

Using Cognitive Science to Think about the Twelfth Century: Revisiting the Individual through Latin Texts

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E. A. Mullins

Abstract

This study has several key purposes. First, it tests the potential applicability of the modern discourses of neuro- and cognitive science to the study of medieval texts and languages: more specifically, it does this by using two core methodological tools, namely *the embodied view of the mind* and a theory of metaphor developed collaboratively by the linguist, George Lakoff, and the philosopher, Mark Johnson, to explore the range of significances which may be drawn from the ways in which human life and existence are represented in a sample of twelfth-century Latin texts. Second, it challenges the view, held by some modern scholars, that by the medieval period Latin was an intrinsically inadequate language for the purposes of self-expression. And finally, it problematises the existing discourses in medieval studies on the individual, self, and subjectivity, first, by developing a new mode of analysing the mental lives of medieval people, and second, by challenging the view that advanced forms of self-awareness were “discovered” during the twelfth century.

By following this course, this study offers a number of fresh insights into twelfth-century texts and the phenomena of the individual, self, and subjectivity. Most importantly, it shows that the ways in which human life and existence are represented in medieval texts are best understood in terms of complex interactions between the biological mind and body and their effects in the world (especially their “socio-cultural” effects). From this conclusion, it is argued that the basis of the individual, self, or subject must be found, not just in socio-cultural development, but also the biological realities of human existence. Furthermore, this study contributes to existing literature on the twelfth century by exploring the range of influences, ancient and contemporary, which affected how medieval people thought about themselves and other people, while affirming their basis in the interaction between the mind, body, and culture.

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List of Abbreviations

- Boethius, *Consolatio* *De Consolatione Philosophiae* in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, vol. 63, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1847), cols. 0579-0870a and *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. P. G. Walsh (Oxford, 2008).
- Guibert, *De Vita Sua* *De Vita Sua Sive Monodiarum* in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, vol. 156, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1853), cols. 0837a-962a and *De Vita Sua Sive Monodiarum*, trans. J. F. Benton in *Self and Society in Medieval France* (reprinted Toronto, 1984), pp. 35-228.
- Isidore, *Etymologiae* *Etymologiae* in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, vol. 82, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1850), cols. 0073-728c and *The Etymologies*, trans. S. A. Barney *et al* (Cambridge, 2005).
- John, *Letters i.* *The Letters of John of Salisbury (1153-1161)*, vol. i, ed. and trans. W. S. Millor *et al* (London, 1955).
- John, *Letters ii.* *The Letters of John of Salisbury (1163-1180)*, vol. ii, ed. and trans. W. J. Millor *et al* (Oxford, 1979).
- John, *Metalogicon* *The Metalogicon of John of Salisbury*, trans. D. D. McGarry (Gloucester Mass., 1971) and *Metalogicus* in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, vol. 199, ed. J. P. Migne, (Paris, 1855), cols. 0823-946c.
- John, *Policraticus* *Policraticus, Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*, trans. C. J. Nederman

(Cambridge, 1990) and *Polycraticus, Sive De Nugis Curialium et Vestigiis Philosophorum in Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, vol. 199, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1855), cols. 0379-822d.

- Lewis and Short C. T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (orig. Oxford, 1879), available online at:
<http://old.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/resolveform?lang=Latin>
- Liddell and Scott H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (orig. Oxford, 1843), available online at:
<http://old.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/resolveform>
- OED*: Oxford English Dictionary, available online at:
<http://www.oed.com/>
- OMT Oxford Medieval Texts published by Oxford University Press.
- Orderic, *Epilogue* *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, vol. 6, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1969-80), pp. 550-7.
- Peter, *Letters* *The Letters of Peter of Celle*, ed. and trans. J. Haseldine (Oxford, 2001).
- PL* *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, series Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844-64).
- PMLA* *The Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America*
- The Life of Christina* *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, ed. and trans. C. H. Talbot (reprinted Oxford, 1987).

Walter, *De Nugis*

De Nugis Curialium, ed. and trans. M. R. James, revised
by C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford,
1983).

Part I

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1: Defining the problems and purposes of this study

This study has four main aims: first, it is intended to make use of theories and methods from the modern discourses of neuro- and cognitive science to shed light on how the authors relevant to this study experienced and conceptualised themselves and the world around them; second, in following this course, this study is intended to problematise the existing discourses on “individuality”, “the self”, and “subjectivity” in medieval studies by focusing on new methods for exploring the ways in which, as just stated, *medieval people experienced and conceptualised themselves, their bodies, other people, and the world around them*; third, this study is intended to explore the issues raised by neuro- and cognitive science for how we relate the phenomena of society and culture to the embodied existence of medieval people; and fourth, by focusing on a sample of Latin texts written by English and French authors in the twelfth century, it is intended to show that Latin was an adequate language of self-expression for those twelfth-century writers who were able to use it.

The first, second, and third aims of this study are related and more complex than the fourth hence they occupy the bulk of this study: particularly from Chapter Two onwards. Before discussing them at length (see sec. 1.3 below) it is necessary to outline the relevant debates and historiography to which they respond (see sec. 1.2). Furthermore, I do not intend to make any argument in this study to the effect that people “discovered” or unwittingly developed “*the individual*” or “*the self*” (*etc.*) during the twelfth century. Instead, I intend to problematise this widely entertained assumption about the development of Western European culture during the twelfth

century on grounds supplied by neuro- and cognitive science. Since the nineteen-nineties, it has been widely argued in these disciplines that self-awareness is an ordinary, but also highly variable, feature of human cognition. Thus, although environmental, physical, and socio-cultural factors influence how people interpret their experiences of themselves (and develop concepts of “other people”), it seems quite certain from the findings of neuro- and cognitive science that people invariably develop concepts of themselves and other selves in response to their embodied sensory experiences of the world.¹ As will be argued in the conclusion to this study, this insight should raise serious concerns for historians and literary critics still clinging to the idea that individuality or selfhood are inventions of twelfth-century Western European societies and cultures.²

The fourth point raised above will be dealt with in this study separately from the previous three. Thus, since the mid-twentieth century, the twelfth century has been widely viewed as a period of economic growth and socio-cultural and political development throughout Western Europe, not least thanks to the work of the American historian, Charles Haskins, who popularised the notion of the “twelfth-century renaissance” in the nineteen-twenties.³ A revival in the use of Latin as a literary language and renewed interest in the literary and intellectual culture of pagan antiquity are often viewed as aspects of the twelfth century renaissance.⁴ However, prejudicial assumptions about the use of Latin in the medieval west have also developed alongside this. As well as witnessing a revival of literary Latin, the twelfth century is widely acknowledged as a period in which vernacular literatures became established in Western Europe (at least outside of England), and gradually replaced

¹ For instance, see the discussions of “the self” in D. C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (New York, 1991), pp. 412-30, A. Damasio, *Descartes’ Error* (New York, 1994: repr. London, 1995), pp. 236-44 (also see pp. 226-35 for relevant background information), and G. Lakoff and L. Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (New York, 1991), pp. 267-89. These three works will be discussed in Chapter Two, sec. 2.1.

² See Conclusion, sec. 6.1.

³ Haskins made his case for his view of the twelfth century as a “renaissance” in his now classic work, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Harvard, 1927).

⁴ For example, see J. Martin, ‘Classicism and style in Latin literature’ in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. J. F. Benton *et al* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 537-6. The twelfth century is also viewed as a period of economic growth which had a knock-on effect on technological and scientific progress (for instance, see B. Stock, ‘Science, Technology, and Economic Progress’ in *Science in the Middle Ages*, ed. D. C. Lindberg (Chicago, 1978), pp. 23-32) and the period during which vernacular literatures became established in Western Europe (for instance, see C. Baswell, ‘Latinitas’ in *Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. D. Wallace (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 122-51).

Latin over its course as the dominant literary tongues of Western Europeans.⁵ This has led some literary critics and historians to view the composition of Latin literature from the twelfth century onwards as stylistically and culturally antiquated.⁶

It is broadly correct that the composition of original Latin literary texts declined as the composition and production of vernacular texts increased during the later medieval period. Nevertheless, it is highly prejudicial to view the Latin literature produced during or after the twelfth century (or even post-classical Latin) as backwards or of poor quality by comparison with contemporary vernacular literature.⁷ In making such judgements, literary critics and historians have often overlooked the apparent comfort with which many authors wrote in Latin throughout the twelfth century, and continued to do so well into the modern period. Latin was presumably considered an adequate mode of literary expression to many writers who chose to use it in the post-classical world. This view of the relationship between Latin and vernacular languages in Western Europe from the twelfth century onwards needs to be challenged, particularly in as much as it reflects the assumptions and prejudices of modern scholars concerning the development of Western European literature from classical antiquity up to the present. Accordingly, this study focuses on wide variety of extracts from a sample of twelfth-century Latin texts which show how their respective authors' were able to make use of Latin as a means of self-expression.

1.2: Historiography and historiographical trends since c.1960

The historiography covered in this section encompasses work published by historians and literary critics from the nineteen-sixties up to the present. The purpose of this is to highlight significant changes in the attitudes, mostly of Anglophone medievalists, towards medieval people as individual conscious beings. The late sixties has been chosen as a starting point because it was around then that individuality, the self, and

⁵ For example, see E. Auerbach, *Mimesis* (originally Bern, 1946), English trans. W. Trask (Princeton, 1953), pp. 77-122 (especially 88-90), E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (originally Bern, 1948), English trans. W. Trask (London, 1953) pp. 383-8, Baswell, 'Latinitas', and S. Spence, *Texts and the Self in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 2 (and 1-17 for the full argument). The Russian scholar, Mikhail Bakhtin, made an analogous argument for the transition from Greek to vernacular languages in Eastern Europe in *The Dialogic Imagination* (originally Moscow, 1975), ed. M. Holquist and trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin Texas, 1981), pp. 3-40.

⁶ See Auerbach, *Mimesis*, pp. 88-90, Baswell, 'Latinitas', Spence, *Texts and the Self*, p. 2, and P. Haidu, *The Subject: Medieval / Modern* (Stanford Calif., 2004), p. 11.

⁷ See references to Auerbach and Haidu in the previous note.

subjectivity, *inter alia*, began appearing in the relevant literature as explicit topics of discussion. An effort is also made in this section to relate these developments to broader trends within history and literary criticism from the nineteen-eighties onwards, as the so-called linguistic turn began to make a significant impact on history and the study of historical languages and texts. Work relating to the twelfth century is given priority in this section. However, the chronological scope of the works covered here ranges from the early medieval period up to the early modern period.

The notion of the individual first became a stated topic of concern in Anglophone medieval studies in the second half of the twentieth century. An early contribution to debates on individuality in the medieval west was provided by R. W. Southern in the final chapter of his now classic work, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (1953).⁸ This theme was picked up more explicitly in the late sixties and seventies in works by Walter Ullmann, John F. Benton, Peter Dronke, and Colin Morris.⁹ Southern also continued to develop these themes in his later biographical work on St Anselm and the impact of humanism on intellectual life and education in eleventh and twelfth-century Europe.¹⁰

In light of how debates on individuality in medieval Europe developed in the seventies, Ullmann's work on individuality in his book, *The Individual and Society* (1967), now seems anomalous. Ullmann confined his gaze to the development of the notion of the individual in secular law and Christian theology from late antiquity up to late middle ages, with an eye towards understanding the origins of the modern notion of the individual as a politico-legal being with inalienable "rights" (especially in English Common Law). By contrast, a very different sense of this term can be found in Dronke's book, *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages* (1970), in which the focus is squarely on the active desire of medieval poets to innovate and express themselves within the limits of established oral and written poetic traditions as opposed to the

⁸ The chapter in question is entitled 'From epic to romance': see R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (London, 1953), pp. 209-44.

⁹ See W. Ullmann, *The Individual and Society* (London, 1967), J. F. Benton, *Self and Society in Medieval France* (originally 1970, reprinted Toronto, 1984), P. Dronke, *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages: new departures in poetry, 1100-1150* (Oxford, 1970), C. Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200* (London, 1972).

¹⁰ R. W. Southern, *The Life of St Anselm: Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1962), *Saint Anselm and his Biographer: a study of monastic life and thought c.1059-1130* (Cambridge, 1963), and *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford, 1970).

individual as a constitutional and legal construct.¹¹ Also in 1970 Benton published two key works. The first, an article in the journal, *Psychoanalytical Review*, marked a precocious effort in medieval studies to make use of psychoanalysis to explore the mind and life of Guibert of Nogent.¹² The second relevant publication is the essay which fronts his translation of Guibert's semi-autobiographical work, *De Vita Sua Sive Monodiarum*, in a book entitled, *Self and Society in Medieval France* (1970).¹³ The latter work is perhaps the first major work in Anglophone medieval studies in which the term *self* occurs in the title thus marking the beginning of a trend whereby "self" has become the favoured word in medieval studies for describing phenomena such as self-awareness and personal expression.¹⁴

Probably the most important contribution made to debates on individuality and the self in medieval Europe during the nineteen seventies was made by Morris in his book, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200* (1972), which builds on the earlier work of Southern, as discussed above, in *The Making of the Middle Ages*. As the title of this work makes clear, Morris' central claim throughout is that in the period c.1050-1200, Western Europeans, or at least those who were well-educated, became more aware of themselves and others as individuals: that is, in Morris' terms, they "discovered" individuality. In support of his argument, Morris stressed the occurrence of self-awareness, emotional sensitivity, and autobiographical narratives or anecdotes in the large body of clerical literature, mostly written in Latin, during the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries: bearing this in mind, it is also noteworthy that Morris did not undervalue the contribution of Latin literature to the development of trends of self-expression in the medieval west.¹⁵ In addition to this, he explored the role of French vernacular literatures in the development of ways of expressing self-awareness in twelfth-century Europe and also greater interest among artists and writers in capturing apparently individual likenesses in portraiture and writing.¹⁶

However, in 1980 Caroline Walker Bynum questioned Morris' supposition that the twelfth century discovered the individual in a provocatively titled article, 'Did

¹¹ Dronke, *Poetic Individuality*, pp. 1-32.

¹² J. F. Benton, 'The personality of Guibert of Nogent' *Psychoanalytic Review*, 57: 4 (1970), pp. 563-86.

¹³ Benton, *Self and Society*, pp. 7-33.

¹⁴ Benton followed this up in 1982 with another significant article, 'Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality' in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. R. L. Benson *et al* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 263-95.

¹⁵ Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual*, pp. 64-120.

¹⁶ On vernacular literature see *Ibid.*, pp. 107-20 and on portraiture and likenesses see pp. 86-95.

the twelfth century discover the individual?', in the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*.¹⁷ In response to Morris' work in *The Discovery of the Individual*, Bynum proposed that the "self" [*seipsum*] is a more appropriate term for describing the sense of self-awareness and personal being that medieval people were supposed to be "discovering" at that time. Furthermore, Bynum argued that in regard to the development and expansion of new forms of communal life in Western Europe from the late eleventh century onwards the "discovery of the self" should be understood within the broader context of the "discovery of the group".¹⁸ Morris published a reply to Bynum in the following edition of *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* in which he expressed agreement with Bynum's claims regarding the importance of new forms of group life in the development of Western European cultures and societies over the relevant period.¹⁹ But he also picked up several points which, he argued, require further consideration in order for us to gain a better understanding of how the changing socio-cultural conditions of medieval Europe at this time altered the conditions of personal being.²⁰

According to Morris the late eleventh and twelfth century witnessed a rapid expansion in the range of life choices available for people on all levels of medieval societies, even including to some extent uneducated laypeople. Most crucial in this respect was the possibility of joining different kinds of communal or religious group. In this way, people at that time were able to take on greater responsibility for their personal well-being and salvation than had typically been the norm in the early medieval period. In this way, Morris argues that the developments of the late eleventh and twelfth century cannot be merely a matter of "the discovery of the group" (although he acknowledges that this was an important aspect of changes to medieval societies over the said period).²¹ Instead, the period in question witnessed developments in both group and personal being which cannot be reduced to either one or the other: group being and personal being changed in response to each other. Finally, Morris rebuts Bynum's argument against the use of the label, "individual", in medieval studies, firstly by highlighting inadequacies in the notion of the self as she

¹⁷ C. W. Bynum, 'Did the twelfth century discover the individual?' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31 (1980), pp. 1-17.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁹ C. Morris, 'Individualism in Twelfth-Century Religion. Some Further Reflections' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31: 2 (1980), pp. 195-206.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 199-206.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 201-2.

defined it, and secondly by adding some qualifications to define the appropriate usage of “individual” in medieval studies while reaffirming its continuing validity through repeated use in the conclusions to his article.²²

Bynum followed up her 1980 article in a chapter of her book, *Jesus as Mother* (1982), in which she essentially restates the argument she made in her 1980 article in a slightly expanded form.²³ More importantly, Bynum published several trend-setting books between the nineteen eighties and early nineties: most significant here are the aforementioned *Jesus as Mother*, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (1987), and *Fragmentation and Redemption* (1991). These books have been influential in the establishment of the study of gender, women, the body, mysticism, asceticism, and piety in medieval studies: their connections with several of these historiographical threads are highlighted later in this section.²⁴ Moreover, in these books Bynum maintains a balance between analysing medieval people as “individual” people or “selves” and as socio-culturally situated beings, the value of which is discussed further below.²⁵

Later, in 1978 Charles Radding published an article in which he argues that the psychological theories of the Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, best known for his work on children, offer a theoretical framework for a mentalities-style history of the medieval period.²⁶ Radding went on to realise this proposal in his book, *A World Made By Men: Cognition and Society, 400-1200* (1985), in which he draws on Piaget’s insights into the nature of individual cognition in order to problematise the relationship between the individual and community in medieval Europe.²⁷ In this respect, Radding’s work has some immediate significance for this study, as will be seen in later chapters where the distinction between biology and culture, widely upheld, although often unstated, in western academia, is problematised in light of the findings of neuro- and cognitive science.²⁸ However, this study also departs from the

²² Morris highlights some limitations of Bynum’s sense of “self” at *ibid.*, p.202 and qualifies the term “individual” as he used it and affirms its validity at *ibid.*, pp. 205-6.

²³ C. W. Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), pp. 82-109.

²⁴ See pp. 21-2 below.

²⁵ See sec. 1.3, pp. 29-30 below.

²⁶ C. M. Radding, ‘The Evolution of Medieval Mentalities: A Cognitive-Structural Approach’ in *American Historical Review*, 83: 3 (1978), pp. 577-97.

²⁷ C. M. Radding, *A World Made By Men: Cognition and Society, 400-1200* (Chapel Hill, 1985), pp. 22-30.

²⁸ For more on this aspect of this study see sec. 1.3, pp. 33-4 below, Chapter Two, sec. 2.1, pp. 44-9, and Chapters Four and Five.

approach taken by Radding in that it makes use of much more recent research into the human mind and cognition. Piaget was undoubtedly a pioneer of modern psychology and, as Radding rightly points out, his insights into the human mind still have some relevance today.²⁹ However, much has changed in the western sciences of the mind since the early to mid-twentieth century when Piaget was active (or indeed, since the early-eighties when Radding was active in this area). Hence one of the aims of this study, as stated above, is to explore how the more recent findings of neuro- and cognitive science shed light on the mental lives of medieval Europeans.³⁰

From the early nineteen-eighties, as interest in matters of inward being seems to have largely slipped out of fashion among historians of the medieval west, students of medieval literature began to take an interest in the concepts of the self and subjectivity as they related to the cultures and literatures of the medieval west. This trend should be viewed within the wider context of the linguistic turn, as post-modern philosophy began to alter how historians and language students viewed historical cultures and literatures. Some notable contributors in this regard include David Aers, Britton J. Harwood, Louise O. Fradenburg, Lee Patterson, and Sarah Kay.³¹ It is also worth noting the importance of serial publications and specialised journals in stimulating work and debate on subjectivity and self in medieval culture and literature.³²

²⁹ Again, see Radding, *A World Made By Men*, pp. 22-30.

³⁰ This is stated above in sec. 1.1.

³¹ Respectively see D. Aers, 'The *Parliament of Fowls*: authority, the knower and the known' in *Chaucer Review* (1981), pp. 1-17, *Community, Gender, and Individual Identity: English Writing 1360-1430* (London, 1988), and 'A whisper in the ear of early modernists; or, reflections on literary critics writing the "history of the subject"' in *Culture and History, 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, ed. D. Aers (Hemel Hempstead, 1992), pp. 177-202'; B. J. Harwood, 'Chaucer's Pardoner: the dialectics of inside and outside' in *Philological Quarterly*, 67: 4 (1988), pp. 409-22, 'Same-sex desire in the unconscious of Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*' in *Exemplaria*, 13: 1 (2001), pp. 99-135, and 'Psychoanalytic politics: Chaucer and two peasants' in *Journal of English Literary History*, 68: 1 (2001), pp. 1-27; Fradenburg, 'Spectacular fictions: the body politic in Chaucer and Dunbar' in *Poetics Today*, 5: 3 (1984), pp. 493-517, and her introduction to an edition of the annual publication, *New Medieval Literatures*, dedicated to the application of psychoanalysis to medieval literature, 'We are not alone: Psychoanalytical Medievalism' in *New Medieval Literatures*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1998), pp. 249-76; L. Patterson, "'What man artow?': authorial self-definition in *The Tale of Sir Thopas* and *The Tale of Melibee*' in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 11 (1989), pp. 117-75, 'Perpetual motion: alchemy and the technology of the self', in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 15 (1993), pp. 25-57, and "'What is me?': self and society in the poetry of Thomas Hoccleve' in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 23 (2001), pp. 437-72; and finally S. Kay, *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry* (Cambridge, 1990) and *Courtly Contradictions: the emergence of the literary object in the twelfth century* (Stanford Calif., 2001).

³² For example see *New Medieval Literatures* originally published by Oxford University Press, now Brepols, and *Exemplaria* published by Maney, Leeds.

Psychoanalysis, and particularly the writings of Freud and Lacan, has proven highly influential among students of medieval literature. For example, Louise Fradenburg has been an enthusiastic advocate of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis in medieval studies, as has Sarah Kay, albeit more so for Lacanian than Freudian theories.³³ Furthermore, Kay's stance towards Lacan is heavily influenced by the work of the philosopher, Slavoj Žižek, who has been an important advocate of Lacanian psychoanalysis for the purposes of contemporary cultural criticism. Indeed, Kay has published a general-interest guide to the work of Žižek.³⁴ The historian, Nancy Partner, has also been influenced by psychoanalysis, as may be seen in her work since the nineteen nineties in which she makes use of Freudian and more contemporary psychoanalytical theory to examine the mental lives of medieval people.³⁵ Meanwhile inveighing against this trend, in 2001 Lee Patterson published an extensive critique of the use of psychoanalysis by his peers working on the literatures of the medieval west.³⁶ In this article Patterson is highly critical of his colleagues for employing psychoanalysis for their own ends without engaging with contemporary criticism of it among psychologists and philosophers.³⁷ So-called queer theory has also made an impact in this area by problematising the issue of sexuality as it relates to the people, societies, and cultures of the medieval west.³⁸ And attention should be drawn to articles published by Patterson and Aers in 1990 and 1992 respectively, in which they both rail against what they see as a failure among students of early modern literature and drama to acknowledge the capacity of pre-early-modern people to engage with themselves or be self-aware or to entertain notions like the self.³⁹

³³ See Fradenburg, 'Spectacular Fictions' and "'So that we may speak of them": Enjoying the Middle Ages' in *New Literary History*, 28: 2 (1997), pp. 205-30 (the latter of which is focused on modern constructions of the middle ages): likewise see Kay, *Courtly Contradictions*, which turns on Lacanian psychoanalysis.

³⁴ This is Kay, *Žižek: A critical introduction* (Oxford, 2003): note I have not consulted this work for the purposes of this study.

³⁵ See N. Partner, 'No Sex, No Gender' in *Speculum*, 68: 2 (1993), pp. 419-43, 'The family romance of Guibert of Nogent: his story/her story' in *Medieval Mothering*, ed. J. C. Parsons *et al* (New York, 1996), pp. 359-79, and 'The hidden self: psychoanalysis and the textual unconscious' in *Writing Medieval History*, ed. N. Partner (London, 2005), pp. 42-64.

³⁶ See Patterson, 'Chaucer's Pardon on the Couch' in *Speculum*, 76: 3 (2001), pp. 638-80.

³⁷ In particular, Patterson draws attention to critiques of psychoanalysis by Frank Cioffi, Malcolm MacMillan, and Frederick Crews: *ibid.*, pp. 647-56.

³⁸ For instance, see Harwood, 'Same-sex desire in Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*'.

³⁹ See Patterson, 'On the margin: postmodernism, ironic history and medieval studies' in *Speculum*, 65: 1 (1990), pp. 87-108 and Aers, 'A whisper in the ears of early modernists; or, reflections on literary critics writing the "history of the subject"' in *Culture and History, 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, ed. D. Aers (Hemel Hempstead, 1992), pp. 177-202.

It is worth highlighting some connections which developed during the nineteen eighties and nineties between the approaches of medievalists and early modernists towards the various aspects of the personal being of medieval and early modern people. In particular, the influence of the literary critic, Stephen Greenblatt, beyond his immediate area of study should be taken into account. Greenblatt's pioneering approach to historical scholarship, dubbed "new historicism", and most influentially employed in his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980) and the later *Learning to Curse* (1990), has been widely influential among cultural historians since the eighties. Greenblatt is especially noteworthy for helping to bring the notion of "self" into the limelight of cultural history (particularly by developing his own concept of "self-fashioning") and promoting psychoanalysis as a hermeneutic tool in cultural history.⁴⁰ Moreover, new historicism has found a vocal advocate in medieval studies in Gabrielle Spiegel.⁴¹ In her *Romancing the Past* (1993), Spiegel examines the use made of the past by the aristocratic elites of thirteenth-century France to "fashion" historical identities for themselves. More recently, Spiegel has attempted to evaluate the influence of post-modernism and new historicism on the writing and practice of history over the past thirty years: see for instance the volume edited by Spiegel, *Practicing History: New Directions* (2005). Meanwhile, the notions of subjectivity and self were becoming important among students of early modern culture and in particular drama by the early eighties.⁴²

Recent work by certain literary critics, spanning both sides of the supposed divide between the medieval and early modern periods, is also significant, particularly as part of a broader re-evaluation of culture and society between those periods. For instance, in his *Aspects of Subjectivity* (2003), Anthony Low examines the development of a sense of the "inner self" (his term) in English literature (written in Old English, Old French, and Middle English) from the ninth to the sixteenth

⁴⁰ S. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse* (London, 1990), pp. 131-45.

⁴¹ Most notably, Spiegel has trumpeted the benefits of new historicism in 'History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages' in *Speculum*, 65: 1 (1990), pp. 59-86 and more recently in her contributions to *Practicing History: new directions in historical writing after the linguistic turn* (London, 2005), noted shortly in the main text.

⁴² Some pertinent works in this regard are Jonathan Dollimore's *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Brighton, 1984) and Catherine Belsey's *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London, 1985): both of these works are criticised by Patterson in 'On the Margins' and Aers in 'A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists.'

century.⁴³ Of similar interest is the volume, *Sixteenth-Century Identities* (2001), edited by A. J. Piesse. Importantly, the introductory offering of the volume, by Douglas Gray, is titled ‘Finding identity in the middle ages’, thus demonstrating an interest among the editor and contributors to the volume in contextualising sixteenth-century identities in relation to the *status quo ante* represented by “medieval identities”. Also of interest in this regard is Bruce Smith’s article, ‘Premodern Sexualities’ (2000), in which he assesses the meanings and significance of the notion of “sexuality” in the late twentieth century and if and how these can be legitimately applied to pre-modern literatures (thus demonstrating an interest in continuity and discontinuity between premodern and modern concepts of sexuality).⁴⁴

Meanwhile, in contrast to literary scholars, by the nineteen eighties the interests of historians of the medieval west appear to have shifted away from the individual and self towards the community. More specifically, interest shifted from human mental life as an individual phenomenon to social or communal manifestations of mental life such as memory, identity, sex and sexuality, and perceptions of gender and the body. Memory has been a significant area of research and debate among medieval historians, particularly since the publication of Michael Clanchy’s *From Memory to Written Record* (1979). This has been followed in recent years by the work of Elisabeth van Houts, as can be seen from her work in *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe 900-1200* (1999) and an essay collection edited by her entitled *Medieval Memories: Men, Women, and the Past, 700-1300* (2001).

