo te, ne ultra sis ingratus amatori tuo: Quia bonus sum datur tibi opcio. Placeat tibi, o homo, et peto ut digneris diligere me, quia amore languet*.

¹⁹⁴Ibid, *SAL*, fol. 9r: *Quis potest intelligere quantus sunt dolor passionis christi in cruce? Exuperat eum omnem dolorem sicut dicit ipse. O vos omnes qui transitus per viam attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus. Merito proinde clamas dicit amore languet*.

¹⁹⁵Lamentations 1:12, which is used as part of the Tenebrae service for Holy Saturday.

¹⁹⁶Norton quotes the passage from Matthew 11 with an added verbal echo: “*O vos omnes qui transitus per viam attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus*” and Methley on fol 31r: “*O vos omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis venite ad me et ego reficiam vos.*”

to the *amore langueo* occurs within the narrative, and the liturgical play, of his crucifixion.

What makes the languor of love a type of *canor* is its ability to communicate mutually to the heart: humans suffer the languor of love in equal measure to Christ. “I am a poor beggar,” says Methley,

Therefore, help me. I ask you to make me languish sensibly out of love for you, so that you may be my faithful lover, and because of this I will be able to be a faithful lover to you, so that finally, in honor of you, I shall greet all people with an invitation that is most graceful.¹⁹⁷

For the mystic, this type of suffering is also the anticipation of future joy. Love-longing is mystical proof that the worshipper is particularly blessed; it is a protracted sense-experience that stands in for a marker of the epiphanic love of God. The corporeal results of this longing are both devastating and delicious. “You are ill because of the languor of love,” Christ explains to the reader:

But, sick in the languor of love, you are hardly able to think, forming these words in your spirit: *amor, amor, amor*, and at last, deficient, lacking that form you desire, your entire spirit will breathe out. *a. a. a.*, in one way or another, either singing, or, more accurately, crying out in your spirit in praise.¹⁹⁸

The mystic is ill, his ability to think rationally is impeded, and he literally expires in love, his breathing wounded and broken like the disarticulated body of Christ in the poems

Compare this with the Latin from Matthew 11:28: “*Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis, et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.*”

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, *SAL*, fol. 4v: *Ego autem mendicus sum et pauperum. Sollicitus esto mei. Face me queso te sensibiliter languere amore tuo, ut sicut michi fidelis amator es, ita ego tibi vicissim amator fidelis sum, ut tandem ad honorem tuum et omnium salutem dicere valeam cum summa gratiarum accione.*

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, *SAL*, fol. 7v: *Sed inualescente languore amoris vix cogitare potui formans in spiritu hec uerba: Amor, Amor, Amor. O tandem deficiens ab hac forma exspectaui quam totaliter spiritum exspirare possem: A. A. A. tum modo aut consimili modo canens pocius quam clamans in spiritu per gaudio.*

already discussed above. And yet, this cry is silent, as both body and the imaginative faculties of the mind are incapacitated by longing. Form is – both in literary and in imagistic terms – again of the utmost import here, as the missing corporeal form of Christ’s physical presence causes a deliberate shift in the form of vocalic expression available to the lover, who sings (*canens*) and cries (*clamans*) in his spirit (*in spiritu*). Carthusian *canor* requires the absence of Christ; as his form removes itself from the mystic, the mystic’s spirit is bereft of everything but a single syllable: *a*.¹⁹⁹

A man languishes for love because there is a great conflict between his spirit and his flesh, and when his spirit desires to surpass the flesh, and continually contradicts it, then he says *ego amore languo*.²⁰⁰

Although the heights of love are constructed as sense-experience, the *languor* of love involves leaving the body behind while engaging a repetitive poetics, one that refers to the liturgy in both explicit and formal terms.

Furthermore, Methley’s *canor* is centered around fraternal love (*caritas*), that is most easily accessed in a monastic environment. “It is impossible for one to languish in love and hate his brother,” Methley says.²⁰¹ “Therefore,” he concludes

You lovers who want to know *amore languo* and truly desire to dissolve and to be with Christ – who is himself eternal glory – know that he gave me the gift of humility and fraternal charity, and this is the same thing as *amore languo*.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ In this way, it is like the *Cloud of Unknowing* or Rollean *canor*.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, *SAL*, fol. 3v: *Languet homo amore quia inter spiritum et carnem maxima collectacio est cum spiritus egredi cupiat quasi continue et continuo et tamen contradicit care et dico ego amore languo*.

²⁰¹ Ibid, *SAL*, fol. 8v: *Impossibile est enim languentem amore fratri inuidere*.

²⁰² Ibid, *SAL*, fol. 7v: *Vos igitur o amatores scitote, quia amore languo et vere cupio dissolui et esse cum christo, ipsi gloria in secula, ipse dedit michi donum humilitatis et fraterne charitatis et ideo amore languo*.

One means of attaining *canor* is to engage intentionally in fraternal care. This sentiment highlights the second aspect that makes Carthusian *canor* different from its Rollean base: *canor* is an action which can be undertaken by a layperson, but which is most easily expressed in the form of a monastic community: a world centered around fraternity in the guise of reiterative liturgical poetics.

The importance of fraternal community is part of Methley's text, but where it appears most explicitly is in John Norton's *Musica monachorum*, or "The Music of Monks," which is about the importance of Carthusian obedience as a type of *canor*. In this text, moreover, John Norton picks up and repeats the verbal gestures his confrere, Methley, makes. For instance, Norton uses *amore langueo* in his own emphatic repetitions in the Lincoln Manuscript. "Many solitaries and others," Norton says,

wishing to ascend the steps of perfection are impeded from the sweetness of God by their own thoughts and by the arguments of the Devil, against whom you should hurl the following phrase faithfully into your hearts: *Jesus est amore meus*, whom I am searching for and in whom I believe. Therefore, *amore langueo*.²⁰³

Norton takes up his fellow Carthusian's refrain, employing it in his own discourse of mystical ascent. By doing so, he is not only invoking the formal repetition that constitutes *canor*; he is also showing his indebtedness to Methley as a writer: a form of humble, charitable reading.

Norton follows Methley's injunction to engage in *canor*. He invokes the *amore langueo*, depicting it as a weapon to be used against the devil and against rational

²⁰³ Lincoln MS 57, *MM*, fol 22v: *Et per talia multi solitarii et alii volentes gradus perfectionis ascendere impediti sunt a cognitione sui ipsius et dei dulcedinis degustacione suis in omni argumento diaboli quod tibi immittitur dic fideliter in corde tuo ihesus est amore meus quem quero in quem credo. Cuius amore languo.*

cognition; *amore languet* pierces the heart of the lover, opening it up to make room for *canor*. He calls Jesus' name in a pious outburst. And, like many moments in Methley's schoolbook *Scola*, Norton includes a marginal note at this point in his text:

Therefore, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, liberator, helper, and pious protector, do not take your mind from me in evil times, I beg you faithfully, because *amore languet*.²⁰⁴

In Norton's *Musica monachorum*, *canor* and the gloss work together. This suggests that the *Musica* is itself an expression of the Carthusian obedience it champions: Norton is reading, performing, and writing as part of an exercise in languor, a *lá* Methley.

Norton uses the *amore languet* again in the *Devota Lamentatio*, a text filled with pious cries symptomatic of *canor*. When the Methlian-Rolleian refrain appears here, it is a plea to the Virgin Mary:

O, most benign consoler of all, I flee to you for refuge; hear me and help me, for I flee to you; bless me for I have long and ardently desired you and your blessing. O, perfect pattern of justice, justify my soul, and lead me out of this body, through your sweet blessing, and free me, for I desire you like pure wine, because *amore languet*.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Ibid, *MM*, fol. 22v: *Ideo ihesu ihesu ihesu liberator, adiutor, et pie protector, mens ne defers me in tempore malo fideliter te rogo, quia tuo amore languet. (Nota de virtute et salutarea ac continua inuocacione dulcissimmi nomines ihesu in tempore tribulacionis ihc)*

²⁰⁵ Ibid, *DL*, fol. 86v: *O benignissima consolatrix omnium ad te confugiencium. Audi et exaudi me fugientem ad te et benedic mihi tam diu desiderans ardentem benedictionem tuam. O perfectissima norma iusticie iustifica animarum meam et educ eam de corpore isto quia propter tuam dulcissimam benedictionem libenter meri desidero quia amore languet.* In the same set of prayers he has personally addressed the Trinity and Christ: *DL*, Lincoln MS 57 fol. 87r: “*per amore sancte trinitatis immenso quia amore languet;*” *DL*, Lincoln MS 57 fol. 91v: “*Eciam O amantissime ihesu a te declinare nequeo quia amore languet.*”

The tone of this phrase mimics Methley's invocation of it: *amore languet* is not just a prayer, but it is also a petition to the love-object to heal the rupture of absence, and a plea that the lover be removed from his flesh in order to attain union with God.

For Methley and Norton, *amore languet* is a way of coping with the lack of mystical experience.²⁰⁶ *Amore languet* occurs when the beloved removes himself (or herself) from the lover, and when quiet devotional moments turn into moments of anticipation because of this absence. In doing so, it connects the Carthusians in a mutual bond of affection to the crucified Christ, to the church, and to their monastic brothers. Furthermore, as Methley structures his *Scola* around the reiterated *amore languet*, the refrain itself becomes programmatic, part of the fabric of the mystical text as languorous: there is not a single section of the *Scola Amoris Languidi* that does not end with the *amore languet*, not one chapter fails to arrive after its vagations with a return to this comfortable, expected, verbal place.

Amore languet, though never the primary focus of Methley's *Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti* or *Refectorium Salutis*, appears another thirty times over the course of the Trinity manuscript, each time reminding the reader of the textual and devotional distance traveled since its last iteration.²⁰⁷ For example, an entry from the *Refectorium Salutis* ends with the *amore languet* refrain:

Here I was, one day, in the year of our lord 1485, on the Feast of the Translation of St Hugh of Lincoln, when I was saying prime in my cell in Mount Grace, and suddenly the song of angels (*canor angelicus*) came to

²⁰⁶ This is like Margery Kempe, who cries both when God is present to her as well as when he withdraws himself from her. See Windeatt, Barry. Ed. *The Book of Margery Kempe*. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004).

²⁰⁷ The *Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti* repeats the phrase fourteen times, and the *Refectorium Salutis* a total of sixteen times.

me with holy music (*carmine sancto*), and at first I my body was so completely overwhelmed that I was hardly able to stand, but after it had happened the third time, our lord said to me that I had been chosen and should always be ready for his return, for he had come down from far above me to lead me from the tyranny of my deficient body – and indeed, I did not want to love it, but to die, for love is strong as death. And thus I threw up a clamour, and sighing in languor I replied: “O, He who greets me with such delight, *amore languet*.”²⁰⁸

The languor of love is constantly in Methley’s mind. By referring back to the repeating trope of his first treatise within his last, Methley provides a sense of formal closure to the mystical ascent contained within the Trinity manuscript as a whole; there is an element of the cyclical, repetitive, and iterable in the construction of devotion. It is liturgical; in mystical ascent, the Carthusian does not so much climb a *ladder* as he does turn a contemplative wheel, or rotate the contemplative text as a teachable object within the anticipatory intention of his mind: the text is an object of contemplation. When Norton appropriates the *amore languet*, he provides proof of Carthusian *canor*’s textual pedagogy. Norton use of the *amore languet* in the same way Methley; he studied in, and with, Methley’s *Scola Amoris*.