However, sex, gender, and the body have certainly been particularly fast growing areas of study among historians of the middle ages since the nineteen-eighties. In particular, Bynum, Nancy Partner, and Miri Rubin have all been highly active (especially Bynum) in these areas of research and debate. As noted above, Bynum published a series of highly influential studies on the roles of sex, gender, and the body, among other things, in the lives of late-medieval women.⁴⁵ Her broader

⁴³ Low states his case in the preface to the work. See Low, *Aspects of Subjectivity: society and individuality from the middle ages to Shakespeare and Milton* (Pittsburgh, 2003), pp. ix-xxi: he uses the term “inner self” at p. ix.

⁴⁴ See D. Gray, ‘Finding identity in the Middle Ages’ in *Sixteenth-Century Identities*, ed. A. J. Piesse (Manchester, 2001), pp. 9-33 and B. Smith, ‘Premodern Sexualities’ in *PMLA*, 115: 3 (2000), pp. 318-29.

⁴⁵ See C. W. Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley Calif., 1982), *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley Calif., 1987), and *Fragmentation and Redemption* (New York, 1991).

work on the body in medieval theology is also important.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Partner and Rubin began publishing work on medieval attitudes towards sex, gender, and the body around the early nineties and have continued to do so in recent years.⁴⁷ In particular, in 1993 Partner edited a groundbreaking edition of the journal, *Speculum*, tellingly subtitled 'Studying Medieval Women: Sex, Gender, Feminism.'⁴⁸ This was followed in 1994 by a further groundbreaking collection of essays concerning the body in the medieval west, co-edited by Rubin and Sarah Kay, entitled *Framing Medieval Bodies*.⁴⁹ And more recently, Nancy Partner has edited a volume primarily concerned with method and theory in medieval history, in which sex, gender, and body history feature heavily, *Writing Medieval History* (2005).⁵⁰

Once again, it is worth noting that early modernists have followed similar trends over approximately the same period. Some significant contributions in this regard include Francis Barker's *The Tremulous Private Body* (1984), Michael Schoenfeldt's *Bodies and Selves in early modern England* (1999), Lyndal Roper's *Oedipus and the Devil* (1994), in which Freudian psychoanalytical methods are applied to perceptions of witchcraft in early modern Europe, and similarly, Diane Purkiss' *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (1996), which explores representations of female bodies and sexuality in early modern culture and recent academic studies of witchcraft in early modern Europe.

Work on formal and informal relationships in the medieval west over the past few decades has also contributed to our understanding of what it meant to be an individual in medieval Europe. The work of the German medievalist, Gerd Althoff, on gestures and formal relationships, which has recently been published in English as

⁴⁶ In particular see C. W. Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in the Christian West 200-1336* (New York, 1995).

⁴⁷ See Partner, 'No sex, no gender', 'The family romance of Guibert of Nogent', and 'The hidden self'; M. Rubin, 'The person in the form: medieval challenges to bodily "order"' in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. S. Kay *et al* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 100-22, 'The body, whole and vulnerable, in fifteenth-century England' in *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. B. A. Hanawalt *et al* (Minneapolis, 1996), pp. 19-28, and 'A decade of studying medieval women, 1987-1997' in *History Workshop Journal: A Socialist and Feminist Journal*, 46 (1998), pp. 213-39. Also available, but which I have not been able to consult, is Rubin, 'Medieval bodies: why now, and how?' in *The Work of Jacques Le Goff and the Challenges of Medieval History*, ed. M. Rubin (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 209-19.

⁴⁸ That is, *Speculum*, 68: 2 (1993), pp. 305-390.

⁴⁹ See *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. S. Kay *et al* (Manchester, 1994).

⁵⁰ See the articles by Partner and David Shaw in Part 1 and all articles in Part 3, subtitled 'Historicising sex and gender'; *Writing Medieval History*, ed. N. Partner (London, 2005).

Family, Friends and Followers (2004), is particularly noteworthy.⁵¹ There have also been a number of studies of gestures in the medieval west published in English.⁵² Meanwhile, work on friendship [*amicitia*] in medieval Europe has shed light on the importance of less formal and emotionally charged relationships in the lives of medieval people. This discussion grew out of earlier work on letters in medieval Europe. Giles Constable's 1976 contribution to a series of pamphlets on medieval source material, *Typologie des source du Moyen Âge occidental*, namely 'Letter and letter-collections', gives some thought to letters as a means for making and maintaining friendships in the medieval west. More recently, the editor of Peter of Celle's letters, Julian Haseldine, has edited an essay collection on friendship, *Friendship in medieval Europe* (1999). Moreover, a recent edition of the journal, *Viator*, which contains a thread on friendship perhaps indicates that this discussion is currently gathering pace.⁵³

Over roughly the past two decades, the notion of identity has also become highly visible in Anglophone medieval studies. Identity has broad significance in as much as it is generally understood in relation to, or even as a facet or by-product of other phenomena (e.g. it is possible to discuss identity in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, nationality, "self-fashioning", and also how it interacts with other aspects of mental life such as memory).⁵⁴ Hence it is very difficult to treat identity as a discrete phenomenon. A number of works cited in this section are in some sense concerned with issues raised by the notion of identity and the ways in which it becomes manifest. For instance, Gabrielle Spiegel's *Romancing the Past* concerns aristocratic identities in thirteenth-century France, while Elisabeth van Houts' *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe* addresses identity as an ethnic and cultural issue in England after the Norman Conquest.⁵⁵ Gender-identity has been covered by

⁵¹ G. Althoff, *Family, Friends, and Followers: Political and Social Bonds in Medieval Europe*, trans. C. Carroll (Cambridge, 2004), originally published in German as *Verwandte, Freunde und Getreue, zum Politischen Stellenwert der Gruppenbindungen im Früheren Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 1990).

⁵² See J. C. Schmitt, 'The rationale of gestures in the West: third to thirteenth centuries' in *A Cultural History of Gestures*, ed. J. Bremmer *et al* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 59-70, J. A. Burrow, *Gestures and Looks in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge, 2002), C. V. Phythian-Adams, 'Ritual constructions of society' in *A Social History of England 1200-1500*, ed. R. Horrox *et al* (2006), pp. 369-382, and J. Kerr, "'Welcome the coming and speed the parting guest": hospitality in twelfth-century England' in *Journal of Medieval History*, 33:2 (2007), pp. 130-46. This literature is cited in relation to the discussion of gestures in Chapter Four, sec. 4.1, pp. 148-50.

⁵³ See the thread 'The Theory and Practice of Friendship in the Middle Ages' in *Viator*, 38: 2 (2007).

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the conceptual relationship between memory and identity see A. Megill, 'History, memory, identity' in *History of the Human Sciences*, 11: 3 (1998), pp. 37-62.

⁵⁵ E. M. C. van Houts, *Memory and Identity in Medieval Europe 900-1200* (London, 1999), pp. 123-42.

van Houts, Bynum, and Partner, among others.⁵⁶ Rubin has dealt with identity in relation to the body and has recently written specifically on identity in late-medieval England, addressing, among other things, Greenblatt's notion of self-fashioning and communal identity.⁵⁷

Additionally, it is briefly worth noting Karl Steel's recent article, 'How to Make a Human.' In this, Steel draws attention to the importance of a paradigm of animal existence to the definition of what it means to be human in certain strands of medieval and modern western philosophy. Importantly, he demonstrates a degree of continuity between medieval and modern attitudes towards the similarities and differences between animals and humans, especially in the respect that both consider *reason* to be an essentially human quality. Hence Steel's work is significant here in as much as it concerns the ways in which human existence has been defined negatively against a paradigm of animal existence in the western philosophical tradition.⁵⁸

There has been a steady shift over the past decade in the attention and attitudes of medievalists back towards mental life as a personal or individualistic phenomenon (in many respects mirroring attitudes towards mental life around the nineteen-sixties and seventies). To be sure, some medievalists never appear to have abandoned individualistic attitudes towards human mental life. For instance, in spite of her argument in favour of situating the individual in relation to the society or community in 1980, in many respects Bynum continued to construe her subjects as individuals throughout the nineteen-eighties.⁵⁹ Elsewhere, Nancy Partner was placing an

⁵⁶ For example, see van Houts, *ibid.*, Bynum, *Jesus as Mother, Holy Feast and Holy Fast, Fragmentation and Redemption*, and Partner, 'No Sex, No Gender', 'The family romance of Guibert of Nogent' and 'The hidden self'.

⁵⁷ See Rubin, 'The person in the form' and 'Identities' in *A Social History of England 1200-1500*, ed. R. Horrox *et al* (Cambridge, 2006), pp.383-412, in the latter of which, self-fashioning is addressed at pp. 395-402 and communal identity at pp. 402-12.

⁵⁸ Reason or rationality is something of a *portmanteau* for loosely theorised notions of cognition, self-reflexion, consciousness, the capacity to foresight that allows organisms to predict, plan, avoid and so on and so forth. It was a prevalent concern amongst Enlightenment philosophers such as Descartes, Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Kant. Steel adds Lacan, Heidegger and Levinas to the list. Steel also points out that reason was considered by medieval Europeans, along Christological lines, as a unique endowment amongst terrestrial beings granted to humanity by God (who, of course, made Adam in his image hence, according to orthodox theology, all other living organisms were subject to the will of humanity): see K. Steel, 'How to Make a Human' in *Exemplaria*, 20: 1 (2008), pp. 3-27.

⁵⁹ Bynum addresses a number of female mystics as individuals in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (see chapter five).

emphasis on the individual as an important analytical unit in the nineteen-nineties: a view that is reinforced in her 2005 article, ‘The hidden self.’⁶⁰

Other signs that mental life as a personal phenomenon is again becoming a popular topic of discussion include Denis Reveney’s *Language, Self, and Love* (2001), which examines the writing of commentaries on the Song of Songs (or the Song of Solomon) as a form of introspective meditation in itself, a chapter on selfhood in John Arnold’s *Belief and Unbelief in Medieval Europe* (2005), Nancy Partner’s aforementioned 2005 article, ‘The hidden self’, David Shaw’s 2005 article, ‘Social selves in medieval England’, and a collaborative work by the psychiatrist, Jerome Kroll, and historian, Bernard Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind* (2005).⁶¹ Also relevant here is Miri Rubin’s aforementioned 2006 article, ‘Identities’, which, although intended as a survey article for a general history book, covers a lot of ground and makes many instructive insights into the topics of identity and self. This trend may also be observed in French-language medieval studies. For instance, 2005 saw the publication of an essay collection, edited by Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak and Dominique Iogna-Prat and entitled *L’individu au moyen âge: individuation et individualisation avant la modernité*. This volume organises contributions into three key topics: *les marqueurs de l’individuation*, *objets de discours*, and *individu et institution*. In this way, it covers a broad range of topics, including individual identity, the variety of modes of expression available to medieval people, and the variety of relationships between the individual and the group (or institution). Also in 2005 the American Medievalist, Barbara Rosenwein, published an article in the French journal, *Revue historique*, entitled ‘Y avait-il un «moi» au haut Moyen Âge?’ [Was there a “me” in the high middle ages?].⁶²

The continuing work of literary critics on the notions of subjectivity and self throughout the nineties and the first decade of the twenty-first century has also been influential. Some particularly significant studies in this regard include Sarah Kay’s *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry* (1990), Dana Stewart’s *The Arrow of Love: optics, gender, and subjectivity in medieval poetry* (2003), and A. C. Spearing’s *Textual*

⁶⁰ See Partner, ‘No Sex, No Gender’, ‘The family romance of Guibert of Nogent’ and ‘The hidden self.’

⁶¹ Kroll’s and Bachrach’s *The Mystic Mind* is discussed further in the next section: for a full citation see n. 80 below.

⁶² *L’individu au moyen âge: individuation et individualisation avant la modernité*, ed. B. M. Bedos-Rezak *et al* (Paris, 2005) and B. Rosenwein, ‘Y avait-il un «moi» au haut Moyen Âge?’, *Revue historique*, 307:1:633 (2005), pp. 31-52.

Subjectivity: the encoding of subjectivity in medieval narrative and lyrics (2005). These works are all notable for employing the term *subjectivity* in their titles (as is also the case for Anthony Low's *Aspects of Subjectivity*, cited above).⁶³ This term is frequently used in literary criticism to describe a point of consciousness or sensation (relating to characters or narrators) in a text. Therefore, subjectivity can function as an anthropocentric concept in as much as it implies qualities of human mental life and consciousness. For example, Stewart uses subjectivity in this manner to refer to points from which lines of sight originate as loci of sensation, consciousness, and feedback or action as far as sight is represented in late medieval love poetry.⁶⁴

However, subjectivity may also be used in less anthropocentric senses. For instance, Kay takes a "decentred" approach to subjectivity, informed by the discourse of deconstructionism, in *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry*. According to Kay, a decentred approach to subjectivity involves appreciation of how existing modes of speech and discourse affect how people, *qua* individuals, use language. By this view, how people speak and write must be taken to reflect how other people have spoken and written to the extent that what the *individual* says and writes may be taken to reflect not only their own subjectivity but also the subjectivities of other language-users.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Spearing's key argument in *Textual Subjectivity* is that "textual subjectivity" need not necessarily mimic human speech and consciousness. This is to say the representation of subjectivity in texts should not necessarily be taken as a direct reflection of human consciousness and phenomenology: textual subjectivity may bend or distort the possibilities of human experience.⁶⁶

Finally, the work of Sarah Spence in her book, *Texts and the Self in the Twelfth Century* (1996), is noteworthy here as an example of an approach to the self (and equivalent concepts) which sits in sharp contrast to that taken in this study. Spence defines the self, as she sees it occur in twelfth-century French literature, 'not as an autonomous unit but as a complex interaction of body, language, and space.'⁶⁷ What she seems to mean by this is that the self, as it is apparently constructed in certain

⁶³ For citation of Low's work see n. 43 above.

⁶⁴ D. Stewart, *The Arrow of Love: optics, gender, and subjectivity in medieval poetry* (Lewisburg, 2003).

⁶⁵ S. Kay, *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 1-2.

⁶⁶ A. C. Spearing, *Textual Subjectivity: the encoding of subjectivity in medieval narrative and lyrics* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 17-31.

⁶⁷ S. Spence, *Texts and the Self in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 1-17.

kinds of text, can be viewed as a consequence, or by-product, of the representation of the body as an object or space identified with the performer(s) of those texts (*e.g.* voices, narrators, or speakers). In Spence's terms "body" is in fact Latin literature: hence, according to Spence, Latin, in its capacity as "body", functions as a 'rupture of the subjective and objective worlds' out of which the "self" apparently emerged in twelfth-century Romance literature.⁶⁸ Thus, my first major criticism of Spence's work is that her understanding of "the self" depends in part on a neat teleology in which Latin is replaced by vernacular languages as the main outlet of literary expression in Western Europe over the course of the medieval period: as noted above, this study is intended to challenge the view that Latin was somehow an inherently inadequate mode of personal expression for medieval people able to use it.⁶⁹

My second major criticism of Spence's work relates to a quotation which she gives from the work of the art historian, Michael Ann Holly, apparently without fully realising, or at least not properly acknowledging, that it derives from the theoretical discourse of phenomenology, which is concerned with people's immediate experiences of the world, rather than literary criticism: '[W]e possess a philosophical view of the world, of which our rectilinear, spatial system is part and parcel.'⁷⁰ In response to this, Spence makes the following statement:

All of the texts analysed here posit not only a self but a self understood as functioning in space, and in particular, taking the body as a frame of reference. At the core of this study...lie two assumptions: the fact that the body had come to assume a pre-eminence denied them in the early Middle Ages and the assertion that space is a crucial and defining aspect of selfhood.⁷¹

This statement does not fit with the implications of the preceding quotation from Holly. If people experience the world via a rectilinear spatial system, as Holly states, and it is from this that, according to Spence, the self arises, then why should early medieval people, or anybody else for that matter, be any less subject to the self than people in the latter medieval or modern periods? Presumably early medieval people were just as subject to this rectilinear spatial system, via the embodied conditions of

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁹ See sec. 1.1 above.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Spence, *Texts and the Self*, p. 2.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

their respective existences, as later medieval and indeed modern people. If so then why shouldn't early medieval people also be subject to the experience of the self (as Spence argues that the body and rectilinear spatial reasoning are crucial to the development of the self)?

Spence's argument pivots around a teleology in which the literary production of the self first becomes possible in Western Europe during the twelfth century as Romance languages gradually replaced Latin as the dominant modes of written expression. Accordingly, she is chiefly interested in the verbal representation of a particular kind of self or subjectivity: not the phenomena of the self in general and certainly not "the self" of colloquial spoken English. Spence raises the interesting point that space and the body are crucial to the figuration of the self. I agree that these are important aspects to how people experience and conceptualise the nature of their own personal being and also that of others: I go on to explore them in several places in this study.⁷² But these should not be treated as purely literary matters.

Spence misuses a phenomenological observation about how people experience the world to construct a highly metaphysical theory of how "the self" emerges in twelfth-century Romance literature. In contrast to Spence, I make use of the findings of neuro- and cognitive science to explore, not just abstract literary representations in themselves, but rather how literary representations of various aspects of human existence, abstract and literal, may be related to the conditions of human embodiment and placement in the world.⁷³

1.3: The place of this study in the historiography

Over the course of the previous section, I highlighted the use of three major terms in the relevant literature: individuality, the self, and subjectivity. Although these terms are to some extent interchangeable, they each highlight reasonably distinct issues. First, individuality typically relates to the overall being of somebody (*i.e. the individual or alternatively the person*). On the other hand, self and subjectivity tend to relate to aspects of individual psychology although, as stated above, subjectivity may also be used in a more "decentred" sense in order to highlight how linguistic, communal, and social relations, *inter alia*, influence individual subjectivity.

⁷² In particular, see Chapter Three, sec. 3.2 and Chapter Four, sec. 4.2.

⁷³ The relevant theory is discussed in Chapter Two and applied throughout Part II.

Additionally, there is a sense of subjectivity which is not connected to human psychology at all. In some areas of academic discourse, particularly in analytical philosophy, subjectivity is often used to mean the condition of being situated: that is having a place or being somewhere in the universe (this is as opposed to objectivity which is supposed to be the condition of not being situated or having no relationships or biases in the world: the proverbial “view from nowhere”).⁷⁴ Although subjectivity is rarely, if ever, used in this way in medieval studies, it is worth noting that it has a broader semantic range than is often recognised in medieval studies. This also highlights the core concept underpinning the notion of subjectivity. Subjectivity is essentially about placement: when it is applied to humanity, this sense is modified to become about conscious appreciation of placement.

As noted above, there has been a terminological dispute between Morris and Bynum over the relative appropriateness of “individual” and “self” as labels for how medieval people experienced and understood themselves and other people. The outcome of this dispute is inconclusive and, at any rate, it does not seem to have achieved any lasting impact. Self has generally been more popular among Anglophone medievalists in recent years. However, I cannot find any widespread hesitation in the use of the term, individual, in recent Anglophone medieval studies and certainly in French scholarship, «*l’individu*» is in general use.⁷⁵ As Morris points out in his reply to Bynum’s 1980 article, when it comes to the problems raised by applying modern terms to premodern contexts, self is no less problematic than individual.⁷⁶ To be sure, Bynum did claim in her 1980 article that self is equivalent to the Latin word, *seipsum*.⁷⁷ But this seems to me the weakest point in her argument. “Self” (according to modern English usage of that word) cannot just be a direct equivalent of Latin for many reasons. Although self and *seipsum* share the same root, they come from two appreciably different languages and do not share precisely the same conditions of use or semantic histories. However much the meanings and

⁷⁴ For a pessimistic discussion of the issues raised by the notions of subjectivity and objectivity for analytical philosophy see T. Nagel, *The View From Nowhere* (Oxford, 1986).

⁷⁵ As far as I am aware, Bynum is the only Anglophone medievalist to have raised serious objections in print to the suitability of “individual” as a means of describing certain aspects of the lives and existence of medieval people. “Individual” was used by Aers in the title of his book, *Community, Gender, and Individual Identity*. Partner discusses the notion of individuality without fundamentally objecting to its use in medieval studies in ‘The hidden self’, p. 44. Two distinct aspects of the notion of individuality, *individuation* and *individualisation*, are explored by the recent French essay collection, *L’individu au moyen age*.

⁷⁶ Morris, ‘Individualism in Twelfth-Century Religion’, p. 202.

⁷⁷ Bynum, ‘Did the twelfth century discover the individual?’, p. 4.

historic conditions of use of these words overlap, they cannot simply be reduced to each other in the way that Bynum suggests.

Bynum is more successful when focusing on selves or individuals without discussing the terminological issues. As stated previously, her work in *Jesus as Mother, Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, and *Fragmentation and Redemption* is laudable for maintaining a good analytical balance between the self (or individual) and society and culture. At various points in these works Bynum focuses on individual people, usually female mystics and ascetics, as situated beings, subject to local and more widespread socio-cultural contingencies. This strategy for approaching medieval people avoids the problems inherent in treating them as either atomic units or reducing their personal being, in a Marxist fashion, to impersonal socio-cultural forces. In short, it is of utmost importance that a balance is struck between acknowledging the personal being of medieval people while also remaining aware of the socio-cultural pressures affecting their development, experiences, and behaviour as individuals. As will be seen in the following chapters of this study, I have attempted to do this by using neuro- and cognitive science to explore the relationship between socio-cultural forces and embodiment.

Next there is the matter of whether there is currently any room for further studies of individuality, the self, or indeed subjectivity, in twelfth-century Western Europe. These areas of debate have been well-serviced over the past few decades. In contrast, neuro- and cognitive science have so far attracted only a very small amount of attention in medieval studies, although very recently a handful of significant studies have been published which will be discussed later in this section. In this study I aim to adopt a totally different approach to medieval people, *qua* individuals, selves, or whatever else, to what is currently available in the existing literature. In short, my intention is to explore how medieval people may be understood, via linguistic records, as embodied biological beings. It will be seen in the next chapter that a theory described here as *the embodied view of the mind* is crucial to my approach to medieval people.⁷⁸ I do not intend in this way to reject or rebut the discourses on individuality, the self, and subjectivity, highlighted in the previous section. Instead, by avoiding these modes of analysis, I aim to provide fresh insights into a well-established area of medieval studies.

⁷⁸ The embodied view of the mind is discussed in detail in Chapter Two, sec. 2.1.

Additionally, as will be discussed further below, I intend to make use of neuro- and cognitive science in this study to problematise the distinction between biology and culture, widely held, but usually unstated, in western academic discourse. This is emphatically not to say that I plan to reduce culture to biology in this study. Rather, as will be seen in later chapters, I intend to point out that human biology and culture share the same plane of existence and affect each other.⁷⁹

Several works which explore the utility of recent developments in the modern biosciences, including neuro- and cognitive science, to studies of people who lived in the remote past have recently been published by medievalists. First, 2005 saw the publication of a collaborative work by the psychiatrist, Jerome Kroll, and historian, Bernard Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind: The Psychology of Medieval Mystics and Ascetics*; in 2006 the English professor, Michael Drout, published his book, *How Tradition Works: A Meme-Based Cultural Poetics of the Anglo-Saxon Tenth Century*; and in 2008, the historian, Daniel Lord Smail, published *On Deep History and the Brain*.⁸⁰

Of these books, Kroll's and Bachrach's *The Mystic Mind* is most directly relevant to the main topic of this study. Kroll and Bachrach make use of contemporary medical knowledge, including insights provided by neuroscience, to shed light on the behaviour and reported experiences of medieval mystics and ascetics. In several chapters they analyse how ascetic and mystical practices are likely to have led to altered states of consciousness and the consequences of this for the cultures of asceticism and mysticism in medieval Europe.⁸¹ In this way, Kroll and Bachrach place a good degree of emphasis on the centrality of the embodied conditions of human existence in determining how people experience and respond to the world. In the next chapter it will be seen that I take a similar approach to the sample of source texts selected for this study, although not with the specific intention

⁷⁹ This is a major topic of Part II and, as such, is discussed at various places throughout. For a brief summary of the relevant issues see the introduction and conclusion to Chapter Four.

⁸⁰ J. Kroll and B. Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind: The Psychology of Medieval Mystics and Ascetics* (London, 2005), M. D. C. Drout, *How Tradition Works: A Meme-Based Cultural Poetics of the Anglo-Saxon Tenth Century* (Tempe Ariz., 2006), and D. L. Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain* (Berkeley Calif., 2008).

⁸¹ These topics and "mysticism and altered states of consciousness" are systematically covered in Part I of Kroll and Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*, pp. 15-87.

of analysing ascetic and mystical practices.⁸² Rather, as will be made clear in the Introduction to Part II, my intention is to make use of neuro- and cognitive science to explore how medieval people may be studied as embodied beings, whose mental and socio-cultural predispositions may be best understood in relation to the conditions of their embodiment.

In contrast, Drout's work in *How Tradition Works* is mostly concerned with an area of evolutionary psychology known as "memetics" after the term, *meme*, coined by the biologist, Richard Dawkins, to describe a theoretical unit of information equivalent to chemical genes in the respect that they show a tendency to replicate through unplanned evolutionary processes. It should be stressed that memetics is an extension of evolutionary biology. The possibility of memes, as Dawkins originally conceived of them, is dependent on there being biologically evolved organisms capable of harbouring and replicating them. Most obviously, human beings are one such biologically evolved organism, in relation to which memes are better known as "thoughts" and "ideas" (which is emphatically not to say that the memetic environment should be limited to humanity). The brain and connected neural circuitry is the material on which memes are instantiated and from which they "replicate" themselves (*i.e.* by predisposing people to behave in ways that are likely to lead to them being entertained in other people's minds).⁸³

Drout's work in *How Tradition Works* is noteworthy because it makes considerable use of theories stemming from the modern biosciences, including to some extent neuro- and cognitive science, to shed light on cultural developments in tenth-century England. Additionally, although Drout does not make it an explicit concern, *How Tradition Works* draws attention to the difficulties inherent in drawing a clear distinction between human biology and culture.⁸⁴ Although I approach this problem from a different angle to Drout, I share in common with him a concern for how the biological conditions of human existence influence the development of

⁸² Asceticism and mysticism is discussed to some extent in this study, especially in relation to *The Life of Christina of Markyate*: in particular see Chapter Four, sec. 4.2.1, pp. 151-4 and Chapter Five, sec. 5.1.3.

⁸³ For Dawkins' original proposal regarding memes see R. Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 30th Anniversary Edition (Oxford, 2006), pp. 189-201. Drout discusses memetics extensively throughout chapters one and two of *How Tradition Works*.

⁸⁴ Perhaps the closest Drout gets to acknowledging this is in asserting the stringent materialism of memetics and thus his approach to culture: Drout, *ibid.*, p. 59.

society and culture as well as how society and culture influence the development of human biology.

Finally, although Smail is a medievalist, his recent book, *On Deep History and the Brain*, aims to tackle a series of issues raised by the modern biosciences for historical scholarship: especially the challenges posed by evolutionary biology to the long-standing chronological limits of western academic history-writing and also what current medical knowledge about the impact of diet, alcohol, and narcotics on human behaviour and development can tell us about the historical development of different societies and cultures (Smail christens this area of study “psychotropic” research).⁸⁵ In this way, he places much emphasis on the importance of human biochemistry in determining how people react to themselves and their local environments and makes it clear that he views the development of this biochemistry through evolutionary processes as historical processes in themselves.⁸⁶ Smail’s work in *On Deep History and the Brain* has no direct bearing on this study since it is mostly intended to address the consequences of evolutionary biology for traditional historical narratives of “Western Civilisation”. By contrast, I am mainly interested in this study with the application of neuro- and cognitive science to medieval texts. Nevertheless, the scope of *On Deep History and the Brain* is broad enough to make it valuable as a general interest guide to the significance of evolutionary biology and the modern biosciences in general for historical scholarship.

It is noteworthy that the method adopted by Kroll and Bachrach three years earlier in *The Mystic Mind* has much in common with Smail’s proposals in *On Deep History*. For instance, Kroll and Bachrach discuss how self-imposed dietary restrictions are likely to have affected the conscious mental lives of medieval ascetics.⁸⁷ Moreover, as with the work of Kroll and Bachrach and Drout noted above, Smail’s argument in *On Deep History* draws attention to the blurred line separating the biological body from culture as these phenomena occur in the world. In doing so, Smail is careful to avoid accusations of “reducing” society and culture to biological processes. Instead he draws attention to ways in which biological and socio-cultural processes may be seen to influence each other reciprocally:

⁸⁵ On general method see Smail, *On Deep History*, pp. 112-56, on pre-history, pp. 12-111 and on psychotrophy, pp. 157-89.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-19.

⁸⁷ Kroll and Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*, chapter six.