Alternate Ostenatos: *ego dormio, o vos omnes*, and Carthusian obedience

²⁰⁸ Trinity O.2.56, RS, fol 49v-50r: *Hinc est quod hodierna die scilicet Anno domini millesimo quadringentessimo octogesimo septimo in festo translacionis sancti hugonis lincolniensis, cum ad primam dicendam in cella mea, in monte gracia surrexissem subito venit in me canor angelicus cum carmine sancto et vix substi sospes in corpore primam utcumque preimplere, sed post ad terciam domine nostre dicendam ad lectum quem semper ob hoc paratum habeo redii, super illum me in longum proiciens et fere a regimine corporali defeci immo loquelam amisi ut moriturus, quia fortis est ut mors dileccio. Et sic iacui clamans suspirans languens et gemens: O quis annunciabit dilecto, quia amore languet.*

Amore languet is not the only formal structuring phrase of the Trinity and Lincoln manuscripts. In Methley's *Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti* (*The Dormitory of the Beloved of the Beloved*), the second treatise in the Trinity manuscript, a repeated "ego dormio" – I sleep – is added to the *amore languet* of the *Scola*. The full quotation, *ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat*: "I sleep, and my heart wakes," is a quotation from the Song of Songs, as well as the opening line of one of Richard Rolle's devotional letters and, of course, a reference to Bernard of Clairvaux's Sermon 23 on the Song of Songs and the tradition of *Brautmystik*.²⁰⁹

In addition to *ego dormio*, the *Dormitorium* returns to *amore languet* from time to time, suggesting not only that this treatise was written after the *Scola*, but also that the *Dormitorium* is the second, more advanced, schooltext in a didactic program that began with the *Scola amoris*.²¹⁰ The languor of love leads to the next stage of tension between the body and the spirit, which is the wakefulness of sleep. Methley's *Dormitorium* is an attempt to solve one of the biggest problems for contemplatives: what should be done with the body during contemplation? Does the mystic ever leave the body completely behind? How should he mitigate against spiritual turpitude? The *Dormitorium* uses sleep as a test-case for the negation of the body that all contemplatives are called to attain.

Simultaneously, the *ego dormio* forces the contemplative reader to be held morally

²⁰⁹ *Canticum Canticorum* 5:2 as well as McIlroy, Claire Elizabeth, *The English Prose Treatises of Richard Rolle*. (Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 2004) and Hill, John M. and Deborah M. Sinnreich-Levi, *The Rhetorical Poetics of the Middle Ages: Reconstructive Polyphony*. (Cranbury: Associated University Press, 2000), especially "The Mystery of the Bed Chamber," pp. 73-7.

²¹⁰ *Amore languet* appears many times in the *Scola* (on 26r, 27v, twice on 31r, 32r, 32v, twice on 34v, 35r, 36r, and 38v) and the phrase "*iubilo et amore prelanguido*" (on 40v, 41v, 42r, 45v, 47v). Norton never once uses the phrase *ego dormio*.

accountable for both his sleeping hours as well as his waking ones.²¹¹ The description Methley gives of this wakeful sleeping in the *Dormitorium* is of two lovers who have chosen to spend the night chatting to each other in that dreamy space between wakefulness and sleep:

Once upon a time I was awake, writing about what you, most generous creator, have given me, wakefully sleeping (*dormiendo vigilans*) in that miraculous experience, for, to the extent that it is possible, I want to make known the glories of heaven which occur in an instant[...] You languish in love of me (*langues amore mei*), and I for you. This languor made me silent, and made me rest in you and not doubt. Now, contrary to the common understanding, this dream was written down in health and not in sickness, and because it seemed to me that, here, in this dream, one man was speaking to another, I have decided to give this little treatise the name *Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti* [...] For here I am miraculously equally asleep and awake.²¹²

The *Dormitorium* is, quite literally, Methley talking in his sleep. Methley makes clear that his sleepiness is not caused by infirmity; just like *amore languo*, though it has all of the markers of sickness, it is beneficial to the soul. Methley illustrates the viability of thinking about dormition as salutary, a microcosm or exemplum of inexpressible fraternal love. As a token of this inexpressibility, this conversation, like the ones contained in the *Scola*, is silent.

²¹¹ I will talk in some more detail about the role of sleep in spiritual productivity or negligence in the next chapter on *Piers Plowman*, but the idea that sleepiness is somehow equivalent to spiritual infirmity is incomplete at best: it does not take into account the Rollean tradition, in which sleep is a marker of true proximity to the deity.

²¹² Trinity O.2.56, *DDD*, fol 25r-v: *Temporibus quidem prioribus, vigilando scribere michi dedisti conditor alme de te: sed nunc dormiendo vigilans per mirabili modo experimentum celestis glorie in quantum michi possibilie est propalare volo, quia cito quia et hoc tu vis: quia langues amore mei, et ego tui. Sed languor iste tacet me dormire et te, et non dubito. Unde secundum vulgare deum, sompnus notat in utrisque sospitatem non infirmitatem, et qui hic ut arbitror uterque ad alterum loquiamur, congerum michi videtur nomen esse opusculi dormitorium dilecti dilecti[...] et ad hoc quo est premirabilius pariter dormio et vigilo.*

Throughout the *Dormitorium*, the focus of the *ego dormio* is on the mystical vigilance of the heart in the form of the sleeping body. But it is not just the *sleeping* body that is addressed through *ego dormio*. The *ego* at rest is a metaphor for *any* type of body engaged in a habitual or required activity that at first seems contrary to the operations of the soul, including liturgical song and the required activities of the monastic life. In other words, “sleep” can be understood here as an iterative, acquired attitude. Like virtue, which is cultivated over time, wakeful sleep is a product of years of careful training. It is a form of obedience, and as such, the *ego dormio* allows Methley – and Norton – to focus on monastic rules and Carthusian obedience, a type of sleep that “excels all others placed before it, because [this virtue] alone perfects men.” Like the sleeper who is awake, the body of the monk becomes inherently obedient; “true obedience, which occurs in the community, and regularly in the singular lover, [...] is highest between the anchorite and God,” says Methley. It turns the lover into charity.²¹³

Obedience to a liturgical rule – and the necessity of singing the liturgy of the hours – is what kept Rolle from taking holy orders and what made his contemporaries, like Hilton, so suspicious of him. What Methley is attempting to do here is bring liturgical obedience in line with euphoric sonic experience.²¹⁴ “Without the regulars and the singulars who are anchorites, or without the recluses who, solely out of obedience leave the solace of human companionship,” Methley says, the virtue of obedience could

²¹³ Ibid, *DDD*, fol 28v: *Est tamen virtus quo omnes excellit omnibus nimirum preponitur, quia sola perficit hominem fortassi dicit aliquis eam esse charitatem. Ego autem dico obedienciam veram; que quidem communiter fit inter regulare singulariter, aut inter deum et eius anacoritam summum.*

²¹⁴ John Norton’s *Musica monachorum* and *Thesaurus Cordium Vere Amantium*, texts that focus explicitly on Carthusian obedience, focus even more stridently on the virtues of obedience.

not be understood. Solitaries and monastics have, by taking leave of the world, fallen asleep to it. They have simultaneously ensured that they exist in a state of continual heightened spiritual awareness. “Who might be able to judge better,” Methley concludes, “and thus truly and not falsely say *ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat?*”²¹⁵ Obedience to a rule, above and beyond Rollean sleep, grants the monastic writer legitimacy to speak about *canor*. Maintaining external requirements – whether these be the requirement on the body to sleep, the requirement of the monk to engage with the liturgy, or the agreed-upon rules of discursive environments every writer assents to – while connecting to hierophanic experience is a special skill. Solitaries, recluses, and monks have been granted the ability to write or about the ineffable because they already have practice in writing from a type of dormition. Words, like monks, require *regulae* in order to express anything at all.

As if to prove his point, Methley follows this passage by breaking out in a troped liturgical quotation: “Glory to God in the highest” (*Gloria in altissimi deo*), he says, and afterwards, “let the earth be at peace” (*ponitur et in terra pax*), “not for the lovers of the world, but to men of good will” (*sed hominibus bone voluntatis*): *ego dormio et cor meum vigilat*.²¹⁶ After intoning the *Gloria* Methley attains a literal break from corporeality:

I saw my heart dance, moving in my chest; and my body, for its part, was rising, and my heart held itself out alone in the heavens, when it left my

²¹⁵ Ibid, *DDD*, fol. 28v: *Sic ergo sine regularis ut anachorita, vel reclusa sola obediencia vera exuit hominem a solitudine, Et si quid difficile oratur, superioris iudicium requirater, et sic veraciter non fallaciter dicat ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat.*

²¹⁶ Ibid, *DDD*, fol. 28r-29v: *Gloria in altissimus deo, et consequenter ponitur et in terra pax, non mundi amatoribus, sed hominibus bone voluntatis. Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat.*

body (for it wanted to appear without weight in front of God), I sensed in my breast a feeling as if the body would not be able to move itself through the empty air; and my heart burst out with great force and violence as it reached towards immense joy, deservingly crying out and singing spiritually: *Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat.*²¹⁷

The picture painted here is just as vibrant as any moment in Rolle's mysticism or even in the *Book of Margery Kempe*. For the Carthusian in particular, the body must be left; leaving is the point. If there is no body – and no regular life – to leave, there is no difference, no moment of resonant rupture, no opportunity to heed the voice of God and to be obedient to the call of the beloved.²¹⁸

But before the soul can take leave of the body, Methley (and later, Norton) must be brought to *scola*, to the routinized practice of the songs and movements of liturgical language. How does one engage in obedience to a spiritual calling – including writing sermons or mystical texts – when one is also intent on experiencing *canor*? Methley remarks that the “holy fathers praise god in their hearts, and insofar as they make sermons, in this way the moderni do well... *ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat.*”²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Ibid, *DDD*, fol. 32v: *Et cor corporale mouendo tripudiare michi videtur in pectore, et corpus in hac parte erigere et celo presentare se intime cor cum corpore vel eo relicto solum modo sine pondere cupit apparere deo, sencio enim in pectore qualiter quum non potest corpus totaliter secum ducere per aeris spacia; erumpere et exiliis re magna vi et impetu suauiissimo conatur immenso iubilo, et ideo merito clamans et canens animo: ego dormio et cor meum vigilat.*

²¹⁸ It is also the expressive tendency of a body. Ibid, *DDD*, fol. 40r. *Oculi mei semper ad deum qui ipse euellet de laqueo pedes meos: domine deus quis mortalum semper habet suos oculos ad te directos vel apertos: puto quippe quod consilium dedit et remedium: ut scirem ad perfeccionem tenendam quid sit necessas auris votum.*

²¹⁹ Ibid, *DDD*, fol 44v: *Et ideo sancti patres modo in celo coram deo laudantes, tales suos fecerunt sermones, quales non faciunt moderni licet utriusque bene, Sic nempet et ego quia continue deo gracias: dormio et cor meum tibi vigilat.*

Spiritual labor beyond mere contemplation is possible in those who are truly spiritually “awake.”²²⁰

Methley and Norton were both concerned that spiritual guidance, labor, and dormition be the proper practice of anyone – active or contemplative – who desired to come to a vision of heaven. The reiterative *amore languero* and *ego dormio* do not just provide the text with an inherent formal musicality, they also provide a speculative landscape in which to experiment with different imaginations of what, exactly, contemplative meaning *means*. Within the framework of their texts, obedience is one of the highest virtues for creating contemplative meaning.²²¹

There are different types of obedience, of course. And Carthusian *canor* is remarkably receptive to these variants. For example, Norton’s first treatise – the *Musica*

²²⁰ The philosophical tradition, after Avicenna and Aristotle, might refer to this faculty as the agent intellect, but the Thomist-Averroist tradition would, I think, see this as a faculty of the soul rather than the intellect. However, in talking of the Carthusian understanding of human psychology, intellect, and attainment of awareness, these sorts of connections should be made tentatively. Suffice it to say, Methley and Norton are attempting to create a means of understanding the operation of the mind relative to the rational awareness of the actions of the mind. See Khalidi, Muhammad Ali, Ed. “Ibn Sina, *On the Soul*,” in *medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 27-32; Aristotle. *De Anima*. Barnes, Julian, Ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Foster, Kenelm and Silvester Humphrey, Eds and Trans. *Aristotle’s De anima: in the version of William of Moerbeke, and the Commentary of St Thomas Aquinas*. (London: Routledge, 1951).