[T]he body states generated by activities of the brain and the endocrine, even those induced by wiring set in place by culture, normally cannot dictate behaviour. Instead, they provide a backdrop of feelings against which people evaluate situations, make decisions, and do things...human behavioural norms, suitably internalised, allow one to ignore or override the predispositions one may have toward doing things or the emotions experienced while doing things.⁸⁸

It will be seen in the next chapter, as well as over the course of Part II of this study, that the reciprocal influence of biology and culture on each other is a major concern of this study. Throughout the following chapters I will draw attention to ways in which the representation of various aspects of human existence in the sample of source texts may be understood in terms of the interacting influences of human biology and socio-cultural pressures on how their respective authors experienced and reasoned about the world. Again, it should be noted that I approach this issue from a different theoretical direction to Smail: specifically by focusing on embodied theories of the mind and language, as will be discussed in Chapter Two. Nevertheless, in following the course laid out in Chapter Two and the Introduction to Part II, this study lends support to the conclusions drawn by Smail in the above citation, as will be seen at regular intervals throughout Chapters Three-Five.

1.4: Conclusion

To recap, this chapter has outlined a series of objectives for this study: first, to make use of the modern discourses of neuro- and cognitive science to shed light on the mental lives of medieval people; second, to problematise the existing discourses on individuality, the self, and subjectivity in medieval studies by making use of new methods for exploring how medieval people experienced and conceptualised themselves, other people, and the world around them; third, to explore the issues raised by neuro- and cognitive science for how we relate the phenomena of society and culture to the embodied existence of medieval people, specifically by making use of the embodied view of the mind (as discussed in the next chapter: see sec. 2.1): and

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

fourth, to call into question the view, held by some literary critics, that at least during the medieval period Latin was intrinsically ill-suited to the purposes of self-expression. By tackling these four issues together, the overall aim for this study is that it makes an original contribution to a well-established area of medieval studies by adopting a heretofore untested approach to the relevant subject matter.

Chapter Two

Theory and Method

This chapter introduces the body of theoretical literature which informs the discussion in the three chapters that follow. It begins, firstly in sec. 2.1, by focusing on what will be described henceforth as the *embodied view of the mind*, which, in short, is the idea that the mind is an ordinary physiological function of the body rather than a discrete entity, with special physical properties, which occupies it. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, the embodied view of the mind is crucial to the analysis of the sample of source texts in Part II of this study in the respect that it provides a means of connecting mental states to the body. By adopting this understanding of the relationship between the mind and body it becomes possible to interpret the contents of medieval texts in terms of the physical conditions, embodied and environmental, in which they were originally composed. Thus to this end, sec. 2.1 provides summaries of the work and arguments of five scholars, two working in collaboration, in favour of the embodied view of the mind, and in one case, a more widely situated view of the mind, and its broader significance for how we understand the relationship between the body and its effects. The views of these scholars, among others, form part of the core theory of Part II of this study.

Furthermore, sec. 2.1 of this study makes use of the embodied view of the mind to shed light on the beliefs and ideas widely held by medieval Europeans about the mind-body relationship.⁸⁹ The embodied view of the mind is usually taken in neuro- and cognitive science as a refutation of older western views on the mind: it is generally not seen as a means by which to understand them. Therefore, a brief argument is made at the end of sec. 2.1 in favour of using the materialist understanding of the mind provided by neuro- and cognitive science to shed light on

⁸⁹ It will be seen in Chapter Three of this study that well-educated premodern Europeans from antiquity up to the twelfth century typically subscribed to a view of the mind logically opposed to the embodied perspective now entertained by the great majority of scholars in cognitive and neuroscience. Broadly speaking, they tended to view the mind and cognition as ontologically discrete phenomena, which could become separated from the material body in various circumstances (most usually death). This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, sec. 3.1.

the radically different beliefs and ideas of medieval people towards the same phenomenon.

Sec. 2.2 outlines a core method for examining the sample of source texts, which will be maintained throughout Part II of this study. The method in question is based on the theory of metaphor developed collaboratively by the Linguist, George Lakoff, and philosopher, Mark Johnson, in their book, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). Lakoff's and Johnson's thesis provides a backbone for the analysis of the source texts in Part II, strengthened in places by the work of the scholars discussed in sec. 2.1 and other notable contributors to neuro- and cognitive science. Therefore, the purpose of sec. 2.2 is to provide a concise summary of the key aspects of Lakoff's and Johnson's *theory of metaphor* (as it will be described henceforth) that are relevant to the analysis of the source texts in Part II.

In following this course, this chapter gives a summary of the theoretical and methodological tools and rationale which drive the approach taken towards the sample of source texts in Part II.

2.1: Modern theories of the embodied mind

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson begin their 1999 book, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, with a series of bold claims about the consequences of modern neuroscientific research for classical western views of the human mind and reason, among which is the following:

Reason is not disembodied...but arises from the nature of our brains, bodies, and bodily experience. This is not just the innocuous and obvious claim that we need a body to reason; rather it is the striking claim that the very structure of reason itself comes from the details of our embodiment. The same neural and cognitive mechanisms that allow us to perceive and move around also create our conceptual systems and modes of reason. Thus, to understand reason we must understand the details of our visual system, our motor system, and the general mechanisms of neural binding. In summary, reason is not, in any way, a transcendent feature of the universe or of disembodied mind. Instead, it is shaped crucially by the peculiarities of our human bodies, by the

remarkable details of the neural structure of our brains, and by the specifics of our everyday functioning in the world.⁹⁰

This view of the nature of the mind and cognition is emblematic of a broader trend in the western sciences of the mind over the past few decades. Increasingly, scholars active in these fields have rejected classical western views of the mind as something ontologically and logically discrete from the body in favour of views which tie it inextricably to the body and world.

My intention in this section is to give an overview of the embodied view of the mind as it has been presented since the nineteen eighties by a number of scholars who have contributed to the discourses of neuro- and cognitive science. Incidentally, it is briefly worth explaining why here and elsewhere I refer to the *discourses*, as opposed to *disciplines*, of neuro- and cognitive science. Although they are considered discrete disciplines within the modern academy, the findings of both since the early twentieth century have stimulated much broader discussions on the nature of the phenomena they cover. An upshot of this has been that while the empirical side of these disciplines is largely limited to people trained within them, discussion and argument about their implications are not. Scholars from a wide range of academic backgrounds have made contributions to debates stimulated by their findings. In particular, philosophers trained in the analytical or Anglo-American tradition have played a major role in digesting the findings and significances of neuro- and cognitive science for a wider audience (myself included). Some of the scholars discussed below fall into this group: Mark Johnson, Daniel Dennett, and Andy Clark.

In short, therefore, while it is important to acknowledge neuro- and cognitive science as discrete disciplines within the modern western sciences, it is equally important to acknowledge the breadth of the debate they have encouraged in other areas of the academy, particularly outside of the so-called natural sciences.⁹¹

As stated above, the embodied view of the mind essentially holds that the mind is a normal biological function of the body in the same ways as digestion, blood circulation, and so forth. Put differently, the mind is an outcome of the structural and behavioural properties of the chemical components of the human body as they interact

⁹⁰ G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: the embodied mind and its challenge to western thought* (New York, 1999), p. 4.

⁹¹ A good discussion of the wider impact of neuroscience, as well as evolutionary biology, is provided by Smail in chapter four of *On Deep History and the Brain*.

and respond to each other and the ambient environment. There is now little doubt about this in neuro- and cognitive science. However, this knowledge still leaves plenty of room for debate as regards precisely how the body causes the mind and what consequences this has for how we understand phenomena like human psychology, mental health and well-being, childhood development, education, and criminality, to mention but a few of the relevant issues. For the purposes of this section, I begin by outlining how some scholars have tried to account for the mind in terms of the physiology of the body as well as environmental factors (for, as will be seen below, the embodied view of the mind invites questions regarding how the environment affects the mind via the body). Following this, I shall explain how these views of the mind and body may be used to shed light on the mental lives of people who lived in the remote past, specifically via textual analysis.

One of the most widely read accounts of how the mind and, in particular, the facet of the mind known as consciousness, may be accounted for in terms of the physiology of the human body, as well as external stimuli, has been provided by the philosopher, Daniel Dennett, in his book, *Consciousness Explained* (1991). Dennett's principal concern in this work is to explain the nature of human consciousness in terms of physical biological processes, rather than to make a case, *per se*, in favour of the embodied view of the mind. Nevertheless, the theory of consciousness he proposes, the "multiple drafts theory", is instructive here because it demonstrates how cognitive functions of the mind may be accounted for in terms of physiological states in the body, and more specifically, the brain. As he puts it:

According to the Multiple Drafts Model, all varieties of perception—indeed all varieties of thought and mental activity—are accomplished in the brain by parallel, multitrack processes of interpretation and elaboration of sensory inputs.⁹²

Throughout *Consciousness Explained*, Dennett situates his thesis in opposition to a view of consciousness, and the mind more generally, which he labels the "Cartesian theatre". This is a variation on so-called "homunculus" views of the mind,

⁹² D. C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (New York, 1991: repr. London, 1993), p. 111.

whereby all streams of conscious awareness are supposed to “come together” at some central point in the brain where they are merged into a coherent phenomenology that human beings, at least, experience as things like consciousness, the mind, or the self.⁹³ Using the findings of research in cognitive and neuroscience, Dennett convincingly debunks this myth in two stages. Firstly, he highlights some ways in which the mind can be seen to perform “editorial work” on multiple, parallel sensory inputs, the outcome of which is the illusion in human phenomenology of a single coherent stream of consciousness, when, in fact, in various test conditions, human consciousness can be shown to be fragmentary.⁹⁴ Secondly, he posits an alternative hypothesis on the nature of human consciousness, which accounts for its fragmentary nature in terms of the physical structure and physiological functions of the human brain. He summarises his thesis thus:

There is no single, definitive “stream of consciousness”, because there is no central Headquarters, no Cartesian theatre where it all comes together for the perusal of a Central Meaner. Instead of such a single stream (however wide), there are multiple channels in which specialist circuits try, in parallel...to do their various things, creating multiple drafts as they go. Most of these fragmentary drafts play short-lived roles in the modulation of current activity but some get promoted to further functional roles, in swift succession, by the activity of a virtual machine in the brain. The seriality of this machine...is not a “hard-wired” design feature, but rather the upshot of a succession of coalitions of these specialists.⁹⁵

It is important to note that Dennett’s view of consciousness is heavily influenced by so-called “connectionism”, whose advocates draw attention to the parallel processing structure of organic neuronal tissues. What this essentially means is that the structure of animal brains is such that they are geared towards performing multiple processing

⁹³ The prototype for the Cartesian Theatre is the pineal gland, a small sub-organ of the brain, which was proposed as the corporeal location of the mind by the seventeenth-century French philosophy and scientist, Descartes (hence the name): for more detail on this see *ibid.*, pp. 101-11.

⁹⁴ In particular, see *ibid.*, pp. 115-26. For more detail on what Dennett means by “editorial work” see the passage following the quotation given above: *ibid.*, p. 111. For an alternative, and more detailed account of connectionism see S. Pinker, *How the Mind Works* (New York, 1997: repr. London, 1998), chapter two.

⁹⁵ Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, pp. 253-4.

tasks in tandem, without the need for any central, overseeing circuit into which all outcomes of processing tasks must be fed before their significance, such as in the form of a bodily output (*i.e.* behaviour), can be determined.⁹⁶

The crucial point for present purposes is that Dennett envisions consciousness, and by extension, the mind, as macro-physiological states of the body, brought about, mostly in the brain, by the continuous occurrence of micro-physiological states, which, importantly, are spatially *distributed* across the matter of the brain rather than concentrated at any one point in it, and thus not centrally directed in quite the way that our experiences of consciousness might lead us to believe. What is of utmost significance here is not so much the explanation of consciousness given by Dennett, which is still significant, but rather *how* he does it. In short, Dennett is able to account for higher-order functions of the mind (*e.g.* memory) in terms of multiple microscopic, and spatially distributed, physical processes happening in the brain and nervous system (although, as will be seen shortly, chemical triggers and sensory inputs arising from the body play indispensable roles in modulating the behaviour of the brain and thus how people experience themselves). The upshot of this is that Dennett is able to provide a coherent account of conscious mental states in terms of physical processes in the body which in no way relies on the older western view of the mind as a disembodied consciousness. According to Dennett, without the body there is no possibility of the mind.

Views on the nature of the mind similar to those of Dennett, although broader in scope, have been proposed by the neuroscientist, Antonio Damasio, in his book, *Descartes' Error* (1994). Drawing on his clinical experiences of patients who have suffered from mental impairments late in life following brain damage, Damasio sets out to demonstrate the strength of the relationship between the mind and body, and the brain and body. Moreover, he sees the link between reason and the emotions as crucial to his case, and as such rests much on showing how reasoning becomes defective in the absence of “emotional” inputs.⁹⁷ The latter part of his case is based on his observations of patients whose brain damage has impaired the capacity of their brains to elicit certain emotional responses from stimuli while leaving their ability to reason logically about those stimuli fully intact. Sure enough, Damasio’s research

⁹⁶ See *ibid.*, chapter nine: Dennett provides some caveats on connectionism at pp. 268-9.

⁹⁷ I discuss what Damasio means by “emotions” in the next paragraph.

into these patients, as well as other studies he cites, seems to confirm that in the absence of emotional inputs, the capacity to reason logically in itself does not produce what would be thought of, at least from a modern western perspective, as “rational” behaviour.⁹⁸

Importantly, Damasio conceives of the emotions, as opposed to feelings (*i.e.* the qualities of emotions that we consciously experience), as biological dispositions, or “values”, formed by a combination of innate and culturally contingent factors, which lead us unconsciously to prefer, or consciously feel predisposed toward (without necessarily quite knowing why), certain responses to stimuli or situations in amongst a cacophony of potential options. This is to say that at some point in reasoning processes intended to facilitate choosing the best response to a stimulus, snap decisions eventually need to be made in order to force the subject to produce a behavioural response. According to Damasio’s account, abstract, logical, and speculative reasoning about how best to respond to a stimulus could go on forever in the absence of some strong disposition, or inclination, to favour a particular response among a potentially infinite number of alternative options. This is the job he ascribes to the emotions: feelings, on the other hand, are the part of emotions that we sometimes consciously experience.⁹⁹

Damasio’s account of the relationships between reason and the emotions on the one hand, and the faculties of the mind and the brain and body, on the other, which he develops in *Descartes’ Error*, is highly significant here. Damasio provides convincing evidence in favour of the embodied view of the mind via his own, and other researchers’, observations on the effects of brain damage on mature patients. The strongest point in favour of this is the fact that specific locations of the brain, when damaged, lead to near-uniform impairments in the mental lives of individual people. For instance, Damasio discusses how damage to certain areas of the frontal lobes predictably leads to the impairment of long-term decision making, grounded in an appreciation of socio-cultural concerns, expectations, and so forth.¹⁰⁰ Apart from

⁹⁸ Damasio builds the case for all this throughout Part 1 of *Descartes’ Error* (New York, 1994: repr. London, 1995): see chapter four for a digested version. On the matter of rationality, while to be sure, what counts as rationality is relative to different individuals and socio-cultural circumstances, it is nevertheless an indispensable concept in trying to account for why certain forms of behaviour, to a greatly predictable degree, work better than others in a given socio-cultural and environmental context. For a discussion of relevant issues see chapter eight, ‘Reason’, in G. E. R. Lloyd, *Cognitive Variations: Reflections on the Unity and Diversity of the Human Mind* (Oxford, 2007).

⁹⁹ See Damasio, *Descartes’ Error*, chapter seven.

¹⁰⁰ See *ibid.*, chapters three and four.

showing that specific brain areas uniformly specialise in certain functions, this lends weight to Dennett's view that consciousness and the mind are spatially distributed throughout the brain and body, and also that mental states almost certainly are supervenient on physiological states occurring in the brain and body: in short, there is no need to suppose the presence of a transcendent mind with special physical (or metaphysical) properties to account for human cognition.

But in addition to this, Damasio's account of the human mind takes into account the influence of the general physiology of the human body, both as it modulates and responds to its own internal physiology and environment stimuli, on the brain and thus mind. Damasio demonstrates the fallacy of the "embrained" view of the mind (*i.e.* the idea that the brain is the sole cause of the mind), firstly by discussing how the brain and body are locked in a chemical feedback-loop, whereby the brain produces chemicals (hormones) which cause physiological and chemical changes in the body which in turn stimulate and thus modify the physiology and chemical balance of hormones in the brain.¹⁰¹ In addition to this, external stimuli impacting on the body, such as emotive circumstances, or the ingestion of food with whatever chemical properties, may also lead to chemical and physiological changes that produce further feedbacks in the body, and so on and so forth. In short, the body and brain, and therefore mind, are inextricably interrelated.¹⁰²

Finally, Damasio ties this all up in a concept of *the self*, which he essentially conceives as a continuous online representation that the human organism produces of itself on the neural substrate of the brain, to which people have varying degrees of conscious and unconscious access (and to which his brain damaged patients, he hypothesises, have more limited access).¹⁰³ So put succinctly, Damasio understands the self as a continuously renewed series of physiological representations of oneself, to which one has degrees of conscious and unconscious access. Note this is not unlike how Dennett conceives of consciousness.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Damasio uses the term "embrained" in *ibid.*, p. 118: this term has recently been reproduced with similar intentions by N. Murphy and W. Brown in *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?* (Oxford, 2007), p. 12.

¹⁰² See Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, pp. 77-8, 144-5, and 160-1.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 236-44.

¹⁰⁴ Note also that Dennett supplies a biological definition of the self in *Consciousness Explained*: see chapter thirteen. I have not noted this here as it is an evolutionary argument, which does not obviously inform my reading of the sample of source texts in Part II.

The above summaries of aspects of Dennett's and Damasio's work provide a sample of how scholars active in the discourses of cognitive and neuroscience have been able to account for the human mind and cognition, and how people experience and act on these things, in terms of biological processes located in the body. This discussion now turns to the work of three scholars who have attempted to draw some wider significances from the embodied view of the mind, first for the edifice of western philosophy, and second for how we relate the phenomena of culture and society to the embodied mind.

Firstly, I return to the book with which this section began: Lakoff's and Johnson's *Philosophy in the Flesh*. Taking the embodied view of the mind as a starting point, as well as their earlier work in *Metaphors We Live By* (which will be discussed later in sec. 2.3), Lakoff and Johnson make the bold claim that the findings of neuro- and cognitive science undermine the foundations of western philosophy in classical metaphysics and assorted disembodied views of the human person, or self, reason, the mind, and so forth. What is of most interest here is what they have to say on how reason is grounded in the biological realities of the human body rather than an objective, metaphysical reality, independent of human existence or mental states.

Lakoff and Johnson begin by asserting that all concepts that human beings are capable of entertaining are inherently embodied, which is to say they exist in the body rather than the outside world (although, to be sure, they are causally related to conditions in the outside world). To illustrate what they mean by this, consider the observations they make on how people experience colours and form concepts from those experiences.

We see colour, and yet it is false, as false as another thing we see, the moving sun rising past the edge of the stationary earth. Just as astronomy tells us that the earth moves around the sun, not the sun around a stationary earth, so cognitive science tells us that *colours do not exist in the external world*. Given the world, our bodies and brains have evolved to create colour.

Our experience of colour is created by a combination of four factors: wave-lengths of reflected light, lighting conditions, and two aspects of our bodies: (1) the three kinds of colour cones in our retinas, which absorb light of

long, medium, and short wavelengths, and (2) the complex neural circuitry connected to those cones.¹⁰⁵ [My stress]

Lakoff and Johnson use this particularly stark example to spell out the much broader point that the properties of things in the world are not sufficient to account for the qualitative and meaningful experiences that people have of them. The qualities of colour experiences are the results of how the body senses and represents certain kinds of stimuli to itself in consciousness: we do not have immediate access to the lighting conditions and surface reflectance properties of objects in the world, but rather mediated representations of how those things *seem* to the body by virtue of the sensory organs and neurophysiology that allow it to sense and process information about those phenomena in the first place.¹⁰⁶

The most important conclusion which can be drawn from this is that western metaphysics, as traditionally conceived from classical antiquity well into modernity, functions on a false premise. In a nutshell, western metaphysics proposes that there is a transcendent reality beyond human experience, but to which it is possible to gain access via certain forms of “rational” enquiry: most usually involving formal logic.¹⁰⁷ It is not necessarily a recent observation that so-called rational modes of enquiry do not grant unmediated or necessarily accurate insights into the nature of the world or a proposed transcendent reality: this has been a discernable, albeit marginalised, position in western philosophy since the philosophical movement known as the Sceptics in classical Greece.¹⁰⁸ The novelty of Lakoff’s and Johnson’s position is that there is an objective reality to how people experience the world which can be studied, but that this is provided by the human body rather than a transcendent nature or physics.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, p.23.

¹⁰⁶ Lakoff and Johnson discuss these issues at length in *ibid.*, chapter three.

¹⁰⁷ For instance, see *ibid.*, chapter 21 on what the authors see as being “wrong” with current analytical philosophy. It is noteworthy that Lakoff has developed this line of argument further in collaboration with the mathematician, Rafael Núñez, by attempting to show how mathematical truisms and concepts also derive from people’s embodied experiences of the world rather than a transcendent mathematical reality: see G. Lakoff and R. E. Núñez, *Where Mathematics Comes From: how the embodied mind brings mathematics into being* (New York, 2000).

¹⁰⁸ For a classic discussion of this group, see E. R. Bevan, *Stocis and Sceptics* (orig. Oxford, 1913: repr. New York, 1979), pp. 121-52.

¹⁰⁹ Of course, the words nature and physic have a shared etymology: however, there is a distinction difference between their meanings in modern English, as I use them here.

In *Philosophy in the Flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson do not really deal with the significance of their view of the embodied mind for how we understand the phenomena of culture and society.¹¹⁰ This is perhaps understandable as their chief concern is with debunking what they see as some cherished fallacies of the whole tradition of western philosophy. But all the same, this seems a noteworthy omission from their account of embodied cognition in *Philosophy in the Flesh*. By contrast, as will be seen below, their theory of metaphor weaves a much more complex account of how embodied cognition sits in relation to socio-cultural knowledge and practices. For present purposes, Lakoff's and Johnson's thesis in *Philosophy in the Flesh* raises important questions, not only about many long-standing assumptions of western philosophy, but also about the relationship between human mental life and the outside world. If human concepts and modes of reasoning are expressions of the limited capacity of the body to process information about the world, this still leaves open the matter of how exactly the phenomena of culture and society influence the meanings or symbolic values that people draw from their embodied experiences of the world. Lakoff's and Johnson's theory of the mind hints at the possibility of a biologically-informed, cultural theory, which is able to account for variations in how people in different cultures and societies experience and understand the world arise from matching variations in their embodied experiences of the world.

In short, there is space within all this, and other embodied theories of the mind, to develop embodied accounts of culture and society, which in no way seek to reduce these phenomena to innate biological drives and instincts, but rather seek to account for them in terms of variations in bodily experience. Perhaps, for instance, when a human body develops in a specific socio-cultural environment, it may lock into a positive feedback-loop with that environment. In this way, embodied experiences of the socio-cultural environment may elicit positive feedbacks, which is to say mental states and behaviours, which help to reinforce aspects of the socio-cultural environment as it stands in the world. This could help to explain the relative success of different socio-cultural environments. The germ of such a theory seems already to be present in the area of evolutionary biology known as memetics.¹¹¹ In

¹¹⁰ That is, beyond some brief statements to the effect that human biology guarantees that certain aspects of human culture and society (e.g. the necessity of their being some kind of verbal, spoken language) are universal: for instance, see *Philosophy in the Flesh*, p. 462.

¹¹¹ This idea was first articulated, famously, by the ethologist, Richard Dawkins in his now classic work *The Selfish Gene*: see chapter eleven. As discussed in Chapter One, the English professor,

this way and others, it is possible to develop biologically-informed theories of culture and society which resort to neither crude forms of biological determinism nor extreme cultural relativism, instead presenting a plausible “third way”.

Finally, I turn to the work of the philosopher Andy Clark. Drawing attention to the ways in which humans structure their local environments either deliberately to meet their needs and desires, or by accident, Clark has pointed out that they create “cultural resources” as a result of such activities. He gives a variety of examples to illustrate this point. For instance, he refers to Alzheimer’s patients who lead relatively normal lives by placing physical reminders around their homes, such as written notices or strategically placed objects, in order to jog their memories.¹¹² He also points out that the world may be used to enhance the computational abilities of a healthy mind. For example, the burden placed on the biological mind by complex mathematical problems can be lessened by using a pen and paper as an external memory device to store the results of intermediate calculations and thus in a sense enhancing the human capacity to perform complex numerological calculations.¹¹³ For Clark, these examples illustrate how the world, *mutandis mutatis*, can be used as a form of external memory to compensate for the failures or limitations of biological memory.¹¹⁴

As Clark explains:

Our cleverness shows itself in our ability to actively structure and operate upon our environment so as to simplify our problem-solving tasks. This active structuring and exploitation extends from the simple use of spatial arrangements, through the use of specific transformations...all the way to the production of explicit written plans that allow easy reordering and shifting focus of attention. These latter cases involve the use of the special class of *external structures* that constitute maps, codes, languages, and symbols.¹¹⁵

[My stress]

Michael Drout, has recently attempted to apply the theory of memetics to tenth-century Anglo-Saxon culture in *How Tradition Works*.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 66. This example is explored further in the article, A. Clark and D. Chalmers, ‘The Extended Mind’ in *Analysis*, 58: 1 (1998), pp. 7-19.

¹¹³ A. Clark, *Being There: putting brain, body, and world together again* (Cambridge Mass., 1997), pp. 60-1.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-7.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

That is, he literally sees cultural resources (the “external structures” noted above) as augmentations to the biological intellect, in the sense that they support or enhance biological cognition (or, in his terms, they act as “props” or “scaffolding”).¹¹⁶

Clark has labelled his views on the relationship between the human mind and the environment as “the extended-mind theory”, and he often speaks of cognition as being “extended” or “leaking” out of the body.¹¹⁷ It should be noted that he opposes this to what he sees as the more traditional, western view of the mind in the modern biosciences as being either brain-bound or, at most, confined to the limits of the biological body. Although Clark’s contention that the mind extends beyond the body has stirred some controversy in cognitive science and analytical philosophy (the extended-mind theory is by no means generally accepted), his work nonetheless makes the instructive point that the relationship between the mind, body, and culture is continuous and fluid.¹¹⁸

Clark’s account of the mind presents yet further opportunities for a biologically-informed understanding of culture and society by allowing for a complex interweaving of cause and effect between the mind, body, and a wide range of highly contingent environmental and socio-cultural conditions. In bringing human biology into a causal account of the formation of culture and society, Clark does not in any way rely on crude forms of biological determinism to account for the relationship between these phenomena. Rather, what his work highlights is that the human body and socio-cultural phenomena are in a cause-effect feedback-loop with one another, and that as such, an account of one cannot be in any way complete if it excludes the other.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-7 and 53.

¹¹⁷ Clark most explicitly uses this phrase in Clark and Chalmers, ‘The Extended Mind’.

¹¹⁸ Clark answers numerous objections to the extended-mind theory in chapter five of A. Clark, *Supersizing the Mind: Embodiment, Action, and Cognitive Extension* (Oxford, 2008).

¹¹⁹ Particularly important in this regard is Clark’s illustration of an “emergent phenomenon” in terms of the formation of a termite colony in *Being There*, pp. 75-6. The point in this is that by acting on a combination of basic biological drives and changes made to the environment by the activity of the termite colony as a whole, individual termites contribute towards the creation of a complex of socio-cultural environment. This environment is not foreseen by any particular termite and thus planned for. It is rather the net product of the behaviour of the termite colony as a whole (*i.e.* it is an *emergent* phenomenon). Crucially, it is not just the biological drives of the termites that create the colony: the gradual build up of an environment created by the biologically determined behaviour of the termites has feedbacks for the subsequent behaviour of the termites so that the environment ends up modifying the basic biological behaviour. This relatively simple illustration helps to give some idea of how the far more complex phenomena of human culture and society may come about through a combination of basic biological drives and the emergent phenomena that come about from individual behaviour.

Historians have to some extent noticed the apparent continuity between biological cognition and cultural resources. For example, Michael Clanchy has pointed out that official record-keeping in medieval England developed partly as a response to the need to preserve biological memories in more robust and reliable forms.¹²⁰ Similarly, Elisabeth van Houts has highlighted a number of ways in which medieval communities preserved biological memories, including the use of written chronicles or annals, physical objects (or “heirlooms”), which, in her terms, could act as “pegs” for memories, and oral tradition (again, an example of biological memory).¹²¹ Clark’s work both validates these approaches to cultural resources and their social significances in medieval Europe, and indeed, strongly suggests that they should be taken further according to a biologically-informed theory of culture, such as was suggested above.

Over the past few decades, neuro- and cognitive science have provided compelling evidence showing the impact of the general physiology of the body on the mind. It now seems beyond doubt that mental states are in fact particular kinds of physiological states. The work surveyed in this section provides an overview, by no means comprehensive, of the literature and discourse of neuro- and cognitive science relevant for the purposes of this study. Taken together as a body of knowledge and argument, it offers a core understanding of how the mind may be understood as a function of the body necessary for the purposes of this study. I shall expand on this shortly in sec. 2.2 by outlining a more focused method for applying the embodied view of the mind to language.

Meanwhile, it is important to note that the embodied view of mind sits in radical contrast to an older set of beliefs and ideas about the nature of human existence in mainstream western thought. This set of beliefs and ideas is most commonly described in current Anglophone academic discourse as soul- or mind-body dualism (*i.e.* the idea that individual human beings consist of two core components: a material body and a cognitive agent, the latter of which may transcend the material conditions of the existence of the body), although this is not always an

¹²⁰ This is a major concern for Clanchy in his *From Memory Written Record: England 1066-1307* (London, 1979). As he states: ‘[B]y Edward I’s reign, the king’s attorneys were arguing in many *quo warranto* prosecutions against the magnates that the only sufficient warrant for a privilege was a written one and that in the form of a specific statement in a charter. Memory, whether individual or collective, if unsupported by clear written evidence, was ruled out of court’ (*ibid.*, p. 3).

¹²¹ Van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe*, pp. 93-120.

accurate label for what it is supposed to represent. For the immediate purposes of this section, soul-body dualism will be left to stand. However, as will be noted in Chapter Three, it is also common to find triadic versions of this theory in western thought (*i.e.* that human beings consist of a material body, cognitive agent or “the mind”, and a life-force, usually “spirit” or “soul”).¹²²

As noted previously, the purpose of this chapter is to explain how the embodied view of the mind will be used in this study to shed light on the older western view of the mind and human life. Importantly, this involves putting the embodied view of mind to work on a problem that it was not meant to solve: explaining the sense of mind-body dualism in terms of the inherently embodied nature of the mind. Ostensibly this may seem somewhat paradoxical since the embodied view of the mind has been taken in the sciences as a refutation of mind-body dualism in all its forms. The embodied view of the mind clearly leaves the prior tradition of western thought on the mind looking highly doubtful.¹²³ However, it also problematises the prior tradition in another way, specifically by raising questions about how such a set of beliefs and ideas could arise in the first place. If, as the embodied view of the mind proposes, all cognition is embodied, then how could people come to the view, on the basis of embodied experiences, that the mind is inherently disembodied?

This is a crucial question to which I shall provide some answers over the course of Part II of this study in terms of embodiment: especially in Chapter Three, sec. 3.3. I shall do this by following Lakoff’s and Johnson’s argument, in *Metaphors We Live By*, that people develop beliefs, ideas, and modes of abstract reasoning in response to their embodied, or sensorimotor, experiences of the world.¹²⁴ This is not to say that each person in the premodern west experienced the world in such a manner that they could only understand the mind and human existence in terms of ideas like

¹²² I particularly have in mind here triadic views of the nature of human existence which have been present in western thought and psychology since at least the earliest Greek writers and philosophers. This, among other things, is discussed at length in sec. 3.1.1 of the next chapter.

¹²³ A classic English-language refutation of mind-body dualism in Anglo-American philosophy is Gilbert Ryle’s *The Concept of the Mind* (London, 1949). It has since become a fairly standard point in works on the mind and cognition to offer some kind of refutation of mind-body dualism (typically Cartesian “substance dualism”, according to which the whole of existence is supposed to be divided into two kinds of substance, *res extensa* and *res cogitans*). For example, see Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, J. R. Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge Mass., 1992), pp. 13-18, Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, pp. 16-17 and 400-4 and Murphy and Brown, *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?*, pp. 15-41. For a more cautious attitude to mind-body dualism see P. S. Churchland and T. J. Sejnowski, *The Computational Brain* (Cambridge Mass., 1992), pp. 1-2.

¹²⁴ This is explained in more detail in the following section.

soul- or mind-body dualism. Socio-cultural predispositions towards belief in such ideas undoubtedly played a powerful role in conditioning how medieval Europeans thought about the mind and human existence. As will be seen in the next chapter, by the twelfth century, the transcendent nature of the mind and soul had already been firmly established in learned western thought for well over a millennium. I cannot say in this study when these ideas originally became established in western thought, nor in response to what embodied experiences. What I will argue, however, is that they remained well-established throughout the medieval period because they made a certain amount of *embodied sense*, which is to say, in certain respects they must have accorded with how medieval people experienced the world as inherently embodied beings.

The embodied approach taken in this study towards the mental lives and phenomenology of medieval people is not wholly novel. Certainly, some medievalists have argued that the mystical or supernatural experiences and beliefs that are reported of, or by, medieval people were in fact responses to the worldly conditions in which they lived as embodied beings.¹²⁵ In this respect, the stance adopted here sits firmly within this tradition, although it is informed by a linguistic method, which, as far as I am aware, has not explicitly influenced the course of previous studies about the mental lives of medieval people.

2.2: Lakoff's and Johnson's theory of metaphor

As noted previously, the core method adopted throughout Part II of this study is based on Lakoff's and Johnson's theory of metaphor. They developed this in their first co-authored book, *Metaphors We Live By*, the main contention of which is that metaphor is a necessary aspect of human reason, determined largely by people's embodied or sensorimotor experiences of the world: this is as opposed to the view that metaphor is optional, aesthetic, and "merely linguistic" (to use their phrase).¹²⁶ Therefore, it is their view that the conceptual systems that guide human reason in different cultures and societies are inherently metaphorical by virtue of the embodied conditions of human existence and, moreover, that this is reflected in the metaphors that pervade

¹²⁵ For instance, see Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* and Kroll and Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*.

¹²⁶ G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 145-6. For more on this see sec. 2.2.4 below.

the everyday language of those cultures and societies. Hence they argue that the metaphorical aspects of everyday language offer important insights into the latent structures of human reason.¹²⁷

2.2.1: *Conceptual systems and types of metaphor*

An important element of Lakoff and Johnson's theory is the supposition that metaphors cluster together in people's minds to form conceptual systems which in turn underpin the worldviews that they variously entertain.¹²⁸ They define metaphors which exist inside conceptual systems as "conventional" metaphors and those that do not as "new" metaphors. However, this distinction is not absolute in that new metaphors may be appropriated into conceptual systems through acceptance and use and conventional metaphors may likewise fall out of use in conceptual systems. However, the most basic kinds of metaphor (*i.e.* those most closely tied to the conditions of human embodiment and the local environment) are most stable as conventional metaphors or even irrevocably so because they are so tightly bound to the given biological and environmental conditions that determine how people experience the world. Furthermore, they argue that conceptual systems are necessarily prejudicial or discriminatory in that they will be more "accepting" (so to speak) of metaphors that logically conform to those already bound-up in them and less so to those that either show no logical affinity to, or clash with, them. For instance, if a conceptual system already contains metaphors that associate *up* with *good*, metaphors outside the system which conform to this worldview are more likely to be appropriated into it. By contrast, the system will be actively prejudicial to metaphors that associate *up* with *bad*.¹²⁹

Lakoff and Johnson identify three main kinds of basic metaphor: *structural*, which impose structures on things (*e.g. arguments are like war, theories are like buildings*); *orientational*, which impose orientation on things (*e.g. more is up, sadness is down, the cliff-face*); and *ontological*, whereby things are construed as discrete

¹²⁷ Giles Constable has recently written on metaphors in medieval Latin (more on this shortly in sec. 2.2.6). He mentions Lakoff's and Johnson's work, but does not explore it in any detail: see G. Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors' in *Viator*, 38: 2 (2007), pp. 1-20.

¹²⁸ Lakoff's and Johnson's views on the extent to which metaphors "construct" people's experiences of are discussed in sec. 2.2.4 below.

¹²⁹ For more on this see sec. 2.2.2 below: for direct reference see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, chapters 9-11.

physical objects, substances, or containers with clearly defined boundaries (*e.g. the cloud is shaped like a house, the French-German border, in the forest*).¹³⁰ The basic aspects of these metaphors are determined by conditions in the world, including those given by the human body. For example, given the approximately “flat” surface of the earth and the form of the body, people typically walk forward with an upright posture. Hence, according to Lakoff’s and Johnson’s argument, these “worldly” conditions provide the basis for metaphorical reasoning and, more specifically in this case, orientational metaphors. In this way, the *orientational* metaphors, *up is good* and *down is bad*, could be related to people’s experiences of the upright posture of their bodies: in anticipation of the following chapters, perhaps this is because the sense organs are mostly concentrated in the head, thus making people more sympathetic to the highest point of the body, and thus relatively less so to the lower areas.¹³¹ Or similarly, *forward is the future* and *backward is the past* could arise as responses to the forward-facing movements of the body (maybe because the body typically faces where it *will* go while its back is turned on where it *has* been).

Importantly, many, if not most, instances of these basic metaphors would not be viewed as metaphorical in any ordinary sense. For instance, none of the following statements would be considered metaphorical in everyday language:

1. *I am feeling down.*
2. *The cliff faces northwest.*
3. *The lake is in the forest.*
4. *That cloud is changing shape.*
5. *That man is stick-thin.*

But all, in different senses, count as metaphors according to Lakoff’s and Johnson’s theory because they impose properties like structure (2, 3, 4, 5), orientation (1, 2), and substance (2, 3, 4, 5) on things in the world. That is, they provide understanding of

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, chapters 2, 4, and 6 respectively.

¹³¹ For more on this see Chapter Four, sec. 4.3.

one thing by reference to another. And moreover, it is from these kinds of basic metaphor that more complex and socio-culturally determined metaphors are constructed. This, in turn, draws attention to an important aspect of Lakoff's and Johnson's theory, which is of utmost importance in the subsequent chapters of this study: namely, the human tendency to view the world as a logically structured place.¹³²

Throughout *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson draw attention to the ways in which the human mind imposes structures on the world. Most obviously, these structures are geographical (*e.g.* land, sea, sky, mountains, hills, rivers), ecological (*e.g.* forests, jungles, deserts, cities, fields), biological (*e.g.* animals, birds, fish, plants), and socio-cultural (*e.g.* communities, languages, cultures, societies). We view these things as either cohering substances (*e.g.* land, sea, sky), categories, which are coherent according to set criteria (*e.g.* animals, birds, fish, and plants), or super-structures, involving the interactions of multiple components (*e.g.* communities, languages, cultures). And additionally, we may infer from these things further substances, categories, or structures which are not immediately available to our senses and even imaginary (*e.g.* heaven, hell, an immaterial soul, spirit, or "fifth element").¹³³ Indeed, it will be argued below that structure is a highly important, if not crucial, aspect to how the authors of the sampled source texts understood the nature of human existence.

2.2.2: Entailments and partial coherence among metaphors

Lakoff and Johnson also point out that metaphors have *entailments* which logically follow from them. For instance, to use their example, *love is a collaborative work of art*, the following entailments logically follow: *love is work*, *love is active*, and *love involves shared responsibility*.¹³⁴ These entailments may be metaphors, as in the first two examples, or not, as in the last. Moreover, entailments will almost invariably have further entailments which logically follow and so on. Accordingly, conceptual

¹³² Cf. with Mary Douglas' take on the human tendency to organise the world in *Purity and Danger* (orig. London, 1966: repr. 2002), pp. 2-3 and 45-50.

¹³³ Chapter Three is most specifically concerned with these issues: in particular, see sec. 3.1.

¹³⁴ The examples given in the text have been taken from Lakoff's and Johnson's list of twenty five possible entailments to the *love is a collaborative work of art* metaphor: see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, p. 140.

systems will at least be partly structured by the *coherent networks* of entailments that follow from the metaphors that they accommodate and so forth. However, by the same token, metaphors invariably highlight certain aspects of our experiences while concealing, or even suppressing others. Hence metaphors and their entailments are only ever *partially coherent* among each other.¹³⁵ For example, *love is a collaborative work of art* highlights aspects of love that are active or involve joint responsibility, suppresses passive or individualistic aspects of love, and conceals alternative views of love, such as *love is blind* which presents a very different view of love.¹³⁶ This, in turn, brings us back to the earlier point that conceptual systems are necessarily exclusive.¹³⁷

None of this is to say that networks of entailments are static. The meanings of words invariably shift over time, and some words fall out of use while others, “neologisms”, are coined in a variety of socio-cultural contexts. Networks of entailments can be expected to shift and become reconfigured with the meanings of specific words. Moreover, a minor semantic shift in the meaning of one word may conceivably have a ripple effect on the network of entailments to which it is connected, thereby bringing about much wider changes in its associated conceptual system. The range of possibilities for shift and change within networks of entailments and thus conceptual systems is vast. However, it should still be stressed that perhaps what is most remarkable about these phenomena is not that they change over time, which is invariably the case, but rather that they change so little and slowly. Conceptual systems and networks of entailments may change, but almost always only gradually, because systems and networks, *qua* systems and networks, also have a stabilising effect on the relationships between their components.

2.2.3: Metonymy and synecdoche

In addition to metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson discuss the importance of metonymy and synecdoche to human reason in *Metaphors We Live By*. Although they note that these are significantly different processes to metaphor in that they perform a largely representative function (*i.e.* the part for the whole) whereas metaphor conceptualises

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, chapters 9-11.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-1.

¹³⁷ Noted in sec. 2.2.1 above.

one thing in terms of another, they highlight similarities in how they impose understanding on the world. To use their example, the metonymic statement, *we need some good heads on the project*, provides understanding by exaggerating an aspect of the thing that is being referred to by the metonymy (*viz.* people). Hence, in this case, *good heads* is not merely intended to represent people in general. It is also intended to highlight intelligence as an aspect or capability of people. Thus, because in modern western culture, intelligence tends to be associated with the head, using the head to represent people in their entirety has the function of exaggerating intelligence as an aspect of the being of those people.¹³⁸ Moreover, it connotes, or has the *entailment*, that intelligence is a greater aspect of some people than of others in that there are presumably also people who *are* “bad heads”, and hence would be less desirable to have on the project.¹³⁹

Therefore, metonymy and synecdoche can be seen to provide understanding in a manner similar to metaphor in that they highlight certain aspects of something which in turn can be expected to conceal others and suppress still others (in the manner described in the previous section). And moreover, they have entailments in that they have different connotations depending on which aspect of their subject they highlight (as was also described above). This can also be related to Andy Clark’s observation that language tends to ‘reduce the descriptive complexity of the environment’, which is to say language tends to focus on the most prominent aspects of the environment.¹⁴⁰ Clark relates this to research on human spatial perception which suggests that people tend to reason and interact with the environment in ways that reduce its complexity for their purposes (*e.g.* it is easier to count a large quantity of eggs if they are arranged into half dozens rather than a single continuous quantity). He draws a strong parallel between these two aspects of human reasoning, arguing that they mutually reinforce each other in that both involve focusing on salient features of the world as we experience it (and when possible, manipulating the world to provide them).¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ However, it will be seen in Chapter Four that this is not the only view of the relationship between the human body and intelligence in western culture: although intelligence or reason was typically associated with the head in western medieval thought, there was also a tendency, as indeed there still is, at least in figurative terms, to associate certain mental faculties with the heart. This issue is explored in detail in sec. 4.3.

¹³⁹ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, chapter 8.

¹⁴⁰ Clark, *Supersizing the Mind*, p. 65.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

2.2.4: *Living by metaphors*

Finally, it is worth drawing attention to perhaps the largest claim made by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*:

The idea that metaphors can create realities goes against most traditional views of metaphor. The reason is that metaphor has traditionally been viewed as a matter of mere language rather than primarily as a means of structuring our conceptual system and the kinds of everyday activities we perform. It is reasonable enough to assume that words alone don't change reality. But changes in our conceptual system do change what is real for us and affect how we perceive the world and act upon those perceptions.¹⁴²

This should be related back to the opening passages of this discussion, where, firstly, it was noted that Lakoff and Johnson view metaphor as a necessary aspect of human reason, and secondly, that they consider sensorimotor experience to be a key influence on metaphorical reasoning.¹⁴³ For present purposes, the above quotation shows how they take these points further, arguing that the metaphorical attitudes that people develop or adopt towards the world (*i.e.* "by which they live") alter their perception of the world to the extent that they can affect how they behave. As they put it:

We see this as...the power of metaphor to create a reality rather than simply to give us a way of conceptualising a preexisting reality.¹⁴⁴

Therefore, the key point here is that the metaphorical attitudes that people develop towards the world are real enough *for them* to guide how they perceive it and behave in it. This casts metaphorical reasoning in a feedback-loop with the world, whereby the given conditions of the world influence the metaphorical attitudes that people develop towards it, which, in turn, influence how they act in it (including how they

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 145-6.

¹⁴³ Also see the discussion of Lakoff's and Johnson's later work in sec. 2.1, pp. 44-6 above.

¹⁴⁴ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, p. 144 (this quotation originally refers back to a given example hence the ellipsis represents 'a clear case').

manipulate it). Furthermore, this view of metaphor allows for a complex reciprocal relationship between the mind, body, and culture since by this account culturally contingent adaptations of the environment may influence metaphorical reasoning (which is earthed in the biological body). This point dovetails with the main concern of Part II of this study: namely how the representation of human existence in the sample of source texts can be seen to reflect the entwined and reciprocal influences of mind, body, and culture.¹⁴⁵

2.2.5: *How does Lakoff's and Johnson's work compare with medieval theories of metaphor?*

Medieval scholars inherited entrenched views on metaphors [*metaphora*] and linguistic tropes and figures in general from classical grammarians. Metaphor was understood according to this tradition in two related ways. Firstly, it was seen as a process of deliberately distorting the meanings of words for rhetorical and stylistic ends, and secondly, as a transference [*translatio*] of words from a significance (or meaning) that is intrinsic to them to a likeness [*similitudo*] that is not. This view of metaphor was widely known to medieval scholars, not least thanks to the *Ars Maior* of the fourth-century Roman Grammarian, Donatus, and later texts in which Donatus' views were repeated.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, many medieval scholars would likely have been aware of Donatus' claim that metaphor proceeds in four distinct ways:

Metaphor is a transferring of things and words. This occurs in four ways: from animate to animate, from inanimate to inanimate, from animate to inanimate from inanimate to animate.¹⁴⁷

This is to say, metaphors work either by transferring qualities of one living thing to another, one lifeless thing to another, or from a living thing to a lifeless thing and a lifeless thing to a living thing. I shall briefly discuss this with reference to some

¹⁴⁵ For more detail on the aims of Part II see the Introduction to Part II, pp. 63-5.

¹⁴⁶ For a discussion of this see *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory AD 300-1475*, ed. R. Copeland and I. Sluiter (Oxford, 2009), pp. 28-38.

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 29. This is repeated, almost verbatim, by Isidore of Seville in *Etymologiae*, i: 37 (2-4): note bibliographical details of the Latin and English editions of this text cited throughout this study are provided in the list of abbreviations.

examples of these four types of metaphor given by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae* as they highlight some important differences between premodern and modern understandings of metaphor.

Thus, Isidore provides the follow examples and explanations:

[F]rom animate [*animalis*] to animate, as:

He mounted winged horses;

speaking metaphorically [*metaphorice loquens*] it associates [*misceo*] the wings of a bird with a quadruped...From the inanimate [*inanimalis*] to the inanimate, as:

The pine-wood plows [*sic.*] the sea, the lofty keel cuts a furrow;

this associates the use of land with water, since plowing [*sic.*] and cutting a furrow have to do with land, not the sea. From inanimate to animate, as “blooming youth”; this associates inanimate flowers with youth, which is living. From animate to inanimate, as:

You, father Neptune, whose white temples, wreathed with crashing brine, resound; to whom the great Ocean flows forth as your eternal beard, and in whose hair rivers wander.

For ‘beard’, ‘temples’, and ‘hair’ pertain not to the Ocean but to men.¹⁴⁸

The key thing to notice here is that Isidore only stresses transference of meaning: not the *understanding* that metaphors provide of the object onto which the transference has been projected, nor indeed of the transferred subject. It is also noteworthy that rather than “associate”, as in the translation, Isidore uses the verb “to mix” [*misceo*] to describe the nature of a metaphorical relationship: hence the process he describes is more circumscribed than Barney and his collaborators’ translation suggests. Mixing

¹⁴⁸ Isidore, *Etymologiae*, i: 37 (2-4).

two things together, as in a “winged horse”, is a more discrete process than *association*, which tends to suggest greater fluidity and less containment. Indeed, by Isidore’s standards the mixing of two ideas, via verbal signifiers, seems to have been sufficient to constitute a metaphor. This does not necessarily follow in modern theories of metaphor. By current standards, the idea of a winged horse is not necessarily in itself a metaphor: it is only a metaphor if it has some symbolic value or meaning beyond what it immediately represents (*e.g.* the wings represent the swiftness of horses).

Premodern theories of metaphor stand in stark contrast to Lakoff’s and Johnson’s modern equivalent. Lakoff and Johnson place utmost emphasis on the understanding that metaphor provides both of its parts (*i.e.* the “vehicle”) and the idea or thing it is supposed represent (“tenor”). By contrast, Isidore has almost nothing to say about the understanding provided by metaphors. This is surely not surprising, for as noted earlier, classical grammarians tended to view metaphor as a perversion of language (*i.e.* solecism). It was typically considered an ornamental or stylistic device, useful to rhetoricians and poets, but also suspicious because, as a perversion of language, it could be used for the ends of concealment or evasion.¹⁴⁹ This is not to say that metaphor was necessarily viewed in a negative light in medieval intellectual life. It was certainly put to positive ends in biblical exegesis as an aspect of one of the four methods for reading the Bible, namely allegory, and it was also recommended in manuals on creative writing.¹⁵⁰ But all the same, premodern theories of metaphor construed it chiefly as a stylistic perversion of language, not as a means of providing understanding.

Therefore, the most important point to take away from this is that Lakoff’s and Johnson’s theory of metaphor stands in diametric opposition to medieval theories of metaphor in two key ways: first, for Lakoff and Johnson metaphor is a necessary rather than optional part of human language (or rather, cognition, hence its prominence in language); second, metaphor provides understanding, not concealment

¹⁴⁹ For an instructive medieval guide on how to add ornamentation, including metaphor, to texts, see the extract from Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s *Poetria Nova*, ed. & trans. Copeland and Sluiter in *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric*, pp. 602-6. Suspicion about highly ornamented language was common in the medieval west, often because of its associations with pagan writers. For example, Guibert of Nogent, one of the subjects of this study, describes how he was led astray as a young adult by the subversive pleasures of classical pagan poetry in *De Vita Sua*, i: 17.

¹⁵⁰ On exegesis see B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 26-36; also see the previous note for a positive medieval guide to adding metaphor to language.

or obfuscation, of whatever it is putatively about and often also of its parts; if it does not achieve such ends then it is either *not* a metaphor or, in a utilitarian sense, a “bad” metaphor. In this way, we can see how a modern theory of metaphor, not shared, at least explicitly, by medieval thinkers, can nevertheless help to shed light on how medieval people represented their experiences and thought about the world in texts.

2.2.6: *Genderless metaphors*

Finally, in regard to Lakoff’s and Johnson’s work on metaphor the issue of gender is raised in the conclusion to this study, specifically in regard to the fact that concepts of sex or gender often do not obviously influence the representation of human existence in the sample of source texts.¹⁵¹ That is, the body is frequently represented in the relevant source texts in gender-neutral terms, even though Latin nouns and adjectives are all gendered. Gender is a relatively flexible aspect of Latin grammar in that many words have male, female, and neuter forms which can be used to achieve language-world fit: for example, *servus* for a male slave and *serva* for a female slave. However, gender is often also conventional in that the gendering of many Latin words does not reflect a language-world fit: so for instance, the female vagina and breasts can be referred to, respectively, by the masculine nouns, *cunnus* and *pectus*. Therefore grammatical gender, at least in Latin, cannot necessarily be viewed as an expression of gender concepts in human cognition.

Lakoff and Johnson discuss an important conceptual tool in *Metaphors We Live By*, namely the notion of *prototypes*, which, as will be discussed in the conclusion to this study, is of some help in determining the extent to which gender concepts influenced the representation of the body in the relevant source texts.¹⁵² In brief, Lakoff and Johnson define prototypes as strictly conceptual examples of *typical* members of categories. Hence a prototypical chair (from a western perspective) has a rigid back, seat, and four legs and is intended for sitting on, whereby things in the world may be defined as “chairs” according to how they relate to this prototype.¹⁵³ This helps to explain why people rarely have trouble deciding whether things are

¹⁵¹ This topic is picked up in the Conclusion, sec. 6.3.

¹⁵² See Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, pp. 122-4 and 162-66: cf. Pinker, *How the Mind Works*, pp. 306-313. This idea is briefly recapped in the Conclusion, sec. 6.3.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-24. Lakoff and Johnson take the concept of prototypes from the psychologist, Eleanor Rosch.

chairs or not, regardless of the wide range of possible variations on what physically and conceptually counts as a chair in the world according to western norms. It is largely a matter of deciding whether an object meets certain prototypical criteria for being a chair (*e.g.* is it a raised platform which can be sat on?). Accordingly, the conclusion to this study will make use of the notion of prototypes to examine the possibility that much of the conceptualisation of the body in the sample of source texts is in fact gender-neutral.

2.3: Conclusion

Over the course of this chapter I have outlined a series of core concepts which inform the analysis of the sample of source texts in Part II of this study. The embodied view of the mind, the relationship between the environment, body, and mental life, and Lakoff's and Johnson's theory of metaphor all impinge in various ways and at different points in the three chapters which follow. My key aim in these chapters is to analyse how human existence is represented in the sample of source texts in terms of the ways in which the body interacts with the mind and the local environment. The influence of the body on consciousness, perception, reasoning, communication, and so forth is of utmost importance. However, it should be stressed that by taking this approach, this study does not opt for crude forms of biological determinism. Rather, as will be discussed in the following chapters, neuro- and cognitive science strongly suggest that human existence, in all its complexity, involves reciprocal interactions between the mind, body, and environmental conditions (including socio-cultural factors and context). As will be argued throughout the remainder of this study, understanding how these facets of human existence interact is crucial to understanding how and why human existence is represented in the sample of source texts in the ways which are discussed in the following chapters.

Part II

Introduction

Part II of this study proceeds in three main chapters which are intended to build on each other towards an analytical synthesis of mind, body, and culture as they are represented in the sample of source texts. There is still a strong tendency in western thought, caught up in some very ancient assumptions about the nature of the world, to analyse these aspects of human existence as though they are logically, perhaps sometimes even ontologically, discrete from one another. However, as discussed in Chapter Two, this view of the relationships between the mind, body, and culture is no longer tenable in light of the recent findings of neuro- and cognitive science. While there is some superficial sense in treating them as logically discrete subjects of human thought and enquiry, the phenomena we subsume under these labels should be understood as interconnected: this is to say, the separation is an analytical conceit, not a reflection of reality. The major argument which I will make in the chapters which follow is that in order for medievalists to gather a well-rounded understanding of medieval people, both as individuals and situated beings, they must take stock of how the existence and development of each of these three facets of human existence is dependent on the existence and development of each of the others. The chapters which comprise Part II of this study develop towards this end as follows.

Chapter Three begins by examining the concept of the mind inherited in the medieval west through ancient religion, philosophy, science, and theology, and late antique Christian thought. This helps to highlight some of the culturally transmitted assumptions that underpinned the attitudes of well-educated Western Christians in medieval Europe towards the human mind and cognition and which may be seen to recur frequently throughout the sample of twelfth-century texts examined by this study. I have applied Lakoff's and Johnson's theory of metaphor and the embodied view of the mind over this background in order to highlight how, in the relevant sample of texts, cultural assumptions about the mind can be seen to intermingle with sensorimotor concepts derived from the ways in which the relevant authors

experienced the world and themselves via the sensorimotor faculties of their bodies. In this way, Chapter Three begins to build a picture of the intimacy of the relationship between the mind, body, and culture by showing how even when thinking of the mind explicitly in terms of a disembodied entity or agent (*i.e.* the soul), an idea they inherited from the ancient past, the relevant authors invariably conceptualised it in terms of their embodied experiences of themselves and the world around them.