²²¹ As Bruce Holsinger has noted, music is an instrument of discipline and a construct of obedience, and strict musical discipline of the body on earth ensures *harmonia* after death, in heaven. He cites Hildegard von Bingen. “For I am a *cithara* sounding praises and piercing the hardness of heart with good will. For when a man feeds his body moderately, I reverberate like a *cithara* in heaven [*in celum cithara resono*] with his praises. When he feeds his body temperately with moderate food, I sing accompanied with musical instruments.” Hildegard’s *Liber vitae meritorum* uses somatic harmonies to construct an instrumental understanding of *obedientia*: “I sound like a cithara at the command of his word because I obey all his commands. See Holsinger, Bruce. *Music, Hildegard von Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 96.

– champions the Carthusian Order and Carthusian obedience above other monastic orders and other types of liturgical awareness, intent on providing a reading of Carthusian obedience as the primary method of attaining equality with the angelic choirs and providing access to divinity. But, let’s imagine Norton working *alongside* Methley during the 1480s, and picture the trajectory of their epistolary friendship. In such an environment, Norton, an eager new Carthusian, would write a treatise on the perfection of the Carthusian life, and then, picking up a proof of Methley’s *Scola* and *Refectorium*, invest himself in an editorial reading of his own text that allowed for broader religious experience. Norton’s second treatise, the *Thesaurus Cordium Vere Amantium*, reflects this shift away from narrow monasticism and into a more general understanding of what obedience might mean to readers in general. “I want the hearts,” Christ says in Norton’s *Thesaurus*:

of those who chastely love me to be my habitation, for they delight to live in me. And in my passion and my pain, I desire nothing of men except the penance of a contrite and humble heart. My spouse, the human spirit, is greatly purified through bitter humiliation of the heart and with other prayers: *Ideo o vos omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis preperate mihi cor contritum et humilitatum et venite ad me et reficiam vos.*²²²

Norton uses the refrain of *O vos omnes* throughout the *Thesaurus*, ending every chapter with it. This is shortened at times to *O vos omnes*, and at other times merely *O vos*; but the *omnes* here explores the different sorts of Christian communities that might be imagined by the mystical expression of *ego dormio*. The *O vos omnes* is a call to

²²² Lincoln MS 57, *TCVA*, fol. 35r: *Volo quia cor eorum qui me caste amant habitacione mea est in quo multum me delectat in habitare. Ideo nichil quero ab hominibus per tota mea passione et pena iusi tuum cor contritum et humiliatum. Quid magis purificatur sponsa mea, est anima humana per amorosam humiliciones cordis quid per oram alia excertitia que ab horem possunt fieri! Ideo o vos omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis preperate mihi cor contritum et humilitatum et venite ad me et reficiam vos.*

community, for *all* who labor to find the peace of Methley's *ego dormio*. Carthusian textuality is a way to try out different ideas about who can properly be called a "mystic," "contemplative," or "obedient" – even, perhaps, who might be an *ego*.

The *O vos* provides another point of evidentiary contact between Methley and Norton as well: the reader who had already seen Methley's Trinity manuscript could be forgiven for, on a first reading of Norton, thinking of Methley's *Lamentations* rather than the *Psalms*: in the final treatise he penned, Methley invoked an *O vos* – *O vos omnes qui transitus per viam* – in a discussion of the edification of the church through the example of the death of Christ, and includes the refrain of *amore languedo*. Norton's *O vos* sets up the expectation of a repetition of Methley's liturgical *O vos* – an *O vos* understandable to those who have performed, and who have memorized, the line from the Tenebrae service that Methley quotes. Norton shifts the meaning and the intentional community of Methley's *omnes* away from those who labor in prayer to all those who labor in reading the *Thesaurus*.

The first time in Norton's text that the *O vos omnes* refrain appears, Christ repeats the invocation to "*omnes*" three times to three different groups of obedient readers:

First, to perfect solitaires, you who follow me, leaving all the consolation of the world to come to solitude, desiring no consolation but me alone; Second, to the religious and to the servants of the church, who do much work for me; and third to all those who love me, whether they are spiritual or temporal, so long as they love me and do works of charity and set a good example to others, *et cetera*.²²³

²²³ Ibid, *TCVA*, fols 35r-v: *Et hec verba dixi tripliciter ad amatores meos: Primo ad te o solitarie perfecte qui secutus es me ab omni solacione mundano ad solitudinem nullum solatum desiderans preter me solum. Secundo dixi vobis o omnes religiosi et ecclesiastici qui multum per me laboratis et cetera. Parcio dixi hec verba prescripta ad vos o omnes amatores mei tam spirituales quoniam temporales qui per amore meo laboratis in operibus caritatis ostendentes bona exempla ceteris et cetera.*

The invocations Christ proffers neatly divide labor, and obedience, into three categories which would have been familiar to any medieval devotional reader: the active, contemplative, and mixed lives.²²⁴

Whereas Norton's *Musica Monachorum* applies only to religious, and primarily to Carthusians, the *Thesaurus Cordium Vere Amantium* uses the technique of the repeated refrain (which Norton himself acknowledges in his use of the *et cetera*) to champion Carthusian spirituality within a wider socioreligious milieu.²²⁵ Norton combines the plaintive desire for the beloved's presence (*amore languero*) with spiritual rest (*ego dormio*) into the cry of Christ: *O vos omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, venite ad me et ego reficiam vos*; he also suggests that each person should read his text as it applies to his

²²⁴ Ibid, TCVA, fol 28r: *Verba ante o vos et cetera quamvis precipue sint ad solitarios, tamen preterea sunt ad omnes et pastores et religiosos, et tercio ad omnes spirituales et temporales exercentes opera caritatis.* William Melton's prologue highlights the non-contemplative use value of Norton's treatise: *Propterea duo quia nulla bona voluntas neque caritatis, neque oratio, neque supplicatione neque inclinacione in ecclesia ob reuerenciam corporis mei et prelatorum et seniorum neque confessio.* (Ibid, TCVA, fol 35r).

²²⁵ Christ's discussion of his unique connection to the solitary is predicated on sacramental theology. Ibid, TCVA, fol. 34v: *Ego dixi qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem in me manet et ego in eo. Hoc est qui audit clamorem meum et humiliat cor suum caste per veram penitenciam in perfectu contricionem et reuerenter me accipit secundum formam sponse mea. Sine dubio recipunt eum et manebit in me et ego in eo et adducunt eum ad palacium meum est regium celeste et reficiam eum secundum amorosam voluntatem suam refeccionem eterna ubi nunquam esuriet nequam scilicet in eternum. Et nolite intendere incantacionibus alicuius incantantis quo acerbant me in multis cordibus hominem et defamat fidem catholicam.*" The text opens with Christ speaking to his beloved, describing the ways in which he lived as a human – his humanity is integral to the ways in which he is capable of refreshing and caring for the reader of the work – similarity and identification is necessary. The affective attachment that the solitary ought to have is contrasted with the siren-like song of false Christians. This is one of the notices that we get in the treatise that it is, in fact, a product of the 15th century, and had a manuscriptal afterlife up into the Reformation period.

own vocation.²²⁶ In this way, Norton uses the *Thesaurus* as a space to imagine who the “*omnes*” are, how they come to be defined as such, and how they might read his text.²²⁷ Having read his Methley, Norton appropriates some of Methley’s stylistic features while maintaining the thematic investment in primarily solitary spirituality by focusing, throughout the rest of the *Thesaurus*, on the proper practice of contemplation. Of course, this inclusiveness is tempered by hierarchy; although the treatise inscribes all of Christianity, the most perfect life is always the contemplative.

For Norton, who seems to have read and reread his own text as well as Methley’s, obedient contemplative practice is cumulative. Note the words he uses to describe devotional reading: “bit by bit” (*eodem et eodem*) and “gradually” (*paulatim*).²²⁸ William Melton, extolling the virtues of the solitary life in the introduction, also underscores obedient reading to operate like this, saying that he copied the treatise “little by little” over a long period of time.²²⁹ He, too, counts himself among the “*o vos omnes qui laborant*” who have attained the heights of perfection through the diligent application of devotion, and who understand what it means to work “without ceasing” or “without interruption.” But one can be both solitary and monastic, a writer and a reader.²³⁰

²²⁶ Ibid, *TCVA*, fol 69v: *Non omnes in hac vita uno modo trahuntur ad perfecciones, suis virus sic alius sic et alius aliter qui vero fideliter in ea vocacione quia vocatus est.*

²²⁷ Ibid, *TCVA*, fol 31r.

²²⁸ Ibid, 27v, 48v, and 71r, respectively.

²²⁹ Ibid, *TCVA*, fol. 284: *Sequitur libellus ab eodem et eodem tempore editus[...] et merito quia in eo spirituale thesaurum invenire potest diligens et devotus lector.*

²³⁰ Norton goes into some great detail describing the mechanics of this. Ibid, fols. 48r-48v: *Pura contemplacio in magnitudine amoris desiderii consummit omnes cogniciones et intellectiones in tempore contemplandi, et facit animas contemplantium puriores et clariores crystallo per excellentissimo casti amoris desiderio, adhuc propter maiorem animi tui intellectiones eo quia minus sapiens es. Nota castissime in corde mundo, quia sicut post solis ortum aliquum in die clarissima apparent stelle et luna et subito postquam*

The images incorporated in the margins of the text suggest this as well, as folios 40v-41r include not only the *o vos omnes* refrain, but also a marginal drawing of a spiritual ladder – another gesture to hierarchical thought and mystical ascent.²³¹ Through a calculus of virtues, the heart gradually climbs the rungs of salvation. Meditating on the angels, focusing on pure confession and true penitence, being attentive to the mother of God, and accepting Christ as the bride of the soul are all spiritual works that require a long duree of attentiveness. The infinitessimals of devotion – the quanta of spirituality – accumulate like snow on a field; practical, daily commitments to spiritual labor are accomplished “bit by bit” over the course of a lifetime. The *quanta* of salvation, in turn, become the quantified resonances of the musical scale so that

the heart sings continuously in chaste love; it constrains demons, rejoices in this purging, and liberates the soul from many pains, and gives the angels and saints in heaven along with all the blessed spirits, having proffered great and marvelous praise[...] and thus it makes a noise of the taste of heaven and sweetly speaks of divine delights his petitions, and enduring in God without diminution.²³²

The Latin here takes part in a mimetic tunefulness. Its alliteration is reminiscent of Rolle’s and Methley’s investment in the minutiae of verbal song – alliterating is, perhaps, the *smallest* way in which one can represent a tunefulness in prose, a performative formality of the verbal:

sol ad feruorem aliquam tendit euanescunt stelle et luna, et quasi non fuerant erunt abscondite ab oculis hominum ante meridiem, et eciam cito post solis occasium et forte ante sicut exquirat tempus apparent stelle et luna ad illuminandum noctis obscuritatem scilicet verus amator cum ad contemplacionem seipsum perfecte properat, et in ea dulciter occupatus fuit mox ab eo recedit multiplicitas temptationum, et cogitationeum et paulatim ascendit ab omni cognicione alicuius entis me adiuante.