Chapter Four adds to this picture by exploring the representation of the body in the sample of source texts. It begins by analysing the basic reasoning that underpins how the body is conceptualised as a material entity: that is, as a cohering and organised mass of parts and substances. It develops this by showing how the representation of the body was influenced not only by the relevant authors' immediate sensorimotor experiences of it, but also by a wide range of culturally contingent ideas regarding, in particular, how and where it is situated in the world, who is potentially observing it, and the nature of its relationship with the mind. This chapter is heavily informed by an argument made by the multidisciplinary scholar, G. E. R. Lloyd, in his book, *Cognitive Variations: Reflections on the Unity and Diversity of the Human Mind* (2007), concerning the validity of the distinction in western thought between nature and culture.¹⁵⁴ In light of Lloyd's views I will argue that the body is neither ontologically nor logically separable from its effects in the world (as might be supposed according to the nature-culture distinction). The socio-cultural phenomena caused by the behaviour of human bodies (especially how different bodies interact with each other) are continuous with the biological body, in which regard they should not be treated in analytical isolation. The biological body and society and culture share the same plain of existence and influence each other's development.

Finally, Chapter Five completes the picture built up over the courses of the previous two chapters by offering a series of snapshots of the lived experiences of the authors of the sample of source texts: namely, the ways in which they experienced pain and suffering, the aging process, and sex and excretion. The purpose of this is to explore how an embodied view of the mind and culture can help to explain the ways in which people's experiences of their existence in the world become value-laden. This point comes from Lakoff's and Johnson's views in *Philosophy in the Flesh*. I will argue in line with these authors that the body deserves a central place in analysis

¹⁵⁴ See Lloyd, *Cognitive Variations*, chapter seven.

of the mind and culture, as indeed mind and culture deserve a central place in analysis of the body. I am not in any way proposing that any of these phenomena are reducible to one another. What am I proposing is that while it is possible to adopt modes of enquiry that place greater or lesser emphasis on one or another of them, looking beyond this it is important for us to recognise that they are in fact mutually entwined facets of the broader macro-phenomenon of human existence.

The Authors and Source Texts

This study is concerned with the culture of Latinity in twelfth-century Europe, specifically in England and Northern France (*i.e.* the use of Latin as a second language by the suitably well-educated denizens of either area). In this tempo-geographical context, knowledge of Latin is an obvious mark of education and, particularly from the eleventh century onwards, of a humanist education modelled on the school curricula of the late Roman world.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, as the Western Church was the largest and wealthiest sponsor of this kind of education in the twelfth century, the vast majority of people who were able to use Latin in twelfth-century England and Northern France would have had ties of one kind or another to the Church.¹⁵⁶ This is reflected by the authors of the texts examined here, all of whom were either monks or secular clergy: Guibert, Orderic, Peter and the author of *The Life of Christina* were monks and John and Walter were clerics.

¹⁵⁵ As early as the ninth century, the works of classical Grammarians were being used as the basis for teaching Latin in cathedral and monastic schools and later the universities: see C. Mews, 'Philosophy and Theology 1100-1150: the search for harmony' in *Le XII^e siècle: Mutations et renouveau en France dans la première moitié du XII^e siècle*, ed. Françoise Gasparri (Paris, 1994), pp. 159-203, E. J. Ashworth, 'Language and logic' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 73-96 and R. W. Southern, 'The schools of Paris and the school of Chartres' in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. J. F. Benton *et al* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 113-37. On monastic education in the earlier part of the twelfth century see M. Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 86-114. Although Orderic is the immediate point of reference for Chibnall's work, her focus is much broader, offering a more general account of monastic education around the time of Orderic's life.

¹⁵⁶ See the four articles in part ii of *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. J. F. Benton *et al* (Oxford, 1982). There are a number of good articles by Constant Mews on education in northern France around the twelfth century in the Variorum edition of his essays, *Reason and Belief in the Age of Roscelin and Abelard* (Aldershot, 2002).

In approximately chronological order according to the date of the composition, the texts used for this study are: Guibert of Nogent's *De Vita Sua Sive Monodiarum* (composed c.1115);¹⁵⁷ the epilogue to Orderic Vitalis' *Historia Ecclesiastica* (c.1137);¹⁵⁸ *De S. Theodora, Virgine, Quae et Christina Dicitur* or as it is better known, *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, composed by an unknown monk of St Albans (c.1155-66);¹⁵⁹ the letter collections of John of Salisbury, which have been preserved in two distinct collections since the Middle Ages (c.1153-61 and 1161-80);¹⁶⁰ the letter collection of Peter of Celle (c.1145-81¹⁶¹); and Walter Map's *De Nugis Curialium* (c.1180-93).¹⁶² These texts offer a fairly broad sample of the surviving Latin literature of the twelfth century in terms of genre, content, style, and to some extent the quality of the Latin prose. They range in genre from hagiography (*The Life of Christina*), something approximating to "autobiography" (*De Vita Sua* and Orderic's epilogue), and letters, to a compendium of autobiographical, moral, and supernatural anecdotes, pseudo-history, and several homiletic tracts (*De Nugis*).¹⁶³

It is clear from their surviving works that each of these authors nurtured highly personal literary and intellectual tastes and interests. For example, Guibert's surviving works include a number of biblical commentaries (*Moralia in Genesin*,

¹⁵⁷ Benton reckons 1115 to be a reasonably precise date for the composition of *De Vita Sua*: see appendix 1 in Benton, *Self and Society*, p. 237. **Note bibliographical details of the versions of the texts sampled for the purposes of Part II of this study can be found in the list of abbreviations: see pp. 8-10 above.**

¹⁵⁸ Chibnall has proposed 1137 as the year of the *Epilogue's* composition, while the work as a whole, she suggests, was composed c.1114-37. On these dates see Chibnall's introduction to Orderic, *Historia*, i., pp. 31-5.

¹⁵⁹ On this dating see Talbot's introduction to *The Life of Christina*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁰ The earlier collection consists of letters composed between 1153 and 1161 while John was in the employment of the then archbishop of Canterbury, Theobald of Bec (1139-61). The second collection consists of letters composed after Theobald's death in 1161 up to John's death in 1180. The tradition of dividing John's letters into two distinct collections is preserved in modern editions. For bibliographical information on the editions used here see the List of Abbreviations. On the manuscript traditions for John's letters see John, *Letters*, i, pp. lvii-lxii and ii, pp. xlvi-lxiii.

¹⁶¹ These are the years Julian Haseldine gives as the earliest and latest possible dates for the composition of Peter's surviving letters (their significance being the beginning of Peter's abbacy at Montier-la-Celle in 1145 and his election as bishop of Chartres in 1181): see Peter, *Letters*, pp. xxxiv-xxxvi.

¹⁶² On the complexity of dating *De Nugis* see James' introduction, pp. xxiv-xxx.

¹⁶³ I hesitate to use autobiography because the concept of autobiography is itself distinctly modern. Even though there are some clear examples of ancient texts which ostensibly fit this mould (Augustine's *Confessions* often being cited as the preminent example), these were not identified as such by their authors, and in many respects have different styles and aims to modern autobiographies. For instance, Augustine's *Confessions* closes with philosophical and theological musings on the nature of time and the Book of Genesis. These are only the most explicit indicators of the fact that his *Confessions* was intended to address theological and philosophical concerns as much as to provide a record of Augustine's early life (i.e. "autobiography"). For a good, if now old, discussion of autobiography as a genre, see J. Olney, *Metaphors of Self: the meaning of autobiography* (Princeton NJ. 1972).

Tropologiae in Prophetas Osee et Amos ac Lamentationes Ieremiae), sermons and moral treatises (*Sermo In Illud Sapientiae* and *Tractatus de Incarnatione Contra Iudaeos, Liber de Laude Sanctae Mariae*), histories (*Gesta Dei per Francos* and *De Vita Sua* which, after book one, largely focuses on contemporary events of significance in and around the town of Laon) and a critique of superstitions attached to saints' relics that were popular his own times (*De Pignoribus Sanctorum*).¹⁶⁴

By contrast, Orderic's literary efforts seem to have been mainly channelled into recording the history of the Norman abbey of Saint-Évroul, where he had been inducted as an oblate when he was ten years old, and the surrounding areas of north-western France.¹⁶⁵ Hence it is known that Orderic contributed to the composition of the Abbey's annals and made a redaction of William of Jumièges' *Normannorum Ducum*, which was originally written around the time of Orderic's birth.¹⁶⁶ In addition to this, he is also known to have written *vitae* of the English saints, Æthelwold and Guthlac.¹⁶⁷ The special significance of the epilogue to his *Historia* is its dominantly autobiographical theme. In a relatively short space Orderic offers a narrative of significant events in his life, from his baptism and early childhood in England shortly after the Norman Conquest in 1066, up to the point at which he was adding the finishing touches to the *Historia* c.1137. Although, it has been noted that Orderic's epilogue imitates the epilogue to Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, the autobiographical content of Orderic's is extensive and highly personal by comparison with Bede's minimal account of his ecclesiastical career and literary achievements.¹⁶⁸

Peter's surviving writings include ninety-six sermons and five biblical commentaries such as tracts on the significance of bread in the Bible (*De Panibus*) and on the tabernacle of Moses (*Mosaici Tabernaculi Mystica et Moralis*

¹⁶⁴ The works noted are printed in *PL*, vol. 156. Heather Blurton has suggested that the sudden shift in *De Vita Sua* from being a personal memoir in book one to becoming a record of events occurring in and around Laon during Guibert's time as abbot of Nogent was triggered by his election as abbot of Nogent in 1104: see H. Blurton, 'Guibert of Nogent and the subject of history' in *Exemplaria*, 15: 1 (2003), pp. 111-31.

¹⁶⁵ On Orderic's activities as a historian see Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, pp. 169-220.

¹⁶⁶ On Orderic's contributions to the abbey's annals and his redaction of William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* see Orderic, *Historia*, i, pp. 29-31.

¹⁶⁷ These are catalogued in R. Sharpe, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland Before 1540* (Turnhout, 2001), p. 406.

¹⁶⁸ See Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 566-71.

Expositio).¹⁶⁹ Peter's biblical interests are clearly reflected in his letters, which abound with biblical citations and allusions.¹⁷⁰ Also of interest is a series of letters exchanged between Peter and Nicholas of Clairvaux, in which the natures of the body and soul are discussed in explicitly Platonic terms.¹⁷¹ In these letters Peter shows some familiarity with Calcidius' translation of a part of Plato's *Timaeus* (17a-53e), which, as will be seen in the next chapter, is important for this study in as much as the portion of it which was available to medieval scholars contained alternative accounts of the natures of human existence and Creation to those available in the Book of Genesis.¹⁷² Calcidius' translation (and his commentary on the part of the text that he translated) was highly influential in certain intellectual circles in Western Europe during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹⁷³

The Life of Christina is the only work that is known to have been written by its anonymous author.¹⁷⁴ This work is unusual in some important respects which make it an interesting text for present purposes. Firstly, there is the matter of the female perspective from which it was written, even if composed by a male author. Moreover, and as Nancy Partner has stressed, Christina was a woman who got her own way in a male-dominated society.¹⁷⁵ Christina's defiant attitude towards her parents' (particularly her father's) wish that she should be married and her strong spiritual authority over the abbot of St Albans, Geoffrey, who is a frequent participant in the later half of her *vita*, mark her out as an impressive female figure. Additionally, Christina appears to have still been alive when her *vita* was being written and hence to have been personally consulted by the author on the events of her life.¹⁷⁶ In these

¹⁶⁹ *De Panibus* and *Mosaici Tabernaculi* are printed in *PL*, vol. 202. For references to printed editions of some of Peter's sermons see Haseldine's introduction to Peter, *Letters*, p. xxxiv

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

¹⁷¹ On the relevant letters see Appendix 7 in *ibid.*, pp. 706-11. The Nicholas in question was a monk at Clairvaux from 1146 until his expulsion in 1152 for misuse of St Bernard's seal (to whom he acted as secretary): for relevant references see Haseldine's n. 1 to Peter, *Letters*, 49.

¹⁷² The influence of the *Timaeus* in Western Europe between the ninth and twelfth centuries is discussed in Chapter Three of this study: see sec. 3.1.3, pp. 89-92.

¹⁷³ Particularly at the school of Chartres: see W. Wetherbee, 'Philosophy, cosmology, and the twelfth-century Renaissance' in *A History of Twelfth-Century Philosophy*, ed. P. Dronke (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 21-53, and also R. McKitterick, 'Knowledge of Plato's *Timaeus* in the ninth century' in *From Athens to Chartres: Neoplatonism and medieval thought*, ed. H. J. Westra (Leiden, 1992), pp. 85-95 and A. Somfai, 'The eleventh-century shift in the reception of Plato's *Timaeus* and Calcidius's *Commentary*' in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 65 (2002), pp. 1-21.

¹⁷⁴ On what little can be said about the author of Christina's *vita* see Talbot's introduction to *The Life of Christina*, pp. 5-10.

¹⁷⁵ See Partner, 'The hidden self'.

¹⁷⁶ This seems to be indicated at the beginning of the work: see *The Life of Christina*, ¶ 1 (references to the text relate to paragraphs in the OMT edition) and Talbot's introduction, pp. 6-7.

respects, *The Life of Christina* is an idiosyncratic text which may offer some valuable insights into the mental lives both of its author and Christina herself.

John of Salisbury's surviving works are numerous and impressive in the style and breadth of their content. They include lives of Saints Anselm and Thomas Becket, a history of the popes (*Historia Pontificalis*), a book on the liberal arts (*i.e.* the *trivium*) and education (*Metalogicon*), political philosophy (*Policraticus*) and a poetic work on the doctrines of philosophers (*Entheticus de Dogmate Philosophorum*) in which John, unusually for this period, shows an awareness of Stoic philosophy.¹⁷⁷ Of these, the *Metalogicon* and *Policraticus* will be of especial concern throughout this study because they give many clues as to the scope of John's education and his reading habits and tastes, neither of which come across so strongly in his letters. It can be seen from both works that John was very well-acquainted with the logical works of Aristotle, including the so-called "new logical" works (the *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics*, and *Sophistical Refutations*¹⁷⁸) which first became available in Western Europe around the late eleventh or early twelfth century.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, in the *Metalogicon* and *Policraticus* John is able to identify the three main schools of classical philosophy (*i.e.* Academics, Peripatetics, and Stoics), and at times, ascribe views to them.¹⁸⁰ John was exceptionally well-read for his time in classical philosophy hence he may be expected to have had broader and perhaps somewhat

¹⁷⁷ All of the works listed, except the *Historia Pontificalis*, can be found in *PL*, vol. 190. Very little was known of classical Stoicism throughout the Middle Ages. Most of what was known came from Roman authors who either followed Stoicism (*e.g.* Seneca) or admired aspects of its teachings (*e.g.* Cicero). Anyway, Stoicism was only known to western Christians through Latin authors: it was unknown in its original Greek context. For a discussion of this see M. Lapidge, 'The Stoic inheritance' in *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy*, ed. Dronke (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 81-112. The *Historia Pontificalis* has been published as John of Salisbury, *Historia Pontificalis*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1986).

¹⁷⁸ John uses all of these works in the *Metalogicon*: for bibliographical details of editions used here see list of abbreviations. For references see McGarry's index to his edition of the *Metalogicon*, pp. 297-8. Ashworth notes that John's use of these works *c.* 1159, in the *Metalogicon*, gives an indication of when they first became available in Western Europe: see Ashworth, 'Language and Logic', p. 75.

¹⁷⁹ On Aristotle's logical works during the middle ages see Chapter Three, sec. 3.1, pp. 73-4.

¹⁸⁰ John gives his views on the academics in *Policraticus*, vii: 1-2: again, for bibliographical details of editions used here see list of abbreviations. For his views on what it meant to him to be a philosopher see John, *Policraticus*, vii: 11. He also discusses the origins of the disciplines of classical philosophy (physics, ethics, and logic in John's terms) and the Peripatetic school in the John, *Metalogicon*, ii: 2. Additionally, for a discussion of truth see *Policraticus*, iv: 36, where John contrasts the views of the Platonists and Peripatetics. The Stoics, Epicurians, and the names of individual Presocratic philosophers also appear in the *Metalogicon* and *Policraticus*. For instance, see John, *Policraticus*, vii: 1 on the Stoics and Epicurians, and John, *Metalogicon*, ii: 2, in which he gives a report of the views of Apuleius, Augustine, and Isidore on Parmenides, Phythagoras, and Socrates (also see McGarry's notes on pp. 76-7).

atypical views on the nature of human existence and mental life, at least by comparison with those of his near-contemporaries examined here.

Finally, *De Nugis* is the only work that can be ascribed to Walter Map with any certainty.¹⁸¹ It is eclectic in its content, but briefly, it includes autobiographical episodes, a moral treatise against marriage, polemics against the institutional practices of the Cistercians, a variety of humorous anecdotes, pseudo-historical and supernatural tales (or “*fabulae*”), and ethnographic observations on the Welsh (with whom Walter somewhat ambivalently identifies himself).¹⁸² It is reasonably clear from the content and style of *De Nugis* that Walter wished to advertise his literary learning: especially the pagan classics, of which he shows considerable knowledge.¹⁸³ Walter’s subversion of traditional genre boundaries in *De Nugis* may reflect the influence of analogous literature from the classic Roman world (in particular, Aulus Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae*, Pliny’s *De Rerum Natura*, and Macrobius’ *Saturnalia*).¹⁸⁴ To be sure, Pliny’s *De Rerum* is an encyclopaedia of ancient wisdom hence it is not a genre-less work. And likewise, Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae* and Macrobius’ *Saturnalia* fit into the so-called “dinner party” genre of classical Roman literature, which is to say, they revolve around the recital of anecdotes among guests at a fictitious banquet setting.¹⁸⁵ However, it is not so much in regard to the genre, but rather the lack of a clear structure and the anecdotal content of these works that it seems reasonable to suppose that they may have influenced the composition of *De Nugis*. Like the aforementioned works, *De Nugis* consists mostly of anecdotes, which do not seem to have been arranged according to any overall purpose or structure, and, moreover, serve no clear purpose beyond entertainment.

However, in regard to the latter point, Carl Watkins has recently argued that the eclectic and often seemingly subversive content of *De Nugis* is in fact best viewed as moral entertainment.¹⁸⁶ This view seems sensible, not least as Walter does offer some cryptic clues of his intentions for *De Nugis* in that work, which seem to

¹⁸¹ It seems that a large number of works were erroneously ascribed to Walter during the Middle Ages including a large quantity of Latin poetry and some references to a probably fictitious exemplar cited as the source for certain parts of the Romance Arthurian cycle: see James’ introduction to Walter, *De Nugis*, pp. xx-xxi.

¹⁸² Walter, *De Nugis*, ii: 20.

¹⁸³ See index to allusions and citations in Walter, *De Nugis*, pp. 524-6.

¹⁸⁴ Carl Watkins has recently noted the ‘heterogeneous’ content of *De nugis*: see C. Watkins, *History and the Supernatural in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 27.

¹⁸⁵ For more detail see *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. W. Harris-Stahl et al (New York, 1971), pp. 26-7.

¹⁸⁶ Watkins, *History and the Supernatural*, pp. 202-8.

correspond to Watkins' argument.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, Watkins rightly situates *De Nugis* among a group of Latin texts from the twelfth century whose authors seem to have shared an interest in miscellaneous storytelling. In spite of all this, however, *De Nugis* remains a highly idiosyncratic work which appears to have been shaped in terms of both style and content by Walter's caprice more than any effort to write within the boundaries of more conventional forms of literary expression. If *De Nugis* was intended to be morally instructive, as seems to have been the case, it is still significant that Walter did not choose a more conventional genre such as, say, biblical commentary or sermons, to express such ends. Meanwhile, the playful nature and often excessive classicism of this work point to the influence of classical exempla of a similarly playful and eclectic style.

These texts offer a fairly broad sample of twelfth-century Latin literature, representing a variety of genres and styles of writing. Furthermore, they are all appropriate for the purposes of this study in that they all describe and discuss a wide range of aspects of human life and experience in ways that are susceptible to the modes of analysis outlined in the previous chapter, as will be seen throughout the remainder of this study.

¹⁸⁷ For example, see Walter, *De Nugis*, ii: 13 and 32.

Chapter Three

The Mind, Soul, and “Cognitive Phenomena”

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the relationship between embodiment and abstract thought, specifically in regard to the representation of the mind, cognition, and the mind-body relationship in the sample of source texts. In this way, it will be shown in this chapter that the relevant authors’ embodied experiences of themselves and the world impinged on how they conceptualised and understood the nature of the mind and human existence.

This chapter proceeds in three main sections. First, sec. 3.1 examines the roots of premodern “western psychology” in ancient Greek philosophy and the course of its development and transmission into the intellectual life of the medieval west.¹⁸⁸ This provides background information which is relevant to the subsequent analyses of how the mind and cognition are represented in the sample of source texts because, as discussed in sec. 3.1, well-educated medieval Europeans received a well-established tradition of western psychology from the ancient past which significantly influenced how they thought about the mind, cognition, and the mind-body relationship. In this way, sec. 3.1 provides a summary of the cultural background to medieval western psychology which is related in the following two sections to the more direct embodied influences on how the relevant authors represented and conceptualised the mind and cognition. Thus, sec. 3.2 makes use of Lakoff’s and Johnson’s theory of metaphor to shed light on the influence of embodied experiences of the external world on how the mind and cognition are represented in the source texts; and finally, sec. 3.3 makes use of the embodied theory of the mind to tackle the key matter of how, or in what ways,

¹⁸⁸ I will often refer in this study to “psychology” in premodern contexts. This label is commonly used by classicists to describe ancient thought on the mind. It should be noted from the outset that in premodern contexts “psychology” is meant its older sense: *i.e.* a rational discourse on the nature of the human mind or soul (from the Greek words for soul and speech, particularly eloquent and reasoned speech, ψυχή [*psuchê*] and λογικός [*logikos*] respectively).

the kinds of beliefs and ideas about the mind and cognition entertained by the relevant authors made *embodied sense*.¹⁸⁹

3.1: *The intellectual context*

This section firstly looks at how the ideas of the soul, spirit, and mind were formulated in early Greek thought and particularly the influence of Plato (d. 347 BCE) on this.¹⁹⁰ Plato's thought and writings have been crucially important to the popularisation and dissemination of the idea of soul-body dualism in western thought: as will be seen in sections 3.2-3 of this chapter, the idea that the mind or soul and body, or the mind, soul, and body are ontologically discrete and separable facets of human existence recurs throughout the source texts used in this study.¹⁹¹ Yet with the exception of a partial Latin translation of the *Timaeus*, Plato's writings were largely unknown in Western Europe between the sixth and thirteenth centuries hence it is important here to highlight the means of transmission for Plato's ideas from late antiquity into the medieval west.¹⁹² The dominance of so-called Neoplatonic philosophy in late antiquity and the influence that it had on late antique Christian writers is hugely important to the transmission of Platonic ideas into early Christian thought and also to the development of the theological doctrines of the Western and Eastern Churches.¹⁹³ Therefore, the middle and latter parts of this section focus on

¹⁸⁹ I will discuss the italicised term further in the introductory paragraphs to sec. 3.3.

¹⁹⁰ The necessity of this course was explained in the introductory paragraphs to this chapter.

¹⁹¹ As will be noted below in this section, the mind and soul should not necessarily be treated as synonymous in ancient thought and language: although premodern western psychology is now often thought of as being "dualistic", it is in many ways "triadic", for there is often an appreciable separation between, mind, body, *and* soul to the extent that human existence is conceptualised as being triadic. For more on thread see K. Ware, 'The soul in Greek Christianity' in *From Soul to Self*, ed. M. James C. Crabbe (London, 1999), pp. 49-69.

¹⁹² Some of Plato's writings were translated in the twelfth century, but little read: see J. Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: an historical and philosophical introduction* (London, 2007), pp. 211-12, R. Kiblansky, *The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition and Plato's Parmenides in the Middle Ages* (repr. London, 1981), pp. 21-31 and 51-3, and J. T. Muckle, 'Greek Works Translated Directly into Latin Before 1350' in *Medieval Studies*, 5 (1943), s.n. Plato. Platonic philosophy in the twelfth century was mostly received through the works of Neoplatonic intermediaries: see R. W. Southern, 'The schools of Paris and the school of Chartres' in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. J. F. Benton *et al* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 113-37, C. Mews, 'Philosophy and Theology 1100-1150: the search for harmony' in *Le XII^e siècle: Mutations et renouveau en France dans la première moitié du XII^e siècle*, ed. Françoise Gasparri (Paris, 1994), pp. 159-203 and Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 161-3.

¹⁹³ For a broad discussion see Andresen, 'The integration of Platonism'. Also see Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 28-33, P. F. Beatrice, 'L'Union de l'âme et du corps: Némésios d'Émèse lecteur de Porphyre' in *Les Pères de l'Église face à la science médicale de leur temps*, ed. V. Boudon-Millot *et al* (Paris, 2005), pp. 251-85, D. Bertrand, 'Origine de l'âme et animation du corps humain' in *Les Pères de l'Église face à la science médicale de leur temps*, ed. V. Boudon-Millot *et al* (Paris, 2005), pp. 299-

the influence of Platonism via late antique Christian authors (especially Augustine, Boethius, and Pseudo-Dionysius) on how the ideas of the soul, spirit, and mind were received and understood by well-educated scholars in the Christian west.¹⁹⁴

It should be stressed here that the emphasis placed on Platonic thought and soul-body dualism in this chapter comes at the expense of discussing other important facets of ancient wisdom and philosophy: most notably the writings of Aristotle, Galen, and later, their followers in the Islamic world. Firstly, of the works of Aristotle, only his logical works are known to have survived antiquity in the west. Certainly, his *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, *Prior Analytics*, *Sophistical Refutations*, and perhaps the *Topics* survived and circulated through Boethius' Latin translations and commentaries.¹⁹⁵ By contrast, his natural scientific works were not widely available to Latin readers in Western Europe until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹⁹⁶ His *De Anima*, in particular, which certainly had an impact on how the soul was understood by medieval scholars, was not available in the west until the early thirteenth century.¹⁹⁷ Thus, Aristotle's influence on medieval thought from the

320, and M. O. Boulnois, 'L'Union de l'âme et du corps comme modèle Christologique, de Némésius de Émèse à la controverse Nestorienne' in *Les Pères de l'Église face à la science médicale de leur temps*, ed. V. Boudon-Millot *et al* (Paris, 2005), pp. 451-75. On Augustine's Platonism see G. Matthews 'Internalist reasoning in Augustine for mind-body dualism' in *Psyche and Soma*, ed. J. P. Wright *et al* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 133-45 and P. Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford, 2000).

¹⁹⁴ See secs 3.1.1-2.

¹⁹⁵ See D. C. Lindberg, 'The Transmission of Greek and Arabic Learning to the West' in *Science in the Middle Ages*, ed. D. C. Lindberg (Chicago, 1978), p. 53, J. Barnes, 'Boethius and the Study of Logic' in *Boethius: His Life, Thought, and Influence*, ed. M. Gibson (Oxford, 1981), pp. 73-5, and more recently Marenbon, *Boethius*, pp. 17-18. Aristotle's old logic enjoyed a late flowering in the first half of the twelfth century through scholastic authors such as Peter Abelard: see Mews, 'Philosophy and Theology'.

¹⁹⁶ See Lindberg, 'The transmission of Greek and Arabic learning', pp. 66-7.

¹⁹⁷ Again, on the influence of *De Anima* from the thirteenth century, onwards, see the essays collected in the recent volume, *Mind, Cognition, and Representation: the tradition of commentaries on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. P. J. J. M. Bakker *et al* (Aldershot, 2007). Also for a more contextualised discussion see R. Pasnau, 'Human nature' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. S. McGrade (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 208-30. On Aristotle's views on the nature of human mental life and the soul-body nexus see T. H. Irwin, 'Aristotle's philosophy of the mind' in *Companions to Ancient Thought 2: Psychology*, ed. S. Everson (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 56-83. On the impact of Aristotle's natural scientific works in the thirteenth century and onwards see E. Maccagnolo, 'David of Dinant and the beginnings of Aristotelianism in Paris' in *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy*, ed. P. Dronke (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 429-42, S. P. Marrone, 'Medieval philosophy in context' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, A. S. McGrade (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 32-6 and E. Dudley Sylla, 'Creation and nature', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. S. McGrade (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 179-93.

Carolingian renaissance up to the early twelfth century was largely restricted to logic.¹⁹⁸

Galen, on the other hand, presents a different set of problems. In one respect, his views on the nature of human existence are derived from Platonism. For instance, he strongly favoured Plato's notion of the tri-partite soul as it is outlined in the *Republic*. Moreover, Galen erroneously supposed Plato to have proven this, using empirical techniques of a sort that he could have approved as a physician. In fact, Plato asserted in the *Republic* that his account of the tri-partite soul was only "likely" [εἰκος: *eikos*] and as such did not claim absolute authority for it.¹⁹⁹ Still, Galen's concerns with respect to the relationship between the soul and body differed significantly from those of Plato. Whereas Plato's writings on the soul had been motivated chiefly by ethical and political concerns relevant to his contemporary Athens, Galen was principally concerned with demonstrating the anatomical locations of the three parts of the soul identified by Plato and their physiological utility with regard to the soul-body relationship. He was strongly influenced by Plato's and Aristotle's metaphysics (especially teleology), but he upheld Plato's identification of the rational part of the soul with the brain over that of Aristotle and the Stoics, who believed that the heart was the seat of reason in the human body. However, in terms of his working methods, Galen was a rigorous follower of the empirical methods that Aristotle developed in his natural scientific works.²⁰⁰

As this chapter is not specifically focused on medical writings or contexts, it does not seem necessary to place much emphasis on the influence of Galen or his followers (Latin, Greek, or Arabic-speaking) on how human existence or the soul-body relationship were understood in the medieval west. Given that Galen tended to favour the Platonic view of the soul-body relationship (even while preferring Aristotelian methodology), it seems reasonable for the purposes of this chapter to treat

¹⁹⁸ Marenbon has noted the influence of Aristotelian categories on Alcuin working at the court of Charlemagne when writing the first significant textbook on logic written since antiquity: *Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 70-2. On the influence of Boethius' translations of Aristotle's old logic see Barnes, 'Boethius and the Study of Logic', O. Lewry, 'Boethian Logic in the Medieval West' in *Boethius: His Life, Thought, and Influence*, ed. M. Gibson (Oxford, 1981), pp. 90-134, and Marenbon, *Boethius*, pp. 17-42.

¹⁹⁹ See P. Donini, 'Psychology', trans. R. J. Hankinson, in *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, ed. R. J. Hankinson (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 185-7. Also see the Plato, *Republic*, 435b-435b and 439d-441a.

²⁰⁰ Donini, *Ibid.*, pp. 184-201.

the representation of the soul-body relationship in the Galenic corpus as part of the broader success of Platonic views on human existence in late antiquity.²⁰¹

There are two possible modes of transmission for the ideas discussed in this section from classical antiquity up to the period in question. Firstly, they may have been transmitted up to the twelfth century through relatively continuous use in scholarly or popular culture. Or alternatively they may have been (re)introduced into the intellectual culture of the medieval west through texts and knowledge migrating westwards (or more specifically from the Greek and Islamic east to the Christian west).²⁰² Furthermore, it should be noted that formal education steadily improved and became more widely available in Western Europe from the ninth century onwards.²⁰³ The twelfth century in particular witnessed important developments in western education, including the reception of Greek and Arabic texts which had been unknown or unavailable in Western Europe since late antiquity and expansion in the teaching of the liberal and mathematical arts (the *trivium* and *quadrivium*) through the growth of university education.²⁰⁴ In regard to this, formal education is perhaps best seen as reinforcing both forms of transmission, firstly, in the respect that it will have reinforced established ways of thinking about the nature of the soul and mental life in the Christian west, and secondly, in that it provided environments (intellectual and institutional) in which texts and ideas migrating from the Greek and Islamic worlds could be engaged and appropriated into western thought.

3.1.1: *The soul, spirit, and mind in early Greek thought and Plato*

To begin, I shall briefly outline what kinds of ideas on the nature of human existence Plato inherited from his predecessors. These are important here not only because they

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² For more detail on this and relevant references see sec. 3.1.3 below.

²⁰³ R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms 789-895* (London, 1977). Specifically on book production, see R. McKitterick, 'Script and book production' in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 221-47. Also see M. Gibson, 'The continuity of learning c.850-c.1050' in *Viator* (1975), pp. 1-13.

²⁰⁴ On education over this period see Southern, 'The schools of Paris', R. H. Rouse and M. A. Rouse, 'Statim Invenire: Schools preachers, and new attitudes to the page' in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, pp. 201-25, C. Mews, 'Orality, Literacy, and Authority in the Twelfth-Century Schools' in *Exemplaria*, 2 (1990), pp. 475-500, and part five of Marenbon's *Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 131-71. On the teaching of the *trivium* and *quadrivium* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries see D. Luscombe, 'Thought and Learning' in *The New Cambridge Medieval History IV, c.1024-1198*, ed. D. Luscombe (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 461-98.

influenced Plato but also because they have had an important bearing on the later development of western concepts of the mind and cognition. As will be seen below, aspects of early Greek thought on the mind can be discerned in the source texts examined in this study.²⁰⁵

Among the earliest Greek philosophers, the so-called Presocratics (c.640-440 BCE), a distinction seems to have been commonly held between the soul [ψυχή: *psuchê*] and mind [νοῦς: *nous*], as well as between the body [σῶμα: *sōma*], soul, and mind.²⁰⁶ The crucial difference between soul and mind seems to be that *psuchê* was understood as a *life-force* animating living bodies whereas *nous* was something special to human beings (*i.e.* it is what makes us rational unlike, it was believed, plants and other animals). Accordingly, *nous* was something additional to *psuchê*.²⁰⁷ It is also worth noting the significance attached to the midriff [φρήν: *phrên*] and heart [καρδία: *kardia*], which had associations with aspects of human cognition in Greek thought prior even to the Presocratics: these terms will be discussed more fully in the next chapter where similarities to their Latin and modern English equivalents are drawn.²⁰⁸

There are some important parallels between these terms and their Latin and English equivalents which should be noted here. Firstly, *psuchê* and *nous* roughly correspond to the Latin *anima* and *mens* and English *soul* and *mind* respectively. In its older Greek sense of “life”, *psuchê* is also strongly analogous to the Latin *spiritus*. Firstly, it was believed to be a rarefied or highly dilute substance able to move freely throughout the bodies of living beings, and secondly, it was associated with the respiratory functions of animal bodies in that it was believed to consist of elemental air and have the quality of dryness (hence the phrase “breath of life” [πνεῦμα βίου:

²⁰⁵ In particular, see the concluding paragraphs to sec. 3.2.3 (pp. 122-3), and sec. 3.3.1.

²⁰⁶ This tri-partite distinction survives quite explicitly in Greek Christianity: see Ware, ‘The soul in Greek Christianity’.

²⁰⁷ See Liddell and Scott, *s.n. yuxh* and *nous* (accessed 13 / 5 / 09): “life” is given as the primary sense of *psuchê* and “immaterial and immortal soul” as a tertiary sense. Liddell and Scott give as the primary sense of *nous*, ‘*mind*, as employed in perceiving and thinking, *sense, wit*’ [original italics], *s.n. nous* (accessed 13 / 11 / 09): for some more specific details see J. Warren, *Presocratics* (Stocksfield, 2007), pp. 36-8 and 130-4. **Please note that in giving references to words in Liddell and Scott, I give the transliterated forms of Greek words in Latin letters which produce the relevant results on the current online version of the *Greek-English Lexicon* (hence *yuxh* rather than *psuchê* to represent ψυχή).**

²⁰⁸ See Chapter Four, sec. 4.3.2: on *phrên* and *kardia* see Liddell and Short, *s.n. frhn* and *kardia* respectively (accessed 13 / 5 / 09).

pneuma biou]).²⁰⁹ It should be stressed that in these respects, *psuchê* was understood to be a material phenomenon in that it was viewed as reducible to elemental air and played a physiological role in human and animal life. Likewise, *nous* was also viewed by some Presocratics as a material phenomenon. For instance, Empedocles associated thought and sensation with elemental water and the quality of wetness in that he believed that these, and thus *nous*, were physiological functions of the blood.

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It seems that *nous* and *psuchê* became much closer in later Greek thought as *nous* gradually came to be seen as a facet or function of *psuchê*.²¹¹ Furthermore, the idea developed that *psuchê* consisted of some celestial or immaterial substance, unlike the conventional four elements (fire, air, water, and earth). This eventually came to be viewed as a fifth element or “quintessence”, sometimes named *aithêr* [αἰθήρ] in Greek and *aether* in Latin, although it is worth noting that this label may have been an extrapolation from the older elemental association of the soul with air [cf. αἴρ: *aêr*].²¹² These views on *psuchê* are perhaps attributable to the ancient Pythagoreans and also the popular belief-system in ancient Greece known as Orphism. To be sure, Plato, who played a crucial role in popularising these ideas in later Greek and Roman science and philosophy, appears to have been inspired by aspects of each kind of thought about the nature of the soul and human existence.²¹³

Plato strongly identified the mind with the soul in his written works and unambiguously posed the existence of a fifth element from which souls are formed in

²⁰⁹ Cf. with the medical sense of *spiritus*: see J. J. Bono, ‘Medical Spirits and the Medieval Languages of Life’ in *Traditio*, xl (1984), pp. 91-130. Like *psuchê*, *spiritus* was also originally connected to breath: see Lewis and Short, *s.n. spiritus* (accessed 13 / 11 / 09): on “breath of life”, see Liddell and Scott, *s.n. pneuma* (accessed 13 / 11 / 09) and also see Warren, *Presocratics*, p. 36.

²¹⁰ See A. Laks, ‘Soul, sensation, and thought’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. A. A. Long (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 250-70, and Warren, *Presocratics*, esp. pp. 36-8, 74-6, and 130-4.

²¹¹ Particularly in the thought of Plato which will be discussed shortly.

²¹² See Liddell and Scott, *s.n. aīhr* and *aer* (accessed 14 / 11 / 09) and Lewis and Short, *s.n. aether*, (accessed 14 / 11 / 09). Aristotle suggests ἀεὶ θεῖν [“runs away”] as an etymology for *aithêr* in *On the Heavens*, trans. W. K. C. Guthrie (Cambridge Mass., 1939), 270^b21-5. For a recent discussion of the early sense of *aithêr* see P. Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 15-35: also see R. P. Multhauf, ‘The Science of Matter’ in *Science in the Middle Ages*, ed. D. C. Linberg (Chicago, 1978), pp. 369-70.

²¹³ For a concise accounts of Plato’s views on the soul and human mental life see T. M. Robinson, ‘The defining features of mind-body dualism in the writings of Plato’ in *Psyche and Soma*, ed. J. P. Wright *et al* (Oxford, 2000), pp.37-55 and S. Lovibond, ‘Plato’s theory of mind’ in *Companions to Ancient Thought 2: Psychology*, ed. S. Everson (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 35-55. Orphism and the Pythagoreans are credited with the notions of metempsychosis (or in more modern terms, “transmigration” or “reincarnation”) and of the body as “prison-house” of the soul: Robinson discusses the influence of these ideas on Plato in the article cited here. Also, on Pythagoras and his most significant follower, Philolaus, see Warren, *Presocratics*, pp. 37-9 and 175-7.

his *Timaeus* (see 55c).²¹⁴ This in turn allowed him to claim special properties and behaviour for the soul: most importantly, immortality and a capacity to transmigrate from one material body to another following death [μετεμφύχωσις: *metempsychosis*] (*i.e.* “reincarnation” in more modern terms).²¹⁵

It has been argued that Plato’s thought has been pivotal to the development of the modern western concept of the mind and psychology. For instance, Sabina Lovibond has stated:

‘[I]t would hardly be an exaggeration to say that Plato *invented* the idea of “mind” with which modern European languages operate, and that it is his writings which have made this idea available to the Western philosophical tradition. It is Plato, more than any other thinker, who is responsible for the pervasive intellectualism of that tradition—for the entrenched tendency to posit “mind” (or in certain contexts, “soul”) as a substantial component of our nature, and to revere this as our most precious possession. (A relative devaluation of the opposed term, “body”, follows automatically from this move.)’²¹⁶ [Original italics]

Whether so much authority can be placed solely on Plato’s shoulders is questionable.²¹⁷ Nevertheless, his works provide us with the earliest well-rounded theory of the human mind and its relationship to the body to have survived from classical antiquity.

Plato consistently argues in his works that the body and soul are fundamentally different kinds of thing which separate at the point of death and that the existence of the soul is prior to that of the body (*i.e.* the soul is not born with the body).²¹⁸ However, he also tweaked his views on these matters over the course of his

²¹⁴ The standard system for referencing the works of Plato is used throughout this chapter, often in brackets in the main body of the text.

²¹⁵ On transmigration see Plato, *Timaeus*, 41d-426: Liddell and Scott, *s.n. metemyuxwsis* (accessed 14 / 11 / 09)

²¹⁶ Lovibond, ‘Plato’s theory of mind’, p. 35.

²¹⁷ Again, the influence of Orphism and the Pythagoreans should be taken into account: see Robinson, ‘The defining features of mind-body dualism in Plato’.

²¹⁸ For example, see Plato’s “myth of Er” at the end of the *Republic*, 614a-21d.

life, arriving at increasingly sophisticated, but also ambiguous conclusions.²¹⁹ For instance, at one extreme in the *Phaedo*, Plato has Socrates subscribe to the Orphic view of the soul as a “prisoner” of the body (*Phaedo*, 82e). By contrast, in the later *Republic*, he moves Socrates to a near-opposite position, arguing instead that the body is merely a passive vessel which the soul may freely manipulate and control, and thereby interface with the material world. Hence he moves from a view of the body as an active to a passive container of the soul, in the former case inhibiting its activities or tendencies, and in the latter case, facilitating them.²²⁰

Plato is perhaps best known for his psychological ideas. These revolved around his view of the soul as divisible into parts, each with distinct and to some extent conflicting natures or tendencies. He most commonly identified two parts of the soul, “reason” [λογιστικός: *logistikos*] and “desire” [ἐπιθυμητικός: *epithumêtikos*]. However, in the *Republic* and *Timaeus* he added a third part, “spiritedness” or “passion” [θυμοειδής: *thumoeidês*], thus giving a tripartite schema of the soul.²²¹ The importance of this is that he identified conflicts in the mind with the competing tendencies of these different parts of the soul. It should be noted that in his earlier works, he tended to identify conflict mostly as the result of the competing tendencies of the body and soul. It is mostly in his later works, including the *Republic* and *Timaeus* that he began to identify different aspects of human psychology with the parts of the soul, and in particular, conflicting emotions, desires, needs, and so forth with their competing tendencies. As Robinson has stated: ‘[The] tensions we all feel

²¹⁹ What follows is a précis of the development of Plato’s views on these matters. For more detailed accounts see Lovibond, ‘Plato’s theory of mind’ and Robinson, ‘Mind-body dualism in the writings of Plato.’

²²⁰ For instance, see Plato, *Republic*, trans. R. Waterfield (Oxford, 2008), 510b-511c and 523a-525a on the mechanisms of sense-perception. The Greek text printed in the Loeb edition of the *Republic* was used for this study: see Plato, *Republic*, 2 vols. trans. P. Shorey (Cambridge Mass., 1930 and 1935).

²²¹ He developed this theory in the *Republic* (see especially 435b-435b and 439d-441a), probably for the purposes of contrast to his tri-partite schema of the state (guardians, soldiers, and workers). Also cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R. Waterfield (Oxford, 2008), 69c-70c and 89e. The Greek text printed in the Loeb edition of the *Timaeus* was used for this study: see Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge Mass., 1929). In the aforesaid portion of the *Timaeus*, Plato posits a mortal part of the soul in addition to the immortal part; he then goes on to divide the mortal part into competitive and appetitive parts. While this tripartite schema is not quite as clear as that of the *Republic*, it is nonetheless a tripartite schema. I have given the standard inflected forms of *logistikos*, *epithumêtikos*, and *thumoeidês*, all of which may be found in Liddell and Short. For direct reference, see *Republic*, 441a. Lloyd notes the significance of these terms among others in *Cognitive Variations*, pp. 69-74 (Lloyd’s work is discussed in more detail in the next chapter).

are not, after all, as the *Phaedo* might have led us to suppose, tensions between the body and soul, but tensions *within the soul itself* [his italics].²²²

Until the twelfth century, the only work by Plato available in Western Europe was the *Timaeus* in two partial Latin translations (the most complete and popular of these covered roughly the first third of the work: 17a-53e). Because of the popularity of this work in the west from the ninth century onwards, it is worth giving a brief summary of some of the more significant ideas about the natures of the cosmos, soul, and matter which are likely to have gained wide circulation.²²³ Throughout the *Timaeus*, Plato asserts a macrocosm-microcosm relationship between the cosmos and sentient beings (especially human beings) whereby the former is presented in form and nature as a macrocosm of the latter and the latter as microcosms of the former (*Timaeus*, 44d-45a). We are told that the cosmos is endowed with a body and soul (*i.e.* the so-called “world soul”: 30b) and that the cosmic soul is prior and senior to the cosmic body (36e). The cosmos is explicitly likened to an animal [ζῷον: *zōon*] (33c-d), albeit, the most beautiful and perfect kind of animal (30b). Finally, it is stated that the world soul is senior and prior to (*i.e.* created before) material creation (36e), thus following the order of the creation of the bodies and souls of earth-bound creatures.

Plato claims that Creation is the work of a craftsman-god or “demiurge” [δημιουργός: *demiourgos*], who fashioned the universe from an initial chaotic state, in which only raw materials and pure “ideas” or “forms” [ιδέαι or εἶδοι: *ideai* or *eidoi*] existed (34a-b). The cosmos itself contains four kinds of ensouled beings, whose individual souls are constructed of the same stuff as the world soul (41d). These are the gods (which are equated with the celestial bodies), and things that fly, walk, and swim (39e-40a). Later he also adds to these the vegetative soul (77a-c). A major claim of the *Timaeus* is that the demiurge is inherently good because he is only capable of thinking good thoughts and doing good deeds. Accordingly, all of his thoughts and actions are *ipso facto* good. He is incapable of being bad (29e-30a, 42d). As a consequence of this, the demiurge leaves the task of fashioning the material bodies of the three latter kinds of ensouled beings (those that fly, walk, and swim) to a series of intermediate gods (or at least, immortal beings) because, as he

²²² Robinson, ‘Mind-body dualism in the writings of Plato’, p. 45: for more detail on this see Robinson’s article in full and Lovibond, ‘Plato’s theory of mind’.

²²³ On the availability and influence of the *Timaeus* in the early to high middle ages see Somfai, ‘The reception of Plato’s *Timaeus*’, pp. 1-21 and W. Wetherbee ‘Philosophy, cosmology, and the twelfth-century Renaissance’ in *A History of Twelfth-Century Philosophy*, ed. P. Dronke (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 21-53. The reception of the *Timaeus* is discussed further below at pp. 90-2.

explains in a lengthy lecture to them, he cannot be responsible for any evil in the cosmos, such as those beings or the gods might themselves create (41a-d).

3.1.2: Models for the Platonic view of the soul available in the medieval west: Augustine and Boethius

Among the Latin Church Fathers, Augustine has perhaps been the most influential exponent of Platonic ideas about the nature of the soul, the mind, and its (or their) relationship with the material body. Certainly, he worked hard to appropriate aspects of Platonic thought into his theological works.²²⁴ Indeed, in his *De Vera Religione* he seems to suggest that Platonism is largely commensurable with Christianity:

Therefore, if we have been able to drive ourselves away from the poison of this life, they [the pagan philosophers], seeing the ease by which they could become authorities by the counsel of men (*and only a few of their words need be changed in order to bring about Christian beliefs*), have thus made the majority of our recent times Platonic. [My italics]

*Itaque si hanc vitam illi viri nobiscum rursum agere potuissent, viderent profecto cuius auctoritate facilius consuleretur hominibus, et paucis mutatis verbis atque sententiis christiani fierent, sicut plerique recentiorum nostrorumque temporum Platonici fecerunt.*²²⁵

Modern commentators have tended to view Augustine's mixing of Neoplatonism and Christian theology with greater scepticism. For example, Philip Cary has described this as a "shotgun marriage" (albeit a productive one). This is particularly true of the *Confessiones* in which Augustine weaves aspects of Neoplatonic mysticism into an ideal of Christian meditation (*i.e.* of the soul looking inwards upon itself in order to

²²⁴ On Augustine and Platonism see B. Stock, *Augustine: the Reader* (Cambridge Mass., 1996), pp. 65-74 and Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self*.

²²⁵ My translation: Augustine, *De Vera Religione*, iv: 7. R. Crouse notes the significance of this phrase in "'Paucis mutatis verbis': St Augustine's Platonism" in *Augustine and his Critics*, ed. R. Dodaro *et al* (London, 2000), pp. 42-3. Also of interest is Augustine, *City of God*, viii: 10-11 and xxii: 26-8 and *Confessiones*, viii: 3.

achieve a vision of divinity).²²⁶ Elsewhere, the influence of Neoplatonism on Augustine has proven controversial among modern theologians, some of whom have questioned the validity of his theological works to Christianity.²²⁷

Augustine's works are significant in terms of their role in preserving and disseminating Platonic ideas on human existence and mental life in medieval Europe. From the end of antiquity up to the thirteenth century, very few Platonic writings were available in Western Europe, either in Latin or Arabic translations or the original Greek.²²⁸ Hence, it is absolutely necessary to look to the writings of late-antique Christian authors who were influenced by the Platonism of their times in order to gain some understanding of how Platonic views on matters such as the nature of human existence filtered through to the intellectual and literary cultures and modes of thought of medieval Europeans.

Augustine is often credited with being the author of an original concept of the human mind (the view of the mind as an inner, "private" space) via his fusion of Neoplatonic and Christian mysticism in the *Confessiones*.²²⁹ It should be noted that the originality of Augustine's theology or his views on human existence are not at stake in this chapter. Rather, Augustine's works are viewed here as important stylistic and conceptual models for the representation of cognitive phenomena to twelfth-century writers, and by extension, conduits for Platonic modes of thought. For instance, take the following extract from the *Confessions*:

My heart vehemently protested against all the physical images in my mind, and by this single blow I attempted to expel from my mind's eye the swarm of unpurified notions flying about there.

²²⁶ Cary puts this thesis forward in *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self*, of which see in particular, pp. 45-60 and 63-6.

²²⁷ See Crouse, 'St. Augustine's Platonism', pp. 37-50.

²²⁸ Some Greek texts were available in Western Europe over this period and a small number of Western Europeans were certainly able to read Greek (most notably, Eriugena in the ninth century): nevertheless these exceptions tend to prove the rule. For available texts see Muckle, 'Greek Works'. Also on texts, knowledge, and education see and the papers collected in *Sacred Nectar of the Greeks*, ed. M. W. Herren (London, 1988).

²²⁹ For example see Stock, *Augustine: the Reader* and Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self*.

*Clamabat violenter cor meum adversus omnia phantasmata mea, et hoc uno ictu conabar abigere circumvolantem turbam immunditiae ab acie mentis meae.*²³⁰

In this excerpt, Augustine draws upon a variety of metaphors in order to represent his experiences of his own mental life. Thus, his heart is protesting against another part of his being while his mind is a container in which images [*phantasmata*] are flying around [*circumvolans*] and from which they can be expelled. And furthermore, the mind has a sight organ [*acies mentis*], with which it is presumably able to view the aforesaid images that it contains.²³¹ This short excerpt contains two significant Platonic themes. Firstly, Augustine uses the notion of an internal rift or conflict within the soul or mind (hence the heart can protest against the contents of the mind).²³² Secondly, the notion of the mind's eye [*acies mentis*] had its roots in Neoplatonic philosophy.²³³ And additionally, Augustine's use of the concept of *phantasmata* (that is, images, visions or apparitions) echoes Aristotle's discussion of cognition in *De Anima*.²³⁴

The influence of Boethius (c.475-524-6) on the transmission of Platonic ideas about the natures of the soul and body should also be noted here. Boethius may be justifiably viewed as the last significant exponent of classical Greek science and philosophy in the Christian west, probably at least until Eriugena in the ninth century.²³⁵ He was born into a wealthy and politically influential Roman family and brought up as a Christian and educated in the Greek and Roman classics. Moreover, as he was fluent in Greek, he knew the works of Plato and other Greek authors directly rather than through Latin translations or intermediate works.²³⁶ This is highly important as regards the contribution he made to preserving parts of classical Greek and Roman thought for the medieval west. Although Latin translations of Greek texts were available to him, he seems to have found them inadequate as he tended to

²³⁰ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. H. Chadwick (Oxford, 1998), vii: 1: Latin text from *Confessiones* in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, vol. 32, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1845), cols. 0657-868.

²³¹ *Acies* literally refers to the tip or blade of a sword, dagger, or other sharp implement and it may also refer to the front echelon of an army. However, in this context it can be taken to be referring to sight (especially keenness of sight): see Lewis and Short *s.n. acies* (cf. *acer*) (accessed 4 / 6 / 09)

²³² See the earlier quotation of Robinson at n. 35 above.

²³³ See Wetherbee, 'Philosophy, Cosmology, and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance', pp. 30-1.

²³⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima*, books II and III, with passages from book I, ed. and trans. D. W. Hamlyn (Oxford, 1968), iii: 7.

²³⁵ On whom, see D. Carabine, *John Scottus Eriugena* (Oxford, 2000).

²³⁶ For biographical details see J. Marenbon, *Boethius* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 7-10.

produce and work from his own, many of which survived into the middle ages. As was noted previously, Boethius' translations of at least five of Aristotle's logical works were available in the ninth century as well as his translation of the *Isagoge* (intended as an introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*) by the fourth-century Neoplatonist, Porphyry.²³⁷

Importantly, Boethius intended his translations of Greek texts to form part of a much grander project: to reconcile the thought of Plato and Aristotle. In this respect, as John Marenbon has pointed out, he was essentially following in the footsteps of Porphyry and the project of Neoplatonism as it had been defined by him in the fourth century.²³⁸ Like Porphyry before him, Boethius believed that Plato and Aristotle were fundamentally in agreement on all important philosophical and scientific matters and he declared it his intention to demonstrate this. Boethius' work and thought may thus be viewed as an important bridge between a living tradition of Greek philosophical and scientific learning and the early medieval west in which knowledge of the Greek language and texts was severely limited.

Boethius' best known and most original work, *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (henceforth *Consolatio*), was written in the final year of his life (probably 524) while under house arrest awaiting execution.²³⁹ It strongly reflects Boethius' conciliatory agenda, not only between Platonic and Aristotelian thought, but also between classical pagan thought and literature in general and Christianity ethics and theology. And in this respect, and others, it was highly influential in Western Europe from the ninth-century onwards.²⁴⁰ The *Consolatio* is a deeply introspective and to some extent

²³⁷ On Boethius' translations of Aristotle's logical works see Marenbon, *Boethius*, pp. 17-18. On Boethius' interest in the *Isagoge* see Barnes, 'Boethius and the Study of Logic' and Marenbon, *Boethius*, pp. 17-42.

²³⁸ See Marenbon, *Boethius*, p. 20. On the influence of Porphyry on Boethius and his translation of the *Isagoge*, see Marenbon, *Boethius*, pp. 20-32. Also see J. A. Weisheip, 'The Nature, Scope, and Classification of the Sciences' in *Science in the Middle Ages*, ed. D. C. Lindberg (Chicago, 1978), pp. 461-82, pp. 470-1 and Barnes, 'Boethius and the Study of Logic', pp. 74-5.

²³⁹ The circumstances of Boethius' arrest are obscure, although there has been much speculation: for a brief summary of possibilities see P. G. Walsh's introduction to his translation of the Oxford classics edition of the *Consolatio*, pp. xvi-xx and Marenbon, *Boethius* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 9-10.

²⁴⁰ The *Consolatio* was not widely known between the sixth and eighth centuries. It first comes on the radar in medieval Europe around the beginning of the ninth century, possibly after the English monk, Alcuin, brought a copy to the court of Charlemagne after a trip to Italy. For more on this see J. Beaumont, 'The Latin tradition of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*' in *Boethius*, ed. M. Gibson (Oxford, 1981), pp. 279-82 and M. Gibson, 'Boethius in the Carolingian schools' in *Boethius*, ed. M. Gibson (Oxford, 1981), pp. 43-56. On its impact in Northern Europe from the ninth century onwards see Beaumont, *ibid.*, pp. 278-305, N. F. Palmer, 'Latin and Vernacular in the Northern European Tradition of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*' in *Boethius*, ed. M. Gibson (Oxford, 1981), pp. 362-409 and Marenbon, *Boethius*, pp. 172-82. The *Consolatio* was also translated into English, probably in

autobiographical work (comparisons have been drawn to Augustine's *Confessiones*).²⁴¹ Much of it is written in the first-person idiom and the phenomenology of the author is a key theme throughout as the progression of the narrative follows a change in Boethius' mental life and behaviour from depression and bewailing the injustice of his fate (*i.e.* to be executed on, he claims, trumped up charges) to happiness and contentment with his lot in life.