²³¹ Ibid, *TCVA*, fol 42r-42v.

²³² Ibid, *TCVA*, fol. 43r.

*Quia quociens cordialiter cantatur continue in cordibus caste amancium demones contristat, purgandos letificat, et multos a penis liberat, angelis et sanctis in celis cum omnium lidatorum spiritum agminibus magnum et mirabile gaudium prestat... Et sic facit eos celico sapore sonare suas peticciones, et dulciter dilicijs diuinis ditare, et in deo durantur sine diuimucione.*²³³

Go into the confinement of the cell of silence, and all of your senses will be made mellifluous solely through love of me, and heartily sing to me in chaste love with a song of amen, without motion, marveling that your your knowledge of any created thing – both of your soul and your body – has been captured through meditation on my passion.²³⁴

This song of the heart, represented as alliterative quanta, has one more – incredibly important – characteristic. It is silent. Norton’s themselves present the ultimate form of obedience as they morph into melody.

Though the Carthusians are atypical among monastic orders in the amount of time granted for silent devotion, Methley and Norton still had to invent ways of harmonizing liturgical duties with mystical exuberance. Though Methley and Norton were able to practice contemplation more consistently than, say, a Benedictine monk might have been able, they experienced *canor* as part of liturgical obedience. Unlike Rolle, they did not have the option to retreat from the duties of the monastic life. “While putting on my vestments,” Methley says,

a very small beat [*unus ictus*] of music of incredibly languid sweetness was sent into me along with the delight of all delights, which seemed to

²³³ Ibid, *TCVA*, fol 43r.

²³⁴ Ibid, *TCVA*, fol 44v: *Ideo dico o dulcis fili constantur age in custodia celle silentii et sensum tuorum per solo amare meo mellifluo, et cane me cordialiter in casto amore cum cantu ameno sine motu merorum in omnibus artibus tuis et anime et corporis et sine respectu alicuius creature cordialiter capto multifare meditando de mea passione.*

me particularly special, for before I had languished and sung with many wandering words.²³⁵

Methley goes about his daily routine, putting on his monastic robes and preparing for mass, yet this does not impede his ability to sing. This song is given in a moment; an entire piece of music is granted in an *ictus*, a short space of time in which the monk can divert his attention away from liturgical duties. A staccato beat of musical time becomes a point of mystical meditation during the celebration of the liturgy.

Like the *ictus*, Methley's *ego dormio* is a point of meditation; Norton's *o vos omnes* is a version of the same, defining the intersection of the body and the soul and the types of labor each is capable of doing.²³⁶ As Norton loses cognitive awareness, the carefully drawn distinction between soul and body evaporates. It is not that the soul *surpasses* the body, but instead that both the soul and the body, liturgical duty and spiritual calling, are indistinguishable at the point of mystical rest:

O sweet son, if you spurn your cell for me alone, chastely singing to me with a contrite, firm heart without false humility and thinking with perseverance on my loving passion, you will quickly – and suddenly – have a taste of that pleasing heaven of sweetness, which is dripping with that sweetness which was spoken of before.²³⁷

Norton and Methley's form of obedience was, after all, Carthusian, and both would have spent most of their time alone in their cells, reading each other's texts rather than

²³⁵ Trinity MS O.2.56, *DDD*, fol. 32r: *Vestibus indutus nichilominus unus ictus perlanguidi dulcoris a dilecto dilecto immissus me cogit specialius quia prius et languescere et canere quid multis vagabor verbis.*

²³⁶ Lincoln Cathedral MS 57, *TCVA*, fol. 44r: *Et sic cito sensies gustum mee melliflue mansuetudinis sensibiliter signatum in tuo corde cum caritate continna crebre cremante.*

²³⁷ *Ibid*, *TCVA*, fol. 44r-v: *O dulcis fili si cellam spernes pro me solo caste canendo me cum corde contrito et firmiter sine fictione humilitato, perseuerantur pensando mei passionem amati cito et subito sencies gustum amenum celico dulcore dictatum mirum in modum magnificantem mentem prius magno merore madidani.*

interacting with one another *viva voce*. Methley even refers to himself as a hermit, performing an “alleluia[...] in the wilderness.”²³⁸ He reiterates the importance of mystical moments away from the mass elsewhere:

There I was, not during mass, but while I was sitting quietly in my cell or my stall, and it was as if I had been pushed into a lovely field, singing and languishing quietly, and desired I would not languish but die in that moment. How wonderful would that moment be in which I would pass from life to the glories to come! This is not the care of men of God within time, because when they believe they are singing psalms, their ears are walking about, but I was able to exist both in the moment of death and in a moment of great consolation.²³⁹

This looks almost exactly like Rollean *canor*: Methley does not experience the force of angelic song during the mass. And so, even though *canor* is delineated as part of liturgical performance, it also occurs in a state of profound solitude.

For instance, when he returns to earth, the solitary lover – this time, Norton – is able to praise God without breaking off (*gaudium ineffabili sine fine*), no matter what his earthly duties might be.²⁴⁰ Norton calls this new spiritual place the “dinner-party of heaven” (*civibus celorum*), again, as a nod to Methley’s *Refectorium Salutis*.²⁴¹ There, says Christ, “I will retrieve [the true lover] from the machinations of evil, and he will remain in my mansion with ineffable praise without end, firmly founded with ineffable,

²³⁸ Trinity MS O.2.56, *DDD*, 37v: *Carmen non lugubre flebilis nec lamentaciones et ve sicut pocius allehuya canam qui inueni quodammodo quod quesui in heremo.*

²³⁹ *Ibid*, *DDD*, fol 31v: *Et hinc est qualiter non in misse tempore sed in cellule quiete ad terram siue stallum vel eciam in orto supra gramina compellor quiescere canens ac languens utinamque ulterius non languerer sed merore morerer in momento. Quam pocius de morte presentis vite transire ad vitam glorie future; non est cura homini dei de tempore, quia cum se putat psalmodizare, ad auram ambulaturus meridie ut michi contingerit indius tercius per magnum tempus pocius morti quam orti solacio presentetur.*

²⁴⁰ These short phrases are taken from the argumentation on 45r-46r.

²⁴¹ Lincoln Cathedral MS 57, *TCVA*, fol. 46v. This may also be a reference to Rolle *and* to *Piers Plowman*, with its dinner scene in B.XIII.

everlasting praise.”²⁴² Like the *amore languet*, which is all the more pronounced because of the absence of the beloved, moments of solitude are structured by the way in which obedience to the liturgy is fulfilled. “There is nothing sweeter than to live well without interruption, and without cessation,” Methley says:

And therefore I was taken into such unexpected praise, and even into the ground, where I thought about how I would be lead there by death, for the writings of scripture say that “you do not know the day or the hour when the son of man is coming,” and truly [...] nothing would be sweeter than to live well without interruption or ending, waiting for you.²⁴³

Within the Carthusian cell, the sound of *canor* is experienced beyond the confines of the body. After attaining the height of experience, the mystic should “always have the interior eye crucified in your heart, always singing,” in an “ineffable happiness which cannot be recounted, no matter how much literature or language is spilled in recounting these musical notes.”²⁴⁴

The solitary is most capable of tuning in to the sweet mellifluousness of song and to exist both without interruption and “without motion,” but this does not mean it is the

²⁴² Ibid, *TCVA*, fol. 46r: *Et in suo aduentu inveniet me cum tota celesti curia ei obuiam, ut inueniam eum a machinis malorum, ut maneat mecum in mea mansione cum gaudio ineffabili sine fine firmiter fundata.*

²⁴³ Trinity MS O.2.56, *DDD*, 38r-v: *Et ideo quia tantu in gaudium et tam inopinatum et tociens humi quem tum a morte distulisti, cogitau mecum de hac scriptura que dicit quia quia hora non putatis filius hominis veniet, si vero[...] nihil melius quam bene uiuere absque interpolacione et sine cessacione te exspectando.*

²⁴⁴ Lincoln, Cathedral MS 57, *TCVA*, fol. 45r - 46v: *Habere oculi interioris hoc est crucifixum in corde semper me canere, quia in mee passionis memoria[...] O vos omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis venite ad me et ego reficiam vos, et uerbi non tum audient me suis et videbunt me facie ad faciem cum ineffabili leticia quorum retribucio non est dicenda pro nimio munero neque notanda litteris et linguis omnium ancium.* I have interpreted “ancium” as “a group of musical notes” despite its rarity in medieval Latin due in part to the context, though in the spelling *antium* it can refer to anything grouped in a row. Some dictionaries, for instance, refer this word to a flock of geese.

only life that leads to contemplation.²⁴⁵ Methley even goes so far as to suggest that some devout worshippers may have experience of heaven *per considerationem creaturam*, by considering earthly things.²⁴⁶ Carthusian *canor* has room in its understanding of mystical experience to allow for multiple paths to the deity: some are long, some are short; some are within the confines of liturgical experience, others beyond it. Methley and Norton are capacious, understanding a broad world of mystical approaches ranging from the cataphatic to the apophatic, from the regular to the secular, from the active to the contemplative. Again, this is the *o vos omnes* of Carthusian *canor*:

You have been permitted to experience a special gift of god, in sensible or tangible fashion, listen, O, lovers of the world (*amatores mundi*), listen to the testimony of God and the conscience of the fire of love, which is burning so sweetly that the senses believe that it is hot when it is cold, and summer in the winter, for this angelic song blossoms forth from true lovers, just as the earth sings with blossoms in the spring, and it is possible to know one by the other.²⁴⁷

When Methley, at the end of the *Dormitorium*, describes his own mystical experience, he does not articulate whether it is sung out loud or in his mind, whether his own experience of *canor* came about *per considerationem creaturam* or through pure intellect. He gives only the time and frequency of its incantation:

This is the song that I sing in the morning:
 Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,
 Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,

²⁴⁵ Ibid, *TCVA*, fol. 48r ff.