The *Consolatio* is possibly best viewed as a Neoplatonic meditation on the causes and justice of human suffering. Boethius' religious sympathies have long been held in question: was he a Christian or closet Neoplatonist? It is now broadly accepted that he was a Christian throughout his life. The survival of a number of his Christian theological works has helped to confirm this.²⁴² However, Boethius' sympathies with Greco-Roman pagan and especially Platonic thought should obviously not be overlooked, not least given the form and content of the *Consolatio*. The latter work includes a number of Platonic ideas about the nature of the cosmos and humanity which are not strictly commensurable with orthodox Christian theology. For example, pressing problems are raised by the closing poem to chapter nine of book three which gives a description of the nature and the movements of the cosmos, lifted, as Boethius makes fairly clear, from the *Timaeus* (hence it includes elements such as the "world soul" [*anima*]).²⁴³ Accordingly, while Boethius' sincerity as a Christian should not be in doubt, it is difficult to reach any satisfying conclusions in regard to precisely how he felt the more heterodox aspects of Neoplatonism (such as, say, the world soul) could be married with orthodox Christianity in the west.²⁴⁴

The more immediate importance of Boethius' *Consolatio* here is that it transmitted a variety of classical Greek ideas about the human mind to its medieval readers, for whom there may have been few if any other sources available on such

Alfredian England (871-99), although the exact dating is presently in dispute. For broadly accepted details on this see *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Lapidge *et al* (Malden, 1999), pp. 29-30.

²⁴¹ See H. Chadwick, Introduction to *Boethius*, ed. M. Gibson (Oxford, 1981), p. 10 and A. Crabbe, 'Literary design in the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*' in *Boethius*, ed. M. Gibson (Oxford, 1981), pp. 256-63.

²⁴² Boethius' authorship of the theological tracts now ascribed to him was in question until the nineteenth century. As it is now agreed that these works were penned by the author of the *Consolatio*, it is also agreed that the author of the *Consolatio* was a Christian who sympathised with aspects of Platonic and Neoplatonic thought. For a summary of this see Marenbon, *Boethius*, pp. 154-6.

²⁴³ Cf. *Consolatio*, iii: 9.17-24 / Walsh, p. 56 and *Timaeus*, 34b.

²⁴⁴ For a recent summary and argument on this matter see Marenbon, *Boethius*, pp. 154-63. Also see Chadwick, Introduction to *Boethius*, pp. 10-12 and H. Chadwick, *The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 247-53 (especially p. 249).

matters.²⁴⁵ Therefore, it is briefly worth highlighting the psychological subject matter of the *Consolatio* by considering some relevant excerpts. And in particular, it is important to note the medical theme that runs throughout the work, in which respect the *Consolatio* clearly presented its early medieval readership with a strong concept of *mental illness*, although to what extent this was recognised is another matter.²⁴⁶

The first prose section of the *Consolatio* (which, incidentally, is written in prosimetric form) opens with the appearance of the goddess Philosophy before Boethius in his cell.²⁴⁷ Up to that point Boethius states that he had been kept occupied by the Muses (*i.e.* writing the poem that opens the work). However Philosophy dismisses them, declaring:

These ladies with their thorns of emotions choke the life from the fruitful harvest of reason. They do not expel the disease from men's minds [*hominumque mentes assuefaciunt morbo*], but merely inure them to its presence.²⁴⁸

This sets up a major theme of the work, namely that Philosophy is a physician, administering medical care to Boethius' diseased [*morbidus*] mind. The doctor-patient relationship between Philosophy and Boethius (respectively) runs throughout the work:

So will you first allow me to ask you a few simple questions, so as to probe and investigate your mental state [*statum tuae mentis*]? By this means I can decide upon your cure [*curatio*].²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Although, it should be noted, Isidore's *Etymologiae* and some of Augustine's are analogous in this regard.

²⁴⁶ There was certainly a concept of mental illness in ancient Greek thought and culture, although it certainly differed from modern western ideas about mental health. See C. Gill 'Ancient Psychotherapy' in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 46 (1985), pp. 307-25 and B. Gundert, 'Soma and psyche in Hippocratic medicine' in *Psyche and Soma*, ed. J. P. Wright *et al* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 13-35.

²⁴⁷ That is, each prose section is introduced and closed by verse sections.

²⁴⁸ Boethius, *Consolatio*, i: 1.9-10: the Latin edition of the text used here is printed in *PL*, vol. 63, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1847), cols 0579d-0870a.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, i: 6.1.

In this way, Boethius' presents himself in the *Consolatio* as suffering from an illness of the mind [*mens*] which may only be cured by philosophy, in respect of which Philosophy is cast as a physician goddess.

This is significant here for two reasons. Firstly, it demonstrates, quite decisively, that the distinction between mental and bodily illness in western thought and medicine has its roots in the ancient past: the concept of mental illness was not born with modern psychiatry, but rather developed from, and along with, ancient ideas and beliefs about the nature of the human mind and existence.²⁵⁰ Secondly, the *Consolatio*, which, as noted previously, was widely read and reproduced in Western Europe from the ninth century onwards, presented its medieval audience with a very clear concept of mental illness derived from Greek medicine: and the *Consolatio* was by no means the only classical text available in the medieval west that contained a concept of mental illness, although it was certainly one of the most widely read.²⁵¹ The crucial point to take away from this is, once again, that modern distinctions between the mind and body, or even between brain and body, are rooted in the ancient past of western thought: we should be mindful, therefore, of how far our modern western habits of thought about the natures of the human mind, body, life, and so forth, are founded on an ancient set of ideas about those things, even if we no longer consciously accept these ideas as describing facts in the world.²⁵²

The mind is represented in the *Consolatio* in terms consonant with Platonic soul-body dualism. Most importantly, it is cast as an internal source of reason or intelligence, as in the following excerpt where it is likened to a library:

What I look for is not library walls adorned with ivory and glass, but your mind's [*mens*] abode; for I have installed there not books, but what gives books their value, *the doctrine found in my writings of old* [*quondam meorum sententias collocavi*].²⁵³ [My italics]

²⁵⁰ See references in n. 59 above.

²⁵¹ For instance, see the descriptions of epilepsy [*epilemsia*], madness [*mania*], and melancholy [*melancholia*] in Isidore, *Etymologies*, iv: 7 (5-9).

²⁵² Damasio makes a distinction between brain and body or *viscera*, which he explicitly flags up as a convenience rather than statement of some real distinction between those two things: see Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, p. 86.

²⁵³ Boethius, *Consolatio*, i: 5.6.

The doctrine in Philosophy's "writings of old" [*quondam...sententias*] is perhaps intended to allude to the theories of the mind presented in the works of Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek philosophers. Importantly, the strength of the mind in this respect is contrasted by Boethius against the weaknesses of the body:

Yet if you consider physique [*corpus*] alone, can you lay eyes on anything feebler than that of humans? Why, even mere flies, if they bite you or creep into some inward part, can kill you! How can a person exercise rights over any other, except over his body [*corpus*] and that which ranks below his body, namely his fortune? You can exercise no dominion whatever, can you, over a free mind [*liber animum*]? Or disturb from its natural serenity a mind [*mens*] at one with itself through the steadying influence of reason [*ratio*]?²⁵⁴

In this way, it can be seen that the basic concepts underlying Platonic soul-body dualism and classical Greek and Roman psychology in general were preserved and transmitted into the early medieval west through texts such as the *Consolatio*. The *Consolatio* was by no means the only path for such ideas into medieval thought and it should be kept in mind that other texts conveying similar ideas were discovered or imported into the Christian west as the middle ages progressed. Original works on Greek thought were also written by western Christian scholars (e.g. Eriugena's *Periphyseon* [*On Nature*], written in the mid-ninth century). This should not, however, detract from the importance of the *Consolatio* in these and other respects. It was widely available and read in Western Europe from the ninth century onwards and thus provided important insights into ancient and Platonic psychology for its medieval readers.²⁵⁵

3.1.3: *The period c.550-1200*

The period between the end of antiquity and the mid-eleventh century has often been characterised as a time of consolidation and reproduction of existing materials (*i.e.* whatever survived the collapse of Roman civilisation or filtered into the Christian

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, ii: 6.5-7.

²⁵⁵ On the transmission and reception of the *Consolatio* see n. 53 above.

west from the Greek and Islamic worlds) rather than original thought. For instance, Constant Mews states:

The cultural flowering of the ninth century under Charlemagne, Louis the German and Charles the Bald was, by and large, the activity of a small monastic elite, more concerned to rescue the past from oblivion than to question its legitimacy.²⁵⁶

To an extent, this is undoubtedly correct, particularly during the ninth century when the religious and educational reforms of the so-called Carolingian renaissance revived and cemented aspects of classical learning in the Christian west.²⁵⁷ Still, it should be stressed that this period was not without original thinkers, some of whom had a lasting impact on the ways in which future generations of Western Europeans were educated and thus thought.²⁵⁸ Moreover, the ninth century should be viewed as an important intermediary point in the transmission of Platonic soul-body dualism and ancient psychology from late antiquity up to the twelfth century, not least because it witnessed the most significant efforts to systematise learning and the reproduction and dissemination of texts in Western Europe since the collapse of Roman authority in North-Western Europe.

It is beyond the scope of this study to give an extensive analysis of the transmission of Platonic texts and ideas between the ninth and twelfth centuries. However, it is worth stressing that the manuscript survival record for some of the most significant sources of Platonic and Greek thought in the early medieval west begins in the ninth century. This is not to say these texts were not known or available prior to then: only that very little or virtually nothing is now known of their existence prior to the early ninth century.²⁵⁹ It has already been noted that the earliest surviving copies of Boethius' *Consolatio* are from the early ninth century (possibly after the

²⁵⁶ Mews, 'Philosophy and Theology', p. 159. Also see Stock, 'Science, technology, and economic progress' and Gibson, 'The continuity of learning', pp. 1-13. Also note that Morris used the year 1050 in the title of his influential work, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200*.

²⁵⁷ See the essays collected in *Carolingian Culture: emulation and innovation*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1994), especially J. Marenbon, 'Carolingian thought', pp. 171-92.

²⁵⁸ Most notably Alcuin and Eriugena. For a brief summary of the achievements of these two men see Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 70-8. Considerably more work has been done on Eriugena, including the recent biography and study of his thought by Deidre Carabine, *John Scottus Eriugena*, as part of the Oxford Great Medieval Thinkers series.

²⁵⁹ McKitterick, 'Knowledge of Plato's *Timaeus*', pp. 85-95, pp. 89-90.

English scholar, Alcuin, brought a copy from Italy to the court of Charlemagne).²⁶⁰ In addition to this, the earliest surviving copy of the more complete of the two versions of the *Timaeus* available in early medieval Europe, a fourth-century Latin translation and commentary by Calcidius, was made around the beginning of the ninth century.²⁶¹ The other, a heavily abridged version by Cicero, which often circulated under the title *De Mundi Constitutione*, is preserved in a late-antique collection of his works, after which, the next surviving copy was also produced in the ninth century.²⁶²

Importantly, of the 129 surviving copies of Calcidius' version of the *Timaeus* produced between the ninth and fifteenth centuries, fifty were made during the twelfth century (sixteen copies of Cicero's version survive from the same period).²⁶³ However, the eleventh century sees the sharpest rise in the number of surviving copies: twenty two compared with two surviving from the tenth and three from the ninth century.²⁶⁴ Setting aside concerns about the likelihood of the survival of texts between the ninth to the twelfth centuries, this indicates that by the eleventh and twelfth centuries the *Timaeus* was regularly being copied, widely circulated, and read, and also that it was valued as a source of knowledge and ideas about the nature of God, the cosmos, matter, and humanity (*inter alia*).²⁶⁵ This was certainly the case, particularly among a group of thinkers associated with the school of Chartres in the late eleventh and early twelfth century.²⁶⁶

It seems that the *Timaeus* appealed widely to its medieval Christian readers because it offered them a concise literary cipher for the nature of the cosmos which could be unpacked by means of a scientific approach to literature (such as was

²⁶⁰ For relevant information see n. 53 above.

²⁶¹ See McKitterick, 'Knowledge of Plato's *Timaeus*', pp. 85-95, Somfai, 'Reception of Plato's *Timaeus*' and for more general details on the transmission of the Platonic corpus, including the *Timaeus*, see Klibansky, *Continuity of the Platonic Tradition*, pp. 21-31 and 51-3. Also, on Calcidius' *Commentary* see B. S. Eastwood, 'Invention and Reform in Latin Planetary Astronomy' in *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century*, 2 vols. ed. M. W. Herren *et al* (Turnhout, 2002), vol. 1, pp. 282-90.

²⁶² See Somfai, *ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ This is not to say that it was not widely circulated or valued in the ninth and tenth centuries. Indeed, note that Rosamond McKitterick has rejected Margaret Gibson's view that the *Timaeus* was venerated as a curiosity rather than used and understood, at least until the eleventh and twelfth centuries: see McKitterick, 'Knowledge of Plato's *Timaeus*', p. 85

²⁶⁶ On whom see Wetherbee, 'Philosophy, Cosmology, and Twelfth-Century Philosophy' and Mews, 'Philosophy and Theology', pp. 173-80 and P. Dronke, 'Thierry of Chartres' in *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy*, ed. P. Dronke (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 371-2 and 379, and on the school at Chartres see R. W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 77 and 79-80 and Southern, 'The schools of Paris and Chartres'.

popular at the time via the influence of Aristotle's old logic²⁶⁷). As Winthrop Wetherbee has stated:

If the effect of the new scientific literacy of the twelfth century was to make men view nature in light of 'a *ratio* synonymous with the inner logic of texts', [then] the *Timaeus* is surely the example *par excellence* of the authoritative text. To study nature was in effect to decode the *Timaeus*, and as a result the literary character of that text had tremendous influence on the thinking to which it gave rise.²⁶⁸

Additionally, the *Timaeus* was widely regarded as an ethical work in as far as nature, of which it gives an account, was often understood by learned medieval Christians to reflect the Will of God and hence the nature of morality itself.²⁶⁹

However, as an account of the creation of the cosmos, the *Timaeus* could potentially also have been seen as a rival to the book of Genesis by its medieval readership. Bearing this in mind, it seems somewhat surprising that the *Timaeus* did not prove especially controversial during the middle ages, not least, as Constant Mews has pointed out, because the focus on physical processes in the *Timaeus* could divert attention away from the Augustinian emphasis on reading the biblical account of Creation as an allegory of divine wisdom and morality.²⁷⁰ Stephen Jaeger has noted an eleventh-century polemic by Manegold of Lautenbach, against the use made of the *Timaeus* by his contemporary, Wolfhelm of Brauweiler. However, Manegold was strictly concerned with the possibility that the study of the *Timaeus* might go beyond cosmology and ethics into theology. Otherwise, he explicitly condoned its use for the teaching of ethics to the clergy in regard to administrative matters.²⁷¹ Apparently, the *Timaeus* was acceptable as an expression of secular ethical conduct, even in the

²⁶⁷ C. Burnett, 'Scientific Speculations' in *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy*, ed. P. Dronke (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 151-76 and Mews, 'Philosophy and Theology' and C. Mews, 'Nominalism and theology before Abelard: new light on Roscelin of Compiègne' in *Vivarium*, 30: 1 (1992), pp. 4-33.

²⁶⁸ Wetherbee, 'Philosophy, Cosmology, and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance', p. 33. Wetherbee's quotation is from Southern, *Medieval Humanism*, p. 78.

²⁶⁹ See S. Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 172-9.

²⁷⁰ Mews, 'Philosophy and Theology', p. 176. Augustine gave his views on the book of Genesis in book thirteen of the *Confessions* and *De Genesi ad Litteram*. Also see Wetherbee, 'Philosophy, cosmology, and the Renaissance', pp. 38-9.

²⁷¹ Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, pp. 176-7.

administration of the “divine republic [*divinus res publicus*]”, but not as an article of faith in itself. This seems odd given that it has so much to say on the nature of God (or the *dēmiourgos*) and the creation of the cosmos, supernatural beings, man, animals, and so forth.

The *Timaeus* is likely to have benefitted from the widespread desire among medieval scholars to highlight (or even engineer) harmony and suppress disagreement among revered texts. As such, there is likely to have been a strong tendency among some medieval readers of the *Timaeus* to smother potentially dangerous pagan ideas by either association or reduction to aspects of orthodox Christian belief. This certainly seems to have been the manner in which the Chartres masters approached the portion of the work available to them.²⁷²

The works of a number of other late-antique writers and their influence in the medieval west should also be noted. Firstly, the works written by someone claiming the pseudonym of Dionysius the Areopagite (now known as the “Pseudo-Dionysius”) first became available in the ninth century thanks to connections between the Carolingian and Byzantine courts.²⁷³ These works, written in Greek, probably by a Syrian monk in the early sixth century (before 532), were heavily influenced by the thought of the fifth-century Athenian Neoplatonist (and pagan), Proclus, and went on to be hugely influential among western theologians: indeed, they have been described as the most influential works of Christian theology between Augustine and Aquinas.²⁷⁴ The works of Pseudo-Dionysius are significant in as far as they presented medieval theologians from the ninth century onwards with a fusion of Neoplatonic thought and Christian theology: this is true both for the Latin-speaking west and Greek-speaking east.²⁷⁵ Moreover, his works are remarkable for being known from

²⁷² John Marenbon notes this in regard to William of Conches: see *Medieval Philosophy*, p. 151.

²⁷³ That is, St Paul’s Athenian convert (see Acts 17: 16-34). The works in question were sent as a gift by the Byzantine Emperor, Michael the Stammerer, to Charlemagne’s son and successor, Louis the Pious. They were first translated into Latin by Hilduin, the Abbot of Saint Denis in the reign of Louis and later by Eriugena at the request of Louis’ son and successor, Charles the Bald: on Eriugena’s translation see Carabine, *John Scottus Eriugena*, pp. 16-20 and Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 73-8.

²⁷⁴ R. Boenig, ‘Pseudo-Dionysius and the *via* towards England’ in *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England*, ed. W. F. Pollard *et al* (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 21 and also see the article as a whole (pp. 21-27). On the thought and influence of the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius, also see W. Beierwaltes, ‘Unity and trinity in Dionysius and Eriugena’ in *Hermathena*, 157 (1994), pp. 1-20, C. Andresen, ‘The integration of Platonism into Early Christian Theology’ in *Studia Patristica*, vol. xv, ed. E. A. Livingstone (Berlin, 1984), pp. 403-5, and on continuity through Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus, Carabine, *John Scottus Eriugena*, pp. 16-26, and Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 50-1 and 73-8.

²⁷⁵ Again see Andresen, *ibid.*, Boenig, *ibid.*, and Beierwaltes, *ibid.*

original Greek texts in the ninth century when they were first received in the west. While relatively few medieval scholars were able to read Greek, those who could, most notably Eriugena, were thereby granted the opportunity to engage directly with Neoplatonism in its original linguistic context.²⁷⁶

In addition to this, works by two Latin writers of the early-fifth century, Macrobius and Martianus Capella, both of whom were almost certainly pagans, were widely read in Western Europe from the ninth century onwards. Macrobius was known through his *Saturnalia* and *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, the subject of the latter of which is Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* (which in turn formed the final two books of his now mostly lost work, *De Re Publica*). Of these, the *Commentary* is of particular interest due to its focus on the nature of the soul (specifically in regard to the causation of dreams) and cosmology.²⁷⁷ More specifically, his discussion of dreams in the *Commentary* focuses on the validity of somniferous visions as a form of communication with the celestial sphere, in respect to which the soul's capacity to receive the images viewed as dreams (or in some cases, cause bogus visions) is of particular interest.²⁷⁸

Meanwhile, Martianus is of note for his *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (c.410-39), which was widely read throughout the middle ages, mainly as a literary introduction to the seven liberal arts of the *trivium* and *quadrivium*.²⁷⁹ It was mostly of interest as a school text to its medieval readership, mainly, because it dealt with education, and also because of the use of made of classical allegory by its author. In addition to this, *De nuptiis* dealt with Neoplatonic themes which would have been current in the early-fifth century, although it should be noted that Martianus was probably not a follower of Neoplatonism.²⁸⁰ More to the point, *De nuptiis* should be viewed as yet another important source of Platonic and Neoplatonic themes and ideas for medieval readers on a wide variety of topics related to the seven disciplines covered by the work.

²⁷⁶ See Carabine on Eriugena's use of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius and also Maximus Confessor: *John Scottus Eriugena*, especially, pp. 22-6.

²⁷⁷ On Macrobius' discussion of dreams in his *Commentary* see A. Peden, 'Macrobius and medieval dream literature' in *Medium Aevum*, 54: 1 (1985), pp. 59-73 and on interest in Macrobius' cosmological arguments during the early middle ages see Eastwood, 'Invention and Reform in Latin Planetary Astronomy', pp. 277-82.

²⁷⁸ Peden, *ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁷⁹ On the reading and influence of *De nuptiis* in the medieval west see *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. W. Harris-Stahl *et al* (New York, 1971), pp. 55-71 and on the somewhat difficult dating of the text see pp. 12-16.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Finally, with the maturation of scholasticism in Western Europe between the late eleventh and thirteenth centuries, new questions began to be asked about the nature of the soul and the composition of the human organism. This trend is exemplified by Peter Lombard's *Four Books of Sentences* [*Libri Quattuor Sententiarum*] (c.1150) or *The Sentences* for short, which, later in the thirteenth century, became a set teaching text and standard model for writers of theological commentaries. These books essentially form a *compendium*, described by one editor as being like a "legal casebook", of potential questions and answers to an extensive range of theological issues relevant to Western Christianity.²⁸¹

Specifically as regards the soul, Peter considers how it was created by God, whether it was made in or outside of the body and, if in the latter case, how it got into the body, and whether it has foreknowledge of its future deeds.²⁸² Peter mostly poses these questions in response to a sentence in the Book of Genesis about the creation of Adam, [*E*]t inspiravit in faciem eius spiraculum vitae [And He [God] blew in his face the breath of life] (Gen. 2: 7). For Peter, as for previous Christian writers, this passage raised important questions regarding whether it should be read literally or figuratively: most importantly, whether God should be understood to have blown, in a *corporal* sense, the breath of life into Adam, or alternatively whether this is a metaphor for God's processes of willing and commanding: Peter, with Bede as his authority, siding firmly with the latter opinion.²⁸³ For Peter, the aforesaid sentence also raised the question of whether God created the souls and bodies of men apart and then fused them at a later moment, or instead created the soul *in* the body. After briefly noting the opposing views of St Augustine and certain unnamed "others" on this matter, Peter draws the conclusion that while Adam may present an exceptional case, for all subsequent men the soul must have been created in the body (thus inviting, but not tackling, the question of whether the body develops soulless for some length of time before the soul is created in it).²⁸⁴

A number of the authors whose works are discussed below were influenced by, or educated in, the developing tradition of scholasticism. Accordingly, the influence of scholasticism can be seen in some of the excerpts examined below:

²⁸¹ See the introduction to Peter Lombard, *The Sentences*, Book 2, trans. G. Silano (Ontario, 2008), p. vii.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, dist. xvii: 1-2 (96-7).

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, dist. xvii: 1.2-5.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, dist. xvii: 2.1-5.

especially in sec. 3.3.2, the chief focus of which is report in Guibert's *De Vita Sua* of a theory of the composition and nature of the soul credited to the early scholastic theologian, Anselm of Bec (1033-1109). It should be stressed that the kind of self-conscious reflection on the nature of the mind, soul, and cognition typical of scholasticism is not of immediate concern in this chapter. I am mainly interested here in the more unthinking assumptions, beliefs, and ideas of the relevant authors on the mind, soul, and cognition. In as far as scholasticism, along with the broader tradition of ancient western psychology, can be seen to have influenced, or reflect, these aspects of the relevant authors' thought it is relevant to the subsequent discussion: but it is not immediately relevant in itself.

3.1.4: Conclusion

There have been two main purposes of this section: firstly, to give an overview of some of the more important aspects of classical Greek thought on the nature of human existence, and secondly, to discuss some of the key authors and texts by which these ideas were preserved and passed on into medieval thought and belief.

There has been a bias in this section towards certain aspects of ancient Greek thought, which has inevitably come at the expense of others (*e.g.* Aristotelian logic or Galenic medicine).²⁸⁵ It should also be stressed that minimal consideration has been given here to the impact of the Bible and Semitic thought (Jewish or Christian) on western thought during the middle ages. Needless to say, Christianity had the greatest impact on the thought, beliefs, lives, and so forth of the majority of people in the medieval west. However, as has been noted above, Christianity was heavily influenced by classical Greek thought as early as within a half-century of Jesus' Crucifixion.²⁸⁶ By the early middle ages, aspects of classical Greek and Roman thought had been appropriated into orthodox Christian thought and theology in the east and west, as can be seen from the writings of the Church Fathers (including Augustine, Boethius, and Pseudo-Dionysius among others). In short, by the beginning of the medieval period, Western Christianity can be seen to reflect a mixed

²⁸⁵ See above, sec. 3.1, pp. 73-4.

²⁸⁶ See P. Brown, *Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (London, 1989), pp. 48-50 and T. K. Heckel, 'Body and soul in Saint Paul' in *Psyche and Soma*, ed. J. P. Wright *et al* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 117-31.

Semitic and Greco-Roman intellectual heritage. Hence mainstream Christian thought included aspects of classical Greek religion, such as soul-body dualism, which gelled awkwardly at best with Old Testament theology on the nature of human existence and embodiment.²⁸⁷

The relevance of this section will become clearer in section 3.3 which focuses on the relationship between the body and soul as it is represented in the sample of source texts. For now it will suffice to note that many of the ideas that can be found in medieval European texts on the nature of human mental life and existence have their roots in classical Greek philosophy. Among these is the idea that the human body is animated by an ontologically independent agent (e.g. the soul [*psuchê* / *anima*] or spirit [*pneuma* / *spiritus*]), which is materially separable from it: according to certain accounts, it may also be able to freely manipulate the body and outlive it, or at least, from a Judaeo-Christian perspective, survive apart from the body up to the moment of the Resurrection.

It will be seen below that ideas like these, *inter alia*, influenced how the authors of the sample of source texts conceptualised and represented human mental life and existence hence the relevance of the contextual discussion given above. It is also important to take note of the revival of Platonism in the schools of eleventh and twelfth century Europe, especially at Chartres, and to some extent Paris too.²⁸⁸

John of Salisbury and Peter of Celle can be explicitly linked to this trend from their surviving writings. John was well aware of the teachings of the scholars associated with Chartres between the late 1000s up to c.1150, as is clear from his *Metalogicon*. He also shows extensive knowledge of philosophical works by classical pagan authors in the *Metalogicon*, including Boethius' translations of Aristotle's logical works.²⁸⁹ In the *Policraticus* John shows some knowledge of Plato's *Republic* via Cicero's *De Officiis* and also discusses the three main branches of classical Greek

²⁸⁷ For instance, on tensions between the Hellenic focus on the soul and the Semitic focus on the material body as the "true" manifestation of "personal being" (so to speak) see Bynum *The Resurrection of the Body*, pp. 7-17 and F. Vidal 'Brains, bodies, selves, and science: anthropologies of identity and the resurrection of the body' in *Critical Enquiry*, 28 (2002), pp. 930-74.

²⁸⁸ See Wetherbee, 'Philosophy, cosmology, and the twelfth-century renaissance' and Mews, 'Philosophy and Theology'.

²⁸⁹ See index (especially *s.n.* Aristotle) to McGarry's edition of the *Metalogicon*, pp. 297-305. On the John's relationships with the Chartres masters, see *ibid.*, pp. xvi-xvii (including notes) and McGarry's index references to Bernard of Chartres, Thierry of Chartres, William of Conches, Robert Melun, Richard L'Evêque, and Gilbert of Poitiers (alt. de la Porrée), all of whom John mentions at various places throughout the *Metalogicon*. Also see Mews, 'Philosophy and Theology', pp. 173-80.

philosophy, the Academics (followers of Plato), the Peripatetics (followers of Aristotle), and the Stoics (followers of Zeno), and the Greek concept of philosophy in general.²⁹⁰ And furthermore, John describes himself as a “philosopher” [*philosophus*] a number of times in his surviving letters and discusses what this meant to him.²⁹¹ Meanwhile, Peter of Celle exchanged a series of letters with Nicholas of Clairvaux in which he discusses a number of Neoplatonic themes.²⁹² Guibert, Orderic, and the author of *The Life of Christina* show relatively little interest in Greek philosophy or indeed the pagan classics. Walter cites the same passage of Boethius’ translation of Porphyry’s *Isagoge* three times in *De Nugis*.²⁹³ Otherwise, he shows little interest or knowledge of Greek philosophy, although by contrast he was able to cite a wide range of pagan Roman authors in the work.

Finally, it should be noted that Orderic’s *Epilogue* is not considered in this chapter. This is because he does not use terms or concepts in it that are relevant here. The *Epilogue* represents a relatively small portion of Orderic’s *Historia* hence some time could have been spent here on its broader text as opposed to just the epilogue. However, given that the other source texts have provided this chapter with an abundance of relevant material, it seems unnecessary at this stage to examine the text of Orderic’s *Historia* more fully.