²⁴⁶ Trinity MS O.2.56, *DDD*, 33r: *Quidam quippe ut nouelli discipuli christi claustrales heremi qualiter cultores excitant deuocionem per considerationem creature.*

²⁴⁷ Ibid, *DDD*, fol 33v: *Et promitto tibi experte eius speciale donum immo sensibilem quam tangibilem amorem habebis; Audite o amatores mundi, audite teste deo et consciencia ignis amoris velut res redolens pre nimia suavitate, tam sensibilis est ut cognoscatur quam quis vellet discernere inter frigus et estum in yeme et estate. Sed et canor angelicus tam verus est in vere amantibus, sicut terrestris melodia cum canitur a inuenibus in sue flore inventutis, sicut possibile unum scire eorum sic et alterum.*

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus
I languish for love.
[...] and insofar as I was taken, fluidly, into light, and lost in the affect of
the angels in love and jubilation and love (which I enjoyed), I had frequent
visions like those I mentioned before.²⁴⁸

Methley refers to his prayers invoking the Holy Name as coming “from the heart”
(*egreditur corde meo, et ingreditur dicit dominus in cor meum*).²⁴⁹ But what seems most
important to Methley is that, through obedience, Christ speaks directly to the beloved in a
way expressible in textual form.²⁵⁰ The power to sing is the power to think, and then to
transcribe.²⁵¹

In her reading of Methley’s *Scola*, Katherine Zieman calls Cathusian *canor*
integumental: only the initiated can understand it. Of course, this chapter is in partial
agreement with Zieman; Methley and Norton read and knew and interacted with each

²⁴⁸ Ibid, *DDD*, fol 34v, 48v: *De carmine et cantico in auror*:

Iesu iesu iesu
iesu iesu iesu
iesu iesu iesu
[...]

*In tanto quippe gaudio affluebam priusquam in lucem rapere tempore perditio quod
quodammodo effectus angelicus amoro iubilo et amore prelanguido fruebar, dei visione
clarius tum frequenti visitacione raptus predicti.*

²⁴⁹ Ibid, *DDD*, fol 36r: *Egreditur corde meo, et ingreditur dicit dominus in cor meum*.

This formulation brings to mind the Aquinian and Augustian discourse of modes of
speech and signification in relationship to angelic speech. See Goris, Harm. “The Anglic
Doctor and Angelic Speech: The Development of Thomas Aquinas’ Thought on How
Angels Communicate” *medieval Philosophy and Theology*. 11 (2003), pp. 87-105.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, *DDD*, fol 45r: *Et vide et ecce deus Jesus Christus super montem excelsum valde
stetit, ita ut mirarer montis altitudinem, et respiciens in faciem Christi mei quia
specialiter diligo eum absque ceterorum dumtaxat despectu voluntatem eius vidi que fuit
huiusmodi: stetit astutem in vertice montis ut possit prospicere de longinquo ac
avidissime desiderabat accupere quid in sequentibus dicitur, et ego hoc sciens absque
eius verbo quia vidi sicut dixi quid volebat spiritum desiderium suum dixi ei inspiritu:
domine quid vis habere: cor meum cor tuum ait volo habere, hec ex non verbis sed in
intellectu sonuit meo qui sint illuminatus.*

²⁵¹ Ibid, *DDD*, fol. 45v: *Tunc utque ipse per gratiam peccatum remittet et amorem
infundet ita ut singuli dicatis amore languero et iterum ego dormio et cor meum vigilat.*

other, and without understanding how they interacted, their mystical experiences can only be incompletely understood. But this ineffability is the case with all mystical experience – indeed all experience of any sort – and prior reading determines the degree of intimacy one may have with a text, whether it is mystical or not. However, the exclusivity of these texts is not as pronounced as Zieman makes it sound. As already discussed above, the *Scola Amoris*, the *Musica Monachorum*, and the *Dormitorium* foreground the performance of *canor* with a textual and liturgical means for understanding their use, purpose, and meaning.

Carthusian Song: Staccato Notes

Amore languedo, ego dormio, and *o vos omnes* highlight structural and stylistic similarities between Methley and Norton, including their approaches to *canor*. By following these phrases within the Lincoln and Trinity manuscripts, one gets an overview of both men's mystical programmes. Carthusian *canor* can be understood by these structural elements just as Carthusian life delimited – and enabled – contemplative practice through its liturgy: read in silence, the connective tissue of *ego dormio, o vos omnes*, and *amore languedo* provides each text with logical ligaments; these connections are especially important because, at times, the argumentation from chapter to chapter is only tentatively wound. The repetitions also do something else: despite the vagations of their content and the choppy logical connections between one chapter and another, they enforce a sort of formal constraint on the reader, obliging him to be obedient to the text.

But there are moments where both Methley and Norton break out of this formal education, some of which we have already seen: the effusive poems at the end of the

Scola, or Norton's prayer at the end of the *Lamentatio*.²⁵² Methley and Norton also both express the ecstasy of *canor* in the form of short repeated mantras, the sort of phrases that would be familiar to any student of the *Cloud of Unknowing*. Ranging from single syllables (A! A! or O! O!) to the Holy Name (*Jesu! Jesu!*) and from pleas (*Audi!*) to substantives (*Amor!*), this proximate repetition reiterates the formal import of the more distant Latin refrains – i.e. “*ego dormio*“ – while stressing the importance of performance as contemplation itself.

In the chapter on “The vehemence of love and of languor felt by the author during the feast of St Peter in Chains,”²⁵³ Methley provides both text and gloss for the ecstasy to follow. “Love,” he says, and desire for the beloved took me into heaven spiritually, so that nothing was able to separate me from God as I savored him.”²⁵⁴ A marginal gloss provides extra help in determining just how the body and the spirit take leave of each other. “The body is corrupted, and it aggravates the spirit and suppresses it to the earth because of the habitation of the senses with many thoughts.”²⁵⁵ Both the senses and rational thought weigh down the spirit, which flees the body:

Then I spoke some words, crying thus: *a. a. a.* with my voice, at the same time, believing myself to be in danger, and thus I said *in manus tuas* either out loud (or, which I think is closer to the truth) in my spirit.²⁵⁶

²⁵² Ibid, *SAL*, fol. 7r; Lincoln Cathedral Library, Lincoln MS 57, *DL*, fol. 86v.

²⁵³ Ibid, *SAL*, fol. 7r.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, *SAL*, fol 7r: *Amor et desiderium dilecti susceperunt me spiritualiter in celum, ut preter mortem nil mihi decsset (inquantum sapio) de gloria dei.*

²⁵⁵ Ibid, *SAL*, fol 7r: *Quia corpus quod corrumpitur agrauat animam et deprimit terrena mihi habitacio sensum multa cogitantem.*

²⁵⁶ Ibid, *SAL*, fol 7r: *Verbum loqui sicut clamant a. a. a. in hac voce simul volentes intelligi periculum suum, sic ego secundum meum deo deicens in manus tuas aut vocaliter aut (quam magis puto) spiritualiter.*

At first, Methley says, he thought that this overwhelming feeling was a physical one; he believed a fire entered his cell, and he cried out, “Come, and help me!”²⁵⁷ Methley mistakes spiritual experience for physical. But readers, *already* taught by the *Scola* that the “*a.a.a*” is a cry of divine inflatus rather than physical fire – for anyone who might have forgotten, the marginal note at this point says “because of the fervor of love, the voice of the lover is carried away,” – will know all they need to: the *a.a.a.* is potentially voiced, but more likely voiceless, as the lover’s capability for vocal expression is carried away along with his spirit.²⁵⁸ Even Methley has trouble defining the boundaries of this event; he gives the situation to the reader to interpret. With what did he cry “A?” and with what mouth did he say “*in manus tuas?*”

Methley gives the answer a few folios later:

And whether I cried out vocally or spirituality (which I think was more likely), I became an invalid due to the languor of love, and I believe I thought these words, forming them in my heart: *amor. amor. amor.* And lacking that form I had desired I was totally able to exhale, *a. a. a.* then either like I was singing, or, rather, as if I were crying out in my spirit in praise.²⁵⁹

The text sets up a test-case for the reader, a chance for her to discern the presence of *canor* on her own, to interpret *a.a.a* for herself, and to see if she has made her own

²⁵⁷ Ibid, *SAL*, fol 7r: *Et sicut qui periculum metuunt ignis. non clamant ignis innasit domum meam. venite et adiuuate me. quia in augustia vel pocius agonia piti? vix possunt vuum? uerbum loqui sicut clamant a. a. a. in hac voce simul volentes intelligi periculum suum. sic ego [marginal gloss: Quia feruo amoris. plerumque ipsam eciam vocem aufert amanti.] secundum meum modulum.*

²⁵⁸ Ibid, *SAL*, fol 7r: *Quia feruo amoris, plerumque ipsam eciam vocem aufert amanti.*

²⁵⁹ Ibid, *SAL*, fol. 7r-v: *Aut vocaliter. aut (quam magis puto) spiritualiter, sed inualescente languore amoris vix cogitare potui formans in spiritu hec uerba . amor . amor. amor. O tandem deficiens ab hac forma exspectaui quam totaliter spiritum exspirare possem. a. a. a. tummodo aut consimili modo canens pocius quam clamans in spiritu per gaudio.*

contemplative practice conform with Carthusian *musica celestis*.²⁶⁰ This is why, when Norton repeat his own penitential *a.a.a*, he does so only *after* he has read Methley's text, written two treatises – one monastic obedience (the *Musica*) and the other on visionary experience (the *Thesaurus*) –, and nearly completed a third (the *Lamentatio*). Only then does Norton exclaim in Methlian fashion:

O virgin and mother of all, most powerful lady and most wise and most benign, Listen, Listen, Listen, Listen, Listen, Listen, Listen, Listen, and Listen to me (*Audi. Audi. Audi. Audi. Audi. Audi. et exaudi*), the my most lamentable and heartfelt lamentations, and lead me away from my body.²⁶¹

Just as in prior treatises, where *O vos omnes* and *amore langueo* had taken hold in the lover, here it is *Audi* – shortened to *A* – that takes precedence, and along with it, the refrain *educ me de corpore isto* or “lead me from this body,” a petition that occurs twelve

²⁶⁰ This *a.a.a*. is not the real experience, but exists in a symbolic relationship to it. The ego is other-identification and its fragmentation in the moment of identification of the other. The marginal notations perform this same function, mirroring the text back to itself. John Norton and Richard Methley, too, are in an epistolary relationship with each other, in a sort of friendship where the two writers mimic and reflect each other in writing. From the end of the eleventh century to the fourteenth, epistolary manuals became the central handbooks for rhetoric, and the idea of writing as a form of speech, or letter-writing as rhetoric, was central to education. According to early 12th-century letter-writing and letter-writing theory, a letter should be divided into five parts: the *salutatio*, the *captatio benevolentiae*, the *narratio*, the *petitio*, and the *conclusio* (a formal greeting, an attention-grabbing section, a background, a request, and a conclusion). Most letters were designed to be read aloud to the recipient rather than to be read quietly, the letter-writing manuals of the *ars dictaminis* focused on the sound of spoken sentences. Katherine Zieman discusses the “death” of the monastic economy at the hands of the chantry. Well, there was also a “death” of the *ars dictaminis* at the hands of its own hyperformalism. It seems to me that one of the differences between pastoral care and the art of letter writing is that the one neglects these forms and the other absorbs them, although there is obviously an introduction at the head of this text. See Richardson, Malcolm. “The *ars dictaminis*, the Formulary, and medieval Epistolary Practice.” in *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present* in Poster, Carol and Linda C. Mitchell (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 52-6.

²⁶¹ Lincoln Cathedral MS 57, DL, fol. 83r: *O virgo et mater et omnium domina potentissima sapientissima et benignissima . Audi . Audi . Audi . Audi . Audi . Audi . et exaudi me lamentabilitur et cordialiter clamantem ad te et educ me de corpore isto.*

times in the *Lamentacio*.²⁶² The final time the body is mentioned, Norton asks that the virgin allow “this body be dissolved into ineffable stuff.”²⁶³ As with the ostenatos of *amore languero* and *ego dormio*, Norton has learned how to contemplate from Methley’s text.

In Norton and Methley’s treatises, the *a.a.a* of *canor* can be many things. By shortening the language of love to a single syllable, the Carthusian authors are not merely following the *Cloud of Unknowing*’s dictates to “Take[...] bot a litil worde of o silable[...] for ever the schorter it is, the betir it acordeth with the werk of the spirite.”²⁶⁴ The *a. a. a.* allows the word of the spirit to be a floating signifier, one that, like the tension between the body and the spirit, gains its significance through the unresolved tension between unisyllaby and polysyllaby, through *Amor*, *Audi*, and *A*. When Methley calls out, he is crying *Amor, amor, amor* (and yet we don’t know this immediately, but only later does he explain to us that the *A* is evocative of *amor*). Norton’s *A*, on the other hand, is vocative: *Audi*. One *a.* is imploring, the other euphoric. The play of spiritual expression is a play on language that is understood by those who have read the text’s continual reappropriation of repetitive terms, from the *a.* to the *amore languero*.

Spiritual Friendship

²⁶² Ibid, *DL*, fol. 83r. “*Educ me de corpore isto.*” Three times on 83r, three times on 83v, twice on fol 84r, and once on fol 86r, 87r, 91v, 92v.

²⁶³ Ibid, *DL*, fol. 93r-v: *Quia ab isto corpore dissolui desidero ineffabiliter et esse cum christo ihesu dulcissimo filio tua quam quero quem diligo quem ineffabilissime clare secuti est videre cupio Et tunc audiui vocem domine mee dulcissime et matris misericordissime mihi valde dulciter dicentem. O fili dulcis ne timeas pondorositatem et vilitatem carnis tue. Quia nunc exaudita est lamentio tua magna et eciam scripta est in celo in libris angelorum coram deo.*

²⁶⁴ *CUnk*, ll 500-1.

What distinguishes the Carthusian stream of *canor* from its Rollean undercurrent? Methley and Norton's musical delectation manifests as the ineluctable transformation of physical matter at the *apex mentis* of spiritual exuberance. For Rolle, this was an experience that took place primarily in solipsism and self-love, one that precluded interaction with the outside world. While the facts of Rolle's autobiography belie this narrative – Rolle's roll as a pastoral and epistolary mentor suggests a less heremitic life than works like the *Melos Amoris* present – Rolle obviously understood his own mystical experience as primarily solitary. On the other hand, what we see in the Carthusian record is quite the opposite: although Norton and Methley belonged to what was effectively an order of hermits, the Trinity and Lincoln manuscripts are fundamentally *social* texts intent on forming relationships: between the solitary and his own interior life (a subjectival awareness), between the author and his readers (in this context, a tradition of spiritual care), and between Methley and Norton specifically (a relationship that was both fraternal and friendly). Methley and Norton wrote and constructed their mystical diaries as collaborative efforts, and Methley and Norton are distinguished from their Rollean foundation through spiritual friendship.²⁶⁵

Where Trinity O.2.56 ends with Rolle – “a sensible fervor which promised to delight me frequently in languor, just like the dear Richard of Hampole.”²⁶⁶ – it begins

²⁶⁵ We should think of this not only as plugging in to the medieval tradition of authorization, but also on contemporary discussions of the “social text” and the death of the author. May want to theorize more on the social text later. The tradition of mystical writing and monastic traditions of spiritual friendship, or *spirituali amicitia* is part of nearly every monastic tradition, though it is most commonly associated with the Cistercians.

²⁶⁶ Trinity O.2.56, RS, fol 55v-56r: *Cumque missam finissem, iterum atque iterum defeci totus languidus effectus nam vita mea consistit in amore languore dulcore feruore,*

with *amicitia*. “For all created things,” the opening line of the *Scola Amoris Languidi* says, “the height of learning is to love and be loved.”²⁶⁷ This little aphorism on mutual love is easy to pass by, a throw-away phrase on the way to more adventurous discussions of languor and ecstasy. But it is, in fact, more than this. In this passage, Methley brings his mystical treatises into a discussion on friendship that goes back, through Augustine and Cicero, as far as Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics*. The types, benefits, and virtues of friendship within a discussion of the contemplative, solitary life of the Carthusian are complicated, imbued with a special sort of rigour, but in order to get at them, one must look briefly at the longer tradition.

For Aristotle, friendship (*philia*) existed in three distinct forms: between those people who use each other for personal profit or utility, those who are friends because of the joyfulness or emotional delight they produce in each other, and those friends who were enjoyed, mutually, in abstract terms. The last of these, the most virtuous, lead to *eudaimonia* and perfect happiness, in large part because it was not dependent primarily on personal happiness, but rather on a sense of self-sacrifice, sufficiency, and the greater

canore, rarius tamen in sensibili feruore quia dilectus michi promisit quod frequencius in languore sicut et ille almus Ricardus dictus de hampol frequencius in calore de quo non legi quod tam frequens fuerit in languore.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, *SAL*, fol 1r: *Omnium creaturum summum studium est amare et amari*. Later, in the *Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti*, Methley will discuss his vocation in terms of connecting with a replete world, “*Ut quid plane quia amore languero: ut digneris me tua vocacione sancta de mundo ad teipsum per teipsum: propter teipsum pre nimia dileccione tua omnio omni modo bono in quantum possibile est decet et oportet in unione omnis creature tecum in ordine suo, et spiritum hoc modicum quomodo sentire possum propter exemplarem sanctitatem tocius mundi*” (fol. 32r). There is a bookmark at this line, suggesting that this sentence was held in some high esteem by at least one of its readers. To love God through a holy vocation, and the world in yourself through yourself, and on account of yourself to have dilectation of the whole world insofar as it is possible and proper, and to bring all creatures into a union with the order, and thus to have a sensation of the whole world.

good.²⁶⁸ This lead Aristotle to say, near the end of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, that only good men, equal in status, and who “mutually recognize [each other] as bearing goodwill and wishing well to each other for one of the aforesaid reasons” can be true friends.²⁶⁹ Perfect friendship requires a reciprocal love of the Good along with the Other, to see in the Other “another self.”²⁷⁰

Three-hundred years later, Cicero appropriated Aristotle’s friendship-as-ethical-good for his own purposes in the *De Amicitia*. “Nothing is more delightful than a return of affection, and the mutual interchange of kind feeling and good offices.”²⁷¹ And when Augustine, with Cicero in mind, retells his life as one conditioned by mutual love, he both appropriates and critiques the classical tradition of friendship constituted by ethical obligations towards the pagan “good.” For Augustine, the classical definition friendship is dangerous. “What delighted me,” Augustine says of his pagan childhood, “if not to

²⁶⁸ Pangle, Lorraine Smith. *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, ed. John von Heyking and Richard Avramenko (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Classen, Albrecht and Marilyn Sandidge, eds. *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH and Co, 2010).

²⁶⁹ Aristotle. *Nichomachean Ethics* Barnes, Julian, Ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). VIII.2-5.

²⁷⁰ *Nichomachean Ethics* IX.4

²⁷¹ *Nihil est enim remuneratione benevolentiae, nihil vicissitudine studiorum officiorumque iucundius*. For Cicero, writing in the context of the tumultuous Late Roman Republic rather than the Athenian *demos*, friendship was inherently political: people unequal of status could not be perfect friends, for one would always be in the others’ debt. Still, he found space for true happiness within friendship. This mutual affection, Cicero goes on to claim, is most powerful in those who are alike; and therefore, the good love the good and attach them to themselves as though they were united by blood and nature (*ut bonos boni diligant adsciscantque sibi quasi propinquitate coniunctos atque natura*). See Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *De Amicitia*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), I.14.

love and be loved?”²⁷² As Augustine reflects on the possibilities of friendship within a specifically Christian context, he laments his childhood friends: these were not connections of souls with souls, but were instead the fragile lineaments of bodily affection, “exhaled in murky clouds of concupescence of the flesh.” The young Augustine could not “discern serene delectation from the clouds of libidinal desire.”²⁷³ In a Christian context, proper friendship is about knowing when to draw boundaries and when to break them down: corporeal self-identity must remain even as spiritual distinction disappears. A true friend is a second self, and the duplication of Self in the Other necessitates that some subjectival difference remain between friends no matter how spiritually connected they are. In the Augustinian sense, *amicitia* is about *dilectio* – dilectation and delight, yes, but also about *election* and choice – about rational thought and the careful cultivation of mutual interest.

What keeps the Christian friend-pair from collapsing into erotic love is the simultaneous, overarching love of God that guides it. Aelred of Rievaulx (d. 1167) provides perhaps the most moving and complete reading of this type of love – spiritual friendship – in *De Spirituali Amicitia*. As an abbot of the Cistercian order, Aelred harmonized the human desire to form close interpersonal bonds with the Benedictine injunction to do just the opposite.²⁷⁴

²⁷² *Et quid erat quod me delectabat, nisi amare et amari?* See Augustine. *Confessiones*. O’Donnell, James, Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 2.2.2.

²⁷³ *Exhalabantur nebulae de limosa concupiscentia carnis et scatebra pubertatis, et obnubilabant atque obfuscabant cor meum, ut non discerneret serenitas dilectionis a caligine libidinis* (Ibid, 2.2.2).

²⁷⁴ The problems associated with friendship within the monastery were many: close personal bonds could cause favoritism, and in turn rancour, amongst a group of men who were supposed to be in harmony at all times. See McGuire, Brian Patrick. “The Charm

How could, Aelred asked, a cloistered man form close personal bonds without disrupting the social order of the monastery, or worse, falling into “unnatural” carnal desire for his friends? The dangers of specific friendship were many, and the Benedictine Rule and its followers go into some detail on the dangers of particular friendship.²⁷⁵ In *De Spirituali Amicitia*, Aelred presents three discussions – one dialogue and two trilogues – in which this problem is solved. He defines friendship, outlines its benefit, and teaches the monks under his care how to maintain friendships in perpetuity, even after death.²⁷⁶ The Cistercian view of friendship as modelled by Aelred was the going form for monastics in the medieval period. In Aelred’s conception, it is a form of rational love that exceeds all other types of human love, even that of charity. Love of friends in this system should always be subordinated to, or mimic, love of the deity; God becomes a spiritual safeguard against the corporeality that threatened to turn stoic appreciation of the Other into a sinful desire for it. Using God as a router, friendship is able to connect Self to Other without the sensual danger of physical lineaments. Friendship is above charity,

of Friendship in the Monastic Institution: A Meditation on Anselm and Bernard.” in *Institution und Charisma*. Felten, Franz, Annette Kehnel, and Stefan Weinfurter, Eds. (Vienna: Bohlau Verlag, 2009), pp. 425-36.