3.2: *Taking an embodied approach to the mind*

The following discussion focuses on how the authors relevant to this study represented the properties and behaviour of cognitive phenomena. More specifically, it draws attention to a perceived tendency to represent mental life and cognitive phenomena as though they are unremarkable material objects. The three subsections that follow highlight a number of different aspects to this: space, proportion, materiality, weight, and motion. These topics are of interest for two reasons: firstly, they suggest that the relevant authors viewed things like the mind, thoughts, beliefs, and so forth as though they viewed them as material objects, and secondly, it brings

²⁹⁰ On the academics see John, *Policraticus*, vii: 1; on the schools of philosophy, vii: 8; on true philosophers, vii: 11 (this theme is echoed in John’s letters 158-9). The republic is a perennial theme throughout the *Policraticus*: however see in particular books v (on heads of state) and vi (on military service). John also makes use of Aristotle’s old logic at iv: 4 / p. 36 and metaphysics at iv: 5 / p. 39 and Cicero’s use of Plato’s *Republic* at v: 11 / p. 93.

²⁹¹ See John, *Letters*, ii: 158-9.

²⁹² See Peter, *Letters*, 50-1.

²⁹³ Walter, *De Nugis*, i: 1, i: 25, and v: 7.

into focus problems with the Platonic idea that the human mind is an *immaterial* and transcendent phenomenon. In particular, it shows that even if the authors notionally accepted the Platonic idea of the mind (or soul), they either found it very hard or impossible to conceptualise it as the kind of entity that Platonism supposes it is.

As discussed in Chapter Two, human reason, abstract or not, is embodied and, as such, invariably makes use of the perceptual data made available to it by the body. The human body is equipped to experience and respond to natural phenomena like space, proportion, weight, materiality, and so on (including the space it occupies, its own proportion, weight, materiality, *etc.*), but not to conditions like immateriality, ubiquity, or transcendence. The world or cosmos may in fact contain immaterial, ubiquitous, or transcendent beings or entities, and some people may at times believe that they have in fact experienced such things: but as far as we can possibly be sure at present, people do not directly experience such things as immateriality, *etc.*, but rather derive abstract concepts like *immateriality* from their immediate perceptual experiences of the world. In short, people can only make sense of abstract ideas like immateriality in terms of their immediate, embodied experiences of the world.

I will henceforth use my term *cognitive phenomena* to refer to aspects of human mental life as they occur in the relevant sample of source texts. This term needs to be discussed further here, particularly because a distinction is made below between *primary* and *secondary* cognitive phenomena.

Firstly, cognitive phenomena may be active or passive, and secondly, the conditions of their existence may differ in the respect that the existence of certain kinds of cognitive phenomena (*e.g.* the mind) may be construed as prior to that of others (*e.g.* the existence of things like beliefs or desires is conditional on the existence of the mind). So for the purposes of this chapter, cognitive phenomena are *primary* if they are represented as wilful and ontologically autonomous agents. This does not mean that they cannot be acted on: rather, what it means is that they are potentially able to act by their own volition (or some other such force) and also that their existence is not conditional upon the prior existence of something else (*e.g.* a soul does not necessarily need a body to exist). On the other hand, cognitive phenomena are viewed here as *secondary* if they are passive in that they are apparently unable to act on their own accord, and also if their existence is conditional

upon the existence of something else (*e.g.* beliefs exist if *and only if* there are things in the world that have the capacity to *believe*).

The significance of this distinction should become clearer as this chapter progresses. At present, suffice to say that although the criteria given here are rough and also that determining the status of cognitive phenomena as they occur in the relevant source texts is not always straightforward or immediately obvious, I feel that this distinction reflects something fundamental about the ways in which the authors of the texts chosen here conceptualised human mental life. It is possible to think of human mental life in terms of substance, so what it actually *is*, and also in terms of functions, processes, and properties, so what it *does* and what it is *like*. What the primary-secondary distinction does here is draw into focus how different aspects of human mental life, as people conceptualise it (*i.e.* in terms of souls, minds, beliefs, desires, and so forth), relate to how they understand substance (being), functionality and causation (processes), and properties (qualities pertaining to things).

In this way, primary cognitive phenomena may be viewed as things that consist of robust materials and perform functions and initiate processes by their own volition, in which respects they can be conceptualised as having the properties of robustness, agency, and being ontologically autonomous (*i.e.* they exist in their own right). By contrast, secondary cognitive phenomena may consist of more ephemeral substances and may themselves be functions or outcomes of processes, in which respect they are passive products of other things. And thus, their properties include fragility or instability in terms of their substantial forms, and being passive and products of other things in the world.

For ease of reference, primary and secondary cognitive phenomena will henceforth be identified by the rubrics Φ_1 and Φ_2 in brackets (Φ , “phi”, being the Greek letter represented in the Latin alphabet by *ph*): for example, *anima* [soul] may be followed by (Φ_1), thus identifying *anima* as a *primary cognitive phenomenon*, whereas *sententia* [opinion] may be followed by (Φ_2), thus identifying *sententia* as a *secondary cognitive phenomenon*. This convention will be maintained as and when clarity is needed (most often in tying down the status of secondary cognitive phenomena): accordingly, it will often only be necessary to highlight the status of many terms once.

It must be stressed that the excerpts considered below are largely metaphorical hence they should not necessarily be taken to express the realities of human cognition

as their respective authors saw it. The justification for this approach was given previously in Chapter Two. However, it seems worth restating the main premise underlying this method as it is stated by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*:

The idea that metaphors can create realities goes against most traditional views of metaphor. The reason is that metaphor has traditionally been viewed as a matter of mere language rather than primarily as a means of structuring our conceptual system and the kinds of everyday activities we perform. It is reasonable enough to assume that words alone don't change reality. But changes in our conceptual system do change what is real for us and affect how we perceive the world and act upon those perceptions.²⁹⁴

The important point to take away from this is that while metaphors are by definition stylised, it does not necessarily follow that they are “unrealistic”. Much of what follows is certainly metaphorical. However, by blurring the boundary between traditional views of metaphor and literal language, Lakoff and Johnson have shown that metaphors cannot simply be fanciful representations of things. A given metaphor invariably *must* represent something “real” about the personal phenomenology of whoever uses it at least in the respect that that person has been subject to a mental state that has recommended that metaphor to them as a useful way of understanding some other aspect of their phenomenology (which may be a perceptual experience of something in the world, a feeling elsewhere in the body, or another abstract mental state: what this other thing is doesn't really matter here as what counts most is the experience of a logical connection or similarity between these two things which may find expression as a metaphor in language or however else).²⁹⁵ So in brief, the crucial point here is that metaphors represent *real* mental states that in turn represent how people experience the world as embodied beings.

²⁹⁴ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, pp. 145-6.

²⁹⁵ On what these mental states might be in terms of the physical substance of the brain and nervous system, see Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, pp. 83-113.

3.2.1: *Space and proportion*

Space is defined here as a medium in which objects may be extended and move (note that in this sense, space does not necessarily have to be a vacuum as in modern physics). There are two respects in which space is significant for this study. Firstly, cognitive phenomena are represented in the source texts as objects moving through space, and secondly, as containers or media capable of containing other things: it also seems implicit from this that they occupy space. In the latter case, primary cognitive phenomena (*e.g. anima*) are often represented as containers of secondary cognitive phenomena (*e.g. spes* [hope]). Something also needs to be said here about dimensions. An object in a space will be extended across all dimensions of that space. Thus, an object in a three-dimensional space will be extended across all three of its dimensions (*i.e.* up-down, forwards-backwards, left-right: although note that orientation, covered below in sec. 3.2.3, is needed to determine what counts as “up”, “down”, and so forth).²⁹⁶

The assumption here is that the authors of the chosen source texts reasoned about cognitive phenomena in relation to their experiences of the three-dimensional spatial environment in which they lived. There is, of course, no means by which this can be proven. Nevertheless, it is necessary in this chapter to adopt a working hypothesis regarding what kinds of spaces the authors of the chosen source texts conceptualised cognitive phenomena as inhabiting. Accordingly, it is reckoned here that the authors of the relevant texts conceptualised cognitive phenomena as inhabiting three-dimensional spaces (thus making them three-dimensional objects) in as far as the overwhelming majority of their experiences of the world will have involved three-dimensional spaces and objects.²⁹⁷ By contrast, experiences of notionally two-dimensional environments, such as say, writing on the flat surface of parchment, will have been relatively infrequent, even among seasoned writers such as the authors being considered here.

²⁹⁶ Issues like these were discussed in Greek philosophy (*e.g.* see Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, 248^b6-286^a36) and may also have been discussed by some medieval thinkers: at any rate, these are certainly not modern observations on the nature of space.

²⁹⁷ For a recent discussion of how people experience space see Lloyd, *Cognitive Variations*, chapter two.

The following two examples illustrate how cognitive phenomena were construed by the author of the *Life of Christina* (item 1) and John of Salisbury (item 2) as objects moving through a space (incidentally, because these examples involve motion, they will be discussed further in sec. 3.2.3). Relevant nouns and verbs have been highlighted:

1. But when her [Christina's] **mind roamed** freely...

*Cum vero mens eius liberius evolaret...*²⁹⁸

2. That my **soul may go forth** with greater joy **from** the prison house of the flesh **into** the sight of the most high...

*Verum ut anima de carnis ergastulo laetior exeat ad conspectum Altissimi...*²⁹⁹

In item 1, *mens* (Φ_1) is the direct subject of the active verb, *evolvo*. Accordingly, *mens* is represented as “roaming” by its own accord (or, put differently, *mens* is the source of its movement).³⁰⁰ Meanwhile, in item 2, *anima* (Φ_1) is also represented as the source of its own movement (that is, it is the direct object of the active verb, *exeo*). However, in this case *anima* is also leaving a container: namely a fleshy prison-house [*carnis ergastuli*] (it was noted above that this metaphor has its roots in Presocratic philosophy and religion and was famously used by Plato in the *Phaedo*).³⁰¹ Although no direct source has been identified for this passage, the view of the body as a constraint on the soul was certainly widespread in medieval Europe, not least via the Pauline Epistles in which the natures of the flesh [$\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$: *sarx* / *caro*] and spirit [*pneuma* / *spiritus*] are regularly opposed.³⁰²

Guibert uses a similar metaphor to that in item 2 to describe the relationship between the body [*corpus*] and mind [*intellectus*]:

²⁹⁸ *Life of Christina*, ¶ 75.

²⁹⁹ John, *Letters*, i: 8.

³⁰⁰ Also see Steven Pinker's discussion of the role of a concept of an internal source of motion in human reasoning about objects in *How the Mind Works*, pp. 321-3.

³⁰¹ See sec. 3.1.1, pp. 78-9.

³⁰² See Brown, *Body and Society*, pp. 48-50 and Heckel, 'Body and soul in St Paul'.

3. It is therefore necessary to treat the **mind** with greater moderation while it is still being **burdened** with its bodily covering.

*Necesse est igitur involucro adhuc corporis **aggravatum** agere temperatius **intellectum**.*³⁰³

In addition to the sense of the body as a restrictive container for the soul, Guibert's formula makes use of the concept of weight [*aggravatus*], whereby *corpus* "burdens" or "weighs down" *intellectus* (Φ_1). Weight will be discussed along with mass in the next section. Presently, it should be noted that items 2 and 3 employ the concept of a container in relation to cognitive phenomena (*i.e.* *mens* and *intellectus* are construed as contents of the body). In this regard, items 2 and 3 also imply that *mens* and *intellectus* are smaller than their respective containers, *caro ergastuli* and *corpus*. Thus, it is necessary to explore further this aspect of the representation of cognitive phenomena, specifically in relation to the concepts *container* and *proportion*.

Importantly, proportion is meant here to describe experiences of the relative sizes and shapes of objects and enclosed spaces. It is being assumed that the authors of the chosen source texts experienced the relationships between objects and enclosed or well-defined spaces in the natural environment in ways that allowed them to make judgements about the relative sizes and shapes of those objects and spaces. Accordingly, they are likely to have been aware of the concepts of proportion [*proportio*] and measurement [*mensura*] and how these can be applied to objects and spaces in the natural environment. The following examples illustrate how they applied these senses to abstract concepts:

4. I doubt not a **large space** is kept for me in your **heart**.

*[N]ec dubito quin in **pectore** tuo reservatus sit **amplissimus locus**.*³⁰⁴

5. Turn over these points and their like **in your minds**.

*Versentur haec et similia **in animis**.*³⁰⁵

³⁰³ Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, i: 5.

³⁰⁴ John, *Letters*, ii: 147.

6. She, as usual, was slow to reply, but **in her heart she did not approve of the undertaking**.

Illa sicut semper non preceps in respondendo, corde solum reclamit agendis.

7. Likewise Thou didst **bring into my wretched heart** [alt. “to my wretched heart”] perhaps not hope so much as **the shadow of hope** [alt. “likeness of hope”].

*Induxisti pariter et misero cordi meo nescio si spem ut similitudinem spei.*³⁰⁶

8. She began **to examine** more often and more closely **into the depths** [secrets] **of her heart** whether anyone can love another more than himself...

*[I]n cordis sui secreta scrutinio frequencius studiosiusque cepit discutere, utrumnam quis alium quam se...*³⁰⁷

In one way or another all of these excerpts cast primary cognitive phenomena as spaces in which things may be placed or kept (4, 5 and possibly 7), acted on (5, 8), moved around (5), examined (7), or as hiding places or concealed locations of thoughts (8 and also 6 if we accept the use of “in” in the translation). A wide range of objects may be placed in these cognitive spaces: a person or friend (4), thoughts about something (5), disapproval of something (6), the likeness of hope [*similitudo spei*] (Φ_2), and answers (8). Additionally, the containers may all be viewed as primary cognitive phenomena (*i.e.* *pectus* (4), *anima* (5), and *cor* (6-8)). Item 7 is of especial interest because *cor* is construed as a container for *similitudo spei*: hence a primary cognitive phenomenon, *cor*, is acting as a container for a secondary cognitive phenomenon, *similitudo spei*. From this, it follows that the heart is an enclosed space of sufficient space and size to contain a likeness of hope. Therefore, *cor* is *proportionally* larger than *similitudo spei* (or *qua* a space, exactly the same size and

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, ii: 292.

³⁰⁶ Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, i: 3.

³⁰⁷ *Life of Christina*, ¶ 79.

shape) and *similitudo spei* is *proportionally* smaller than *cor* (or *qua* an object, exactly the right size and shape to fit into *cor*).³⁰⁸

These entailments do not obviously conflict with the ancient-medieval idea of transubstantiation: *i.e.* that one distinct substance may transmute into another (*e.g.* elemental water may transmute into elemental air if exposed to the right conditions).³⁰⁹ Furthermore, it does not make sense in these items for the contained or acted upon objects to be merely “accidental” [cf. συμβεβηκός: *sumbebēkos*] properties of the containers or actors.³¹⁰ There is no question in any of the above excerpts of either the container, contained, or area enclosed or bounded by the container being transmutations or different qualities of the same things. In item 7, for example, the container, *cor*, and contained, *similitudo spei*, are clearly supposed to be discrete entities: the thing contained is not a transmutation or accidental property of the container (otherwise the container could not logically be a container for it because they would be the same thing). Neither is *similitudo spei* construed as an accidental state or property of *cor* (in the same way that, say, being white can be said to be an accidental state of Socrates): *cor* and *similitudo spei* clearly are discrete entities in this instance, although I could conceive of circumstances in which *similitudo spei* might explicitly be represented as a supervenient state of *cor* (and it would be necessary to represent this explicitly as *similitudo* and *spes* both tend to behave as *substantive* nouns). To be sure, the accidental properties of *being a place* and *being a container* may be said to supervene on the set of objects construed as being places or containers in items 4-8: but this is exactly the point of the discussion. Abstract ideas about entities whose ontological states and properties are uncertain are being described in terms more obviously applicable to unremarkable physical objects.

³⁰⁸ Aristotle’s discussion of these issues in book four of his *Physics* was known by the twelfth-century: see in particular, Aristotle, *Physics*, iv: 3. On knowledge and reception of the *Physics* from the twelfth century onwards see Murdoch and Sylla, ‘The Science of Motion’, especially pp. 206-22.

³⁰⁹ For instance, an “atomic” theory of transmutations between the elements may be found in Plato, *Timaeus*, 53e-57d. For a broader and more openly polemical discussion of the nature of change see Aristotle, *De Generatione et Corruptione* in *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English*, vol. ii, trans. H. H. Joachim (Oxford, 1947): specifically as regards transmutation between the elements see *ibid.*, ii: 4 (331^a6-332^a1).

³¹⁰ Συμβεβηκός was originally used in this technical sense by Aristotle to describe the non-essential properties of things: for example, it is used in this sense in Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. H. Tredennick (Cambridge Mass., 1933), Z, 1026^b. This word, sometimes rendered *accidentalis* in medieval Latin (from the root verb, *accido*), was used in a similar sense by medieval scholars to describe the perceptible qualities of things. Συμβεβηκός is cognate to the verb, συμβαίνω [*sumbainō*], one sense of which is *to come to pass*: see Liddell and Scott, *s.n.* *sumbainw* (accessed 21 / 5 / 2010); see entry iv for definitions of συμβεβηκός.

The examples cited above go some way towards demonstrating the influence of embodied concepts, namely space and proportion, on how the authors of the source texts conceptualised and reasoned about mental life in abstraction. None of this requires that any of them *really* believed that cognitive phenomena exist and behave as though they are material objects or that they ascribed properties like size, shape, and being a container to them. The crucial point here is rather that they reasoned about them *as though* they were material objects with properties like size, shape, or being a container because the embodied experiences that people have of the world are likely to predispose them towards thinking in those terms, even when worldly properties such as size and shape are not supposed to apply to the objects of thought.

Furthermore, when I say that these authors ascribed properties like size or shape to cognitive phenomena, I mean this in a very loose and flexible sense. Conceiving of an object in abstract thought with properties like size and shape does not necessarily commit us to defining precisely how big and what shape we suppose it to be. I may form an abstract image in my mind of a mind as a physical container without also committing myself to tackling concerns like whether it is closer in shape and size to a tin can or wine bottle or whatever else. Considerations such as these are simply not necessary in abstract thought in which it is possible to entertain purely conceptual, if somewhat indistinct, representations of size and shape, which describe categories of phenomena that we are able to experience in the world, but not any particular instantiations of them (*i.e.* what Plato called *idéai*). However, while we can entertain these concepts in abstraction from how they occur in the world, they are nonetheless products of the relationship between our bodies and the world. Once we have acquired the concept of size from our experiences of the world, we can use it freely in abstract thought: but we would not be able to do this if our bodies did not have the capacity to experience and form mental representations of such a thing as size in the world.

3.2.2: *Materiality and weight*

Materiality is used here as a way of describing the phenomenon and property of “being material” (*i.e.* consisting of material substance(s)). Materiality can be contrasted with “matter” which is taken to mean the base units of the material that

objects consist of (*i.e.* “atoms”, derived from the Greek, ἄτομος [*atomos*], literally meaning “uncuttable”).³¹¹ Furthermore, it is important to note that certain other phenomena or properties pertaining to objects are assumed here to arise from materiality: most importantly, the size and weight of objects (other properties such as shape, colour, density, *etc.*, are not important here). The size and weight of objects are presumably determined by the quantity and kind of matter pertaining to them hence they will be discussed here as aspects of the phenomenon of materiality.

Medieval scholars inherited part of Plato’s theory of matter through the *Timaeus*. Plato’s account of the base components of material things in the *Timaeus* (47e-68d) owed much to the thought of the atomists (particularly Leucippis and Democritus), although his account of the creation and formation of matter by the demiurge was probably intended as a critique of the atomists who argued that the cosmos was the result of accidental collisions among atoms.³¹² All of this would have been lost to medieval readers of the *Timaeus* who tended to view it as a verbal cipher for the nature of the cosmos.³¹³ However, the special ontological status ascribed to souls in the *Timaeus* would not have been lost on its medieval readers, not least as they are likely to have been familiar with late-antique Neoplatonism via writers such as Augustine, Boethius, Macrobius, Martianus, Pseudo-Dionysius and so forth.³¹⁴

In the portions of the *Timaeus* available in the medieval west (mostly through Calcidius’ translation³¹⁵), Plato argues that souls consist of a substance which was not any of the four conventional elements (cf. 32e-33a, 34c-35b, and 36e-d): the passage in which Plato explicitly proposes a fifth element (55c) was not available to medieval readers, although by the late twelfth century many would have known of Aristotle’s even more forceful views on the existence and nature of the fifth element, *aithêr*, in his *De Caelo* (*On the Heavens*).³¹⁶ The *Timaeus* shows the difficulties involved in conceptualising “immateriality” as a state of being. Plato was only able to describe the creation of souls in terms of substance. It is thus significant that medieval thinkers inherited not only an intellectual tradition that categorised things into two states of being, materiality [*corporalis*] and immateriality [*incorporalis*], but also a canonical

³¹¹ See Liddell and Scott, *s.n.* “*atomos*” (accessed 11 / 06 / 09)

³¹² See Andrew Gregory’s introduction to Waterfield’s translation of the *Timaeus*, pp. xix-xxii.

³¹³ See sec. 3.1.3, pp. 89-90 above.

³¹⁴ On which, see sec. 3.1.2-3 above.

³¹⁵ Calcidius’ translation was far more widely available than Cicero’s: see Somfai, ‘Reception of Plato’s *Timaeus*’.

³¹⁶ For the relevant passages see Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, 269^b18-270^b32.

text that describes the creation of supposedly immaterial things in material terms. There is no suggestion here that the authors relevant to this study all knew the *Timaeus* (although John and Peter certainly knew parts of it).³¹⁷ There is a strong degree of continuity between classical and medieval thought on the nature of human existence and the Platonic account of soul-body dualism proved to be especially successful in this regard.³¹⁸ Furthermore, medieval writers inherited the intrinsic problems of the concept of immateriality (most importantly, how *being* can be a property of immateriality).³¹⁹ Accordingly, we can expect medieval writers, including the authors of the texts chosen for this study, to reflect the problems raised by the ontological status and behaviour of cognitive phenomena in their texts.

Thus, consider the following examples:

1. This, holding my soul in the fingers of its hand, warned me with its own voice not to turn away from it.

*Hec digito manus sue tenens animam meam, voce propria monuit ne declinarem ab ea.*³²⁰

2. [S]o deep an impression did his manner leave on their hearts, so much sweetness did he instil in them.

*[I]n earum cordibus sui moris impressit memoriam, tantem infudit dulcedinem.*³²¹

In item 1 Peter construes his soul [*anima*] as an object in the hand of God, while in item 2 the author of the *Life of Christina* describes the impact of the behaviour of a mysterious visitor on the nuns at Christina's convent in terms of an impression on their hearts [*cordes*]. In item 1 *anima* is handled like a solid object (indeed, it is held between the fingers of the hand), which tends to suggest that the soul is a relatively small object in relation to the hand in question. This also suggests that, in this case,

³¹⁷ See John, *Letters*, i: 111 and *Metalogicon*, iv: 17. Also see Peter, *Letters*, 50-1.

³¹⁸ This was argued throughout sec. 3.1 and subsections above.

³¹⁹ Indeed, Plato is unable to resolve the problems posed for his account of matter by the possibility of voids: See Plato, *Timaeus* 79a-c and 80c.

³²⁰ Peter, *Letters*, 51.

³²¹ *The Life of Christina*, ¶ 80.

anima is of a certain size, perhaps shape, and certainly, consistency (*i.e.* it is solid enough to be comfortably handled), which, in the present sense, implies that *anima* is subject to mass. Meanwhile, item 2 implies that the nuns' *cordes* (Φ_1) are solid but also soft. More specifically, they are soft enough to be marked if pressure is applied to them, but also solid or stable enough to retain the impressions left on them (unlike, say, water which does not retain impressions for an appreciable length of time). The author may have had something in mind like the mark left in heated wax by a seal or signet ring, although the range of experiences that could have informed this metaphor should not be limited to this.³²²

The main point here is that in these excerpts the cognitive phenomena in question behave as though they are “ordinary” material objects not least in the respect that properties can be imputed to the materials of which they appear to consist. Most obviously, solidity can be ascribed to *anima* in item 1 and solidity, softness, and receptiveness to impressions to *cordes* in item 2. This allows us to think about *anima* and *cordes*, in these instances of their use, in terms of familiar objects in the natural world. For example, we could think of *anima* in item 1 as being handled like a marble and we could think of *cordes* as being like heated wax or clay. More to the point, excerpts 1 and 2 demonstrate a tendency among their respective authors to represent cognitive phenomena in terms of objects and materials that would have been familiar to them from their respective environments.

Moreover, to use Lakoff's and Johnson's term, a range of entailments follow from the ways in which the soul and hearts are represented in these excerpts.³²³ Firstly, the relationship between the soul and hand in item 1 is most probably intended to stand for the relationship between Peter and the Word of God.³²⁴ Hence in beholding the beauty of the Word or God's Creation, Peter is disinclined to leave its sight, in this case in order to correct what he considered to be Nicholas of Clairvaux's erroneous views on the nature of Creation, although he is already resigned to doing so. But more significantly, through this hand metaphor, Peter appears to be suggesting his own vulnerability *in the hands of God* (so to speak): God is freely able to *manipulate* (in both senses) Peter, who presumably thus considered himself to be at God's mercy. To be sure, the hand most directly represents the Word or Creation, the

³²² Constable notes the significance of wax and seal metaphors in ‘Medieval Latin Metaphors’, pp. 8-9.

³²³ For a discussion of what Lakoff and Johnson mean by “entailment” see Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.2.

³²⁴ In the broader context of the passage in question, the subject of *h<a>ec* is something like the beauty of God's Creation or the Word. Of course, indirectly, God is ultimately the subject of all this.

truth of which recommends itself to Peter as a voice (perhaps the Word itself) which warns him not to turn away from it (perhaps as Peter believed Nicholas had done): but the source of the voice, or the Word, is more obviously God's, *qua* the Creator.

Item 2 also revolves around the relationship between God and humanity, although in this case the metaphor is about reform of character whereas in item 1 it was more about maintaining good character. The impression on the hearts of the nuns is left by a mysterious visitor, who, although we cannot be sure as *The Life* cuts short before the episode concludes satisfactorily, seems to have been intended as a cipher for Jesus. In any case, it is clear that what the physical change in the form of the nuns' hearts represents is an unobservable change in their minds brought about by the example of His exemplary character and behaviour at the convent. Or to pose the matter in different terms, the metaphor draws on embodied experiences of phenomena like softness, malleability, and pressure to conceptualise changes in people's mental dispositions towards thought and behaviour.

These points can be pursued further by considering the role of weight in the representation of cognitive phenomena in the source texts. Cognitive phenomena are frequently ascribed the quality of weight. Moreover, they are often represented as affecting other things by virtue of their weight: for instance, weighing things down (see items 4, 6, and 7 below). However, determining precisely what is meant by "weight" in this context is problematic. In modern physics weight is considered to be a force and is calculated in relation to the gravitational pull of a large body of matter (such as the earth). By contrast, in the "science of weights" [*scientia de ponderibus*] which medieval scholars inherited from classical antiquity, weight was understood to reflect the tendency of matter towards a natural state of rest.³²⁵ Motion and rest were viewed as fundamentally different states of being and matter was believed to have an innate tendency towards rest (this idea is related to Aristotelian cosmology in which the four elements are supposed to move towards their natural places in the cosmos).³²⁶ Accordingly, the weight of an object was considered an effect of the strength of its tendency towards rest (determined by the elements of which it consisted) and caused by its movement towards its natural place in the cosmos. As a consequence of this, in

³²⁵ See J. E. Brown. 'The Science of Weights' in *Science in the Middle Ages*, ed. D. C. Lindberg (Chicago, 1978), pp. 179-205, p. 179. Also see Aristotle, *Physics*, 211^a4-5 and 212^b29-35.

³²⁶ For example, see Aristotle, *Physics*, iv: 4, 210^b32 and iv: 5, 212^b29.

the context of medieval science and philosophy, the Latin words for weight, *pondus*, and heaviness, *gravitas*, were used to denote different aspects of the phenomenon of weight: *pondus* to describe the weight of an object at rest (“still-weight”) and *gravis* to describe the weight of an object moving towards its natural place.³²⁷

Some work has been done on the perception of weight in medieval Europe as a natural phenomenon and weight as a measurement, such as in numismatics, and its economic significance.³²⁸ However, nothing appears to have been published on popular or intuitive perceptions of weight among medieval Europeans. The medieval science of weights is not especially relevant to the argument being made here for two key reasons: firstly, there is no clear evidence that any of the relevant authors were learned or interested in it; secondly, this section is primarily concerned with how immediate, “intuitive”, sensory