²⁷⁵ One of the chief sources for the monastic reticence towards particular friendship is Cassian, who in his sixteenth conference on *De Amicitia* elides Christian friendship into a broader discussion of Christian charity. It is difficult not to do this, of course, for all Christians – unlike their pagan ancestors – have available to them a discourse of charitable, perfect love in the image of God that is easily abstractable from particular love of an individual. Classen, Albrecht and Marilyn Sandige, Eds. *Friendship in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age: Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), p. 41.

²⁷⁶ Rueffer, Jens. “Aelred of Rievaulx and the Institutional Limits of Monastic Friendship.” *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude: Essays on Cistercians, Art and Architecture in Honour of Peter Fergusson*. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), p. 55-62. Ambrose’s *On the Duties of the Clergy* is another significant text behind *De Spirituali Amicitia*.

and spiritual friendship above other kinds, though “somehow the spiritual is obscured by association with other friendships, which rush in and noisily greet those who seek and desire a spiritual friendship.²⁷⁷ When Richard Methley opens his book – *The School of the Languor of Love* – with the quotation on mutual love, he is explicitly configuring his text within the rubric not only of *amor*, but of *amicitia*, at the center of which is God. “No one,” he says, “loves well if he does not truly love God as a trinity, and the trinity in unity and all that is created, and love it on account of God.”²⁷⁸

The main points Aelred makes in support of friendship are these: 1) true friends love with a bond more powerful than *caritas*, because charity is due to everyone, whether or not the object of love returns one’s affection; the love that binds spiritual friends is mutual and recognized as such, which makes it more perfect; 2) mutual love is a simulacrum of the love which exists between the perfectly obedient Christian and God;²⁷⁹ 3) following this, true friendship is impossible without true knowledge of God; 4) the goal of spiritual friendship is to mirror heavenly love in human relationships. In addition to this, spiritual friends must speak honestly with each other, and correct each other when

²⁷⁷ “*Non sit tibi molestum inter tot amicitias, illam quam spiritualem ad differentiam aliarum credimus nominandam, quae illis quodammodo involvitur et obscuratur, et illam quaerentibus et desiderantibus occurrunt et obstrepunt, ab earum, ut ita dixerim, communione secernere; ut illarum comparatione clariorem eam nobis, ac proinde optabiliorem faciens, ad ejus nos acquisitionem vehementius excites et accendas.*” See Aelred of Rievaulx, *Über die geistliche Freundschaft: lateinisch, deutsch*. Nyssen, Wilhelm, Ed. (Trier: Spee-Verlag, 1978).

²⁷⁸ Trinity MS O.2.56, *SAL*, fol 1r. *Nemo bene diligit nisi qui deum amet in trinitate et trinitatem in unitate diligit et omnia que creata sunt, debito respectu propter deum diligit.*

²⁷⁹ The coming of Christ allowed for a fuller manifestation of friendship than in the pagan world. Where Cicero only knew of four pairs of *true* friends, Christian friendship pairs exist in the thousands: the perfect sacrifice of the martyrs, who are “of one heart and one soul,” Acts V, “*Multitudinis credentium erat cor unum et anima una: nec quisquam aliquid suum esse dicebat, sed erant illi omnia communia?*”

they have fallen into error. Aelred encourages obedience as a means to true, charitable love. “A friend,” says Aelred elsewhere in his writing, “is someone you let into the secret chamber of your mind by the bonds of charity.”²⁸⁰ By following these precepts, *spirituali amicitia* not only perfectly sees the Self in the Other and the Other in the Self while maintaining proper physical boundaries, but is also a perfect means of discovering God, one by which the monk climbs the rungs of theophanic experience. “Was it not a foretaste of blessedness thus to love and be loved,” says Aelred:

to help and thus to be helped; and in this way from the sweetness of fraternal charity (*fraternae caritatis*) to wing one’s flight aloft to that more sublime splendor of divine love (*dilectionis divinae splendorem*), and by the ladder of charity now to mount to the embrace of Christ Himself; and again to descend to the love of neighbor (*amorem proximi*), there pleasantly to rest? And so, in this friendship of ours, which we have introduced by way of example, if you see anything worthy of imitation, profit by it and advance your own perfection.²⁸¹

The spiritual friend ascends from fraternal charity to the dilection of Christ – a form of mystical indwelling that retains rational properties – and back to the lateral love of the

²⁸⁰ *Quem uinculis caritatis in illud secretarium tuae mentis inducas.* This comes from *De speculo caritatis*, III.39,100. Baldwin of Canterbury (d. 1190), a Cistercian monk and Abbot of Ford, in Devonshire, later Bishop of Worcester, and friend to Aelred of Rievaulx makes similar remarks in the *De Requie Quam Sibi et Nobis Christus Quaesivit et Paravit*. The mutual love of monastic friendship is represented here as useful, as sweet; it is both commerce and repayment – it is economic. Like Aelred’s formulation, it is a representation of the higher social bonds of heavenly love, of desire for and of God. Like the celestial hierarchy, in which the higher angelic orders participate fully in the blessedness of the lower, and the lower partake, or have a share in, the perfection of the higher, can be understood to be part of a relationship based on commerce.

²⁸¹ *Nonne quaedam beatitudinis portio fuit, sic amare et sic amari; sic iuvare et sic iuvari; et sic ex fraternae caritatis dulcedine in illum sublimiorem locum dilectionis divinae splendorem altius euolare; et in scala caritatis nunc ad Christi ipsius amplexum conscendere, nunc ad amorem proximi ibi suaviter repausaturum descendere? In hac igitur amicitia nostra quam exempli gratia inservimus, si quid cernitis imitandum, ad vestrum id retorquete profectum.* See Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendship* III.127.

brother. The similarity to Pseudo-Dionysian mystical and ecclesiastical hierarchies is not superficial; Aelred imagines spiritual friendship as the functional operation of theophany.

We see the same tendency in John Norton's *Musica Monachorum*, in which obedient profession to the Carthusian order mimics the obedience maintained by the celestial hierarchies.²⁸²

Now, when you love god and honor him for his natural divinity, I know then you speak to my spirit, but you will not be angry, if I say *amore languedo*, because it is certainly not accidental that you love me and I love you, but love each other is the cause that either of us is part of the other.²⁸³

As well as on the nature of *amore languedo* itself: *Amore Languedo* is about not just about loving God, but about engaging in a fraternal care for the Br(Other) The use of the "you" in his treatises suggests that our mystic is concerned with speaking to someone who has taken monastic vows. In Norton's mind, pure obedience is comprised of elements that provide for the operation of spiritual friendship:

Charity (*caritas*) is the matter of all salvation and all good works; wisdom (*sapiencia*) is the operation of this matter and is instrumental in its manifestation, and love (*graciously amor*) burns and is the most perfect of all these material works.²⁸⁴

Caritas (matter), *sapiencia* (form), and *graciously amor* (substance), combine to form Carthusian obedience. The resonance of charity, love, and wisdom is a form of perfect friendship manifested in the proper regulation of behavior. Again and again these terms

²⁸² Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 57, *MM*, fol. 12v-16r.

²⁸³ Trinity MS O.2.56, *DDD*, fol 41v: *Nam quod tu cupis honorem ext natura diuina est, scio quippe quomodo loqueris, et loqueris michi in spiritu modo, sed queso ne irascaris, si[...] quia amore languedo, certe non accidentalia sunt causa quare vel tu me vel ego diligo te, sed amore tuus utriusque causa est scilicet ex utraque parte.*

²⁸⁴ Lincoln Cathedral MS 57, *MM*, fol 12r: *Caritas materia tocius saluacionis et omnium bonorum operum est. Sapiencia vero operatum illius materie et instrumentum operandi et manifestandi opera eiusdem. Et graciously amor ardescent est claritas coniunctione et perfectione uniuersorum praedictae materiae operum.*

appear in relation to each other, limning the boundaries of *spirituali amicitia*: charity, obedience, and love. It is difficult *not* to read the entirety of the *Musica monachorum* – structured around obedience and attaining heaven – as Norton’s attempt to define principles of sociality and friendship within a solitary life. The Carthusian who obtains equivalence with the *chorus angelorum* becomes a *spiritualis amicus* with the angels.²⁸⁵ Obedience to the solitary life leads to communal inclusion, as evidenced within the manuscript.²⁸⁶

Methley, too, is concerned with monastic obedience, rapture, and how this obstructs or confounds sociality. How does one obtain mental tranquility in *languor*, he asks, while also fulfilling the obligations of the Carthusian office? And how does obedience allow for friendship? Methley’s *Scola Amoris Languidi*, like Norton’s, makes obedience the center of solitary practice:

You will be able to fulfill this [your rule] without grave impediments, because you are one who is working alone, but not alone: the one who is working in you makes you capable. You are not able to do anything without him and so, in a sense, everything you do is done by him, and on account of him, and, moreover, you want to know how you might fulfill your office and complete the circle of obedience, without doing what is necessary for the body, or what has been established as touching on charity, so that you might then be raptured into heaven.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ Ibid, *MM*, fol. 5v: *Sine dubio si caste perseuerant ambo in celis gloriose coronabuntur et in benedicionem mea sine fine gaudebunt cum angelis et sancits celorum in seculam sempeterna.*

²⁸⁶ Ibid, *MM*, fol 20r.

²⁸⁷ Trinity O.2.56, *SAL*, fol 5r: *Et tu sine graui impedimento potes implere, tu illus per ipsum facies. Quia ipse est qui operatur in te et velle et posse. Nichil potes sine ipso, ergo quodammodo ipse omnia agit in te, et propter te, hic autem intelligere te volo, quia omnia debita officia tua implebis sine fuit circa obedienciam, sine proprie corporis necessaria, vel raterne caritati contigua. Et si tu tunc in celestibus raptus esses.*

Obedience is necessary for true spiritual friendship. The unification of the self with the *corpus mysticum* or monastic body is reminiscent of Aelred, who says that God

determined that peace should guide all his creatures and society unite them. Thus from him who is supremely and uniquely one, all should be allotted some trace of his unity. For this reason, he left no class of creatures isolated, but from the many he linked each one in a kind of society.²⁸⁸

In other words, friendship is most perfect in the self-sufficient – an ideal traceable back to Aristotle – self-sufficiency and solitude are *not* identical to loneliness.²⁸⁹ Although the solitary eschews communality, he does so in order to reach the ordered *unitatis* of sociality.

In the *Dormitorium Dilecti Dilecti*, Methley discusses the possibilities for friendship based on solitary spiritual fervor. “I thought that I had found a comrade in my reading, but now you remove yourself from me, and I fear you have put me in harm’s way; I beg you to return.” Christ answers Methley’s spirit, responding with the familiar refrain: “I do not leave or forsake you, for I languish in love.”²⁹⁰ Although the interlocutor – the friend – is Christ, we could be mistaken for initially imaging that the *sodalem in lecto florido* was the reader, or perhaps John Norton. Though the friend here

²⁸⁸ Aelred of Rievaulx, *De Spirituali Amicitia: Ipsa itaque summa natura omnes naturas instituit, omnia suis locis ordinavit, omnia suis temporibus discrete distribuit. Voluit autem, nam et ita ratio ejus aeterna praescipit, ut omnes creaturas suas pax componeret, et uniret societas; et ita omnia ab ipso, qui summe et pure nus est, quoddam unitatis vestigium sortirentur. Hinc est, quod nullum genus rerum solitarium reliquit, sed ex multis quadam societate connexuit.* (PL.0667A-B) See also *Speculum caritatis*, 1.21.61.

²⁸⁹ "The solitary person's life is hard, since it is not easy for him to be continuously active all by himself; but in relation to others and in their company it is easier." (Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, 1170a6–8)

²⁹⁰ Ibid, *DDD*, fol. 42r: *Putabam me inuenisse sodalem in lecto florido et nunc vis recedere a me committens me periculo et differens a petito. Quod inspirati? Non dimittam nec derelinquam te, quia amore languo.*

is Christ, by imitation any “accomplice” in activity can be seen as a friend.²⁹¹ Through obedience and charity, spiritual friendship with Christ becomes not just possible, but the exemplum from which all friendship formulates itself, a friend who works with the solitary in a continual spiritual engagement.

And there is one virtue which is placed above all the others, and which alone perfects men, and this is charity. Moreover, I say, true obedience which commonly occurs between the regular and the singular, or between God and the anchorite, I say, moreover, that the experiment of of the solitary is above earthly kings, and he will have no equal in this mortal life in terms of his true obedience.²⁹²

Charity *is not merely true obedience*, but the two are *one and the same thing*. In addition to this, Methley elides Norton’s architectural distinction between charity and obedience (in which obedience is comprised of charity, wisdom, and love). Carthusian friendship seems predicated not merely on charity, but on deontologic logics of obedience to a rule. The extent to which obedience is about retreating into solitude, it is also the means of achieving intersubjectivity.²⁹³ This is why, perhaps, all of the treatises in the Lincoln and

²⁹¹ From Cassian, in his sixteenth conference (*De Amicitia*) to Augustine, Cicero, and Aelred, friends who were distant from each other – or even dead! – were still considered to be friends. In fact, many of the monastic friendships outlined in the literature are pen-pals rather than proximate bodies. See Slater, Isaac. “*Exuberantissimus Amor*: Cassian on Friendship.” *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 44.2 (2009): 129-144.

²⁹² Trinity O.2.56, *TCVA*, fol 28r: *Est tamen virtus quo omnes excellit omnibus nimirum preponitur, quia sola perficit hominem fortassi dicit aliquis eam esse charitatem, ego autem dico obedienciam veram, que quidem communiter fit inter regulare singulariter, aut inter deum et eius anacoritam summum, dicam ergo quomodo didici experimento solus dicendum est rex super omnes mortales, et ipse pariter mortalis qui nullum habet parem in vera obediencia.*

²⁹³ Derrida makes a long argument about the politics of friendship and its inherent dangers. The friend, as Other, no matter how firmly identified with Self, is always in danger of becoming the enemy. Friendship *is* political, and the political operation amounts to making friendship possible. Responsibility has something to do, in this world, with friendship, and the vocative call in the treatise what Derrida would call a

Trinity manuscripts are, in part, dialogic: they let the mystic and his readers know not only that he is not “alone,” but, what’s more, to know that he is God’s friend.²⁹⁴

Friendship is specific to the individuals involved. But friendship, as outlined above, is also abstract and fungible: any two Christian solitaries in possession of Norton and Methley’s text could be exchanged for any others. And, although Norton and Methley lived side by side, the only traces of their relationship appear in manuscripts in which neither mentions the other by name. Classical and medieval critiques are largely silent on the role that mutual activity plays in solidifying friendships, and the spiritual friendship between Methley and Norton is a sort of limit-case: the time given them to speak, bounded as it was by cell-walls and the strictures of the Carthusian rule, would have consisted almost entirely of refectory time, sung mass, and Sunday walks: liturgical time.

Carthusian song is Rollean in that its corporeality interferes with physical song, but the Carthusian mystic has a means of avoiding the critical interference between noumena and phenomena: it *requires* its practitioners to withdraw into solitude for long periods of time. Carthusian cells were essentially “private monasteries” and Methley’s emplacement tells us a lot about the way in which the entire space of the Charterhouse

“messianic teleiopoiesis.” See Derrida, Jacques. *Politiques de l’amitié* (Paris: Editions Galiléé, 1994), p. 235.

²⁹⁴ “Too much love separates, interrupts, threatens the social bond,” because getting too close always leads to rupture (Derrida, *Politiques de l’amitié*, 256). And so this is, perhaps, one of the ways in which this Carthusian dialogue is the *most* friendly one there could possibly be: the participants rupture with the world in order to converse with Christ, and afterwards, shaken but not destroyed by this intimate connection with Christ, go on to recount their behaviors to each other in stunningly intricate detail. This is the most non-heremitic thing I can imagine.

was used.²⁹⁵ This is why, Methley in particular structures his treatises around social spaces: he is making up for the lack of sociality through a social text. We should, in this sense, imagine the textual exchange represented in Lincoln and Trinity as about friendship, but, more importantly, performing friendship through epistolary exchange, no matter the distance. Norton understood this, as his *Thesaurus* suggests the possibility for the reunion of the soul with its beloved friends after death:

Therefore they will be called blessed who labor [against their flesh] unto death, when they will be joined, even if it is from across the alps, in chaste love and in the time of their death they will exist in pure contemplation without iniquity.²⁹⁶

This contemplative communion of saints is represented in the “open” journals of Norton and Methley, as they respond to each other while simultaneously providing readers beyond the cloister walls a chance to engage in a similar relationship.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ The Carthusian cell is “a two-story house, with an entry passage, living room, study, bedroom, oratory on the ground floor and with a work room above. The cell is set in the corner of a garden and is surrounded by walls about 10 feet tall. Monks typically threw their garbage out of their second-story window, and in excavations of Mount Grace, we can tell from the garden detritus just which cells were responsible for which parts of book production: Cell 8 was a bookbinder, Cell 10 and 11 produced pen nibs, Cells 12 and 13 colored pigment.” See Burton, J and K Stöber, eds. “Make straight in the desert a highway for our God – Carthusians and Community in late medieval England,” in *Monasteries and Society in the British Isles*. Studies in the History of medieval Religion 35. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 168-179. With this evidence at hand, it is impossible to imagine the book production of Mount Grace, and its attendant mystical expression, as anything other than a product of an entire community humming with an audible rhythm of material force. The sense that we get from the archaeological evidence, when mixed with the archival record, is of a sort of infinite choice.

²⁹⁶ Lincoln Cathedral MS 57, *TCVA*, fol 50r: *Ideo beatissimi vocantur qui in hoc opere usque ad mortem iugiter transalpinati fuerunt in amore casto, et in mortis sue tempore erunt puri contemplatii sine aliqua iniquitacionem.*

²⁹⁷ For instance, Bonaventure used the word *communicatio* to signify the bond uniting two people through charity (*lex caritatis*) in contrast with the law of society (*lex socialis*). See Dunn, John, and Ian Harris, Eds. *Aquinas, Great Political Thinkers, Vol. 4*. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1997), p. 93. In this one phrase, Bonaventure connects

Carthusian mystical song is more highly social than its Rollean foundations – the mystical diaries that John Norton and Richard Methley produced show an indebtedness to the tradition of spiritual friendship, and their scribes and their readers show that they are invested in a long-standing relationship to the texts at hand. In the opening to the *Musica Monachorum*, for instance, the scribe writes:

This was written by Brother Flecher, and you know that I did not rush forward indiligently to have looked over this little book, but with great favor and fraternal charity which is given to us by turns may it conserve in the eternal god and the lord Jesus Christ our redeemer. Amen.²⁹⁸

Fraternal charity combines the highest forms of friendship with the copying of the manuscript – the text itself is a means to friendship. Carefully copying out the text is not just a monastic duty, but a friendly one. The manuscript is the congener by which true friendship is expressed, with Christ as the ternary, stabilizing figure.²⁹⁹ Remember that Methley’s other treatises are written for specific men: *The Epistle of Hew Hermite* to a young hermit living near Mount Grace (whose Latin was apparently not good enough to read a work of spiritual guidance in Latin), and the Latin *Cloud of Unknowing* as well as

obedience with love and, beyond this, with the language. Aelred of Rievaulx talks in some detail in Book II of the *De Spirituali Amicitia* about maintaining friendship at a distance, and many of the great “friendships” of the medieval period can be discerned through the *ars dictaminis*, or the epistolary genre. See also Rueffer, Jens. “Aelred of Rievaulx and the Institutional Limits of Monastic Friendship.” *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude: Essays on Cistercians, Art and Architecture in Honour of Peter Fergusson*. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), p.55-62; Camargo, Martin. *Ars dictaminis, ars dictandi*. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991); Murphy, James Jerome. *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.)

²⁹⁸ Lincoln, Cathedral Library MS 57, *MM*, fol. 2r-v: *Hec scripsi frater flecherus ut intelligas me libellum tuum perlegisse non prorsus indiligentus. sed cum grato favore et fraterna caritate, quam nobis Invicem conseruet in eternum deus et dominus redemptor noster ihesus christus amen.*

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, *MM*, fol. 27v: *Sequitur libellus ab eodem et eodum tempore editus.*

Marguerite Porete's *Mirror*, to Thurston Watson, a confrere at Mount Grace who was eventually transferred to Hull, where he died in 1505.³⁰⁰ Friendship requires mutual caring, intimacy, and shared activity, and all three of these things are found in the Carthusian conception of *canor* as well.

The two manuscripts at the center of this chapter get at the song of angels by manipulating *canor* through a filter of obedience, solitary activity, charity, and liturgical action. This is why, getting back to the beginning of this chapter and the (very) late invocation of Rolle as the inspiration behind Carthusian *canor*, Methley took so long to reference him: the mystical song of the Carthusian monastery is about more than Rollean withdrawal into the self: it is about withdrawal into the other, the spiritual friend.

It is tantalizing to imagine Norton and Methley passing their respective fascicles off to each other in such a setting. "What do you think," one might have said, "of this?" The other, "I dined with the angels last night!" And there is a sort of collegial one-upmanship at work in their various texts, a sense of mutual influence. At the end of the *Scola Amoris Languidi*, Methley addresses his readers:

³⁰⁰ Logan, Francis Donald. *Runaway Religious in medieval England, C. 1240-1540*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 49. One Thurstan Lofthous, identified as Thurstan Watson, is recorded as having left the Cistercians of Kirkstall and transferred to Mount Grace before 1489. A papal mandate exists from 23 February 1489, but he was allowed to remain a Carthusian. The only known manuscript of Methley's *Cloud and Mirror* survives in Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 221, in the hand of William Darker (d. 1512) a Carthusian of Sheen. See Doyle, A. I. "William Darker: the Work of an English Carthusian Scribe." *medieval Manuscripts, their Makers, and Users*. (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2011).

I hope that I have been both orthodox and catholic in this work, but if it necessary that this treatise be corrected, if please you, o scribes, do it, so that you can praise me in continual song: *quia amore langueo*.³⁰¹

We can imagine Norton, his brother, taking him up on the offer.

³⁰¹ Trinity MS O.2.56, *SAL*, fol. 21v: *Gracies mei orthodoxi et catholici, si necesse sit opus hoc corrigite, si vobis placuerit, scribite, mecum precor dem imperpetuum laudate: quia amore langueo et cetera.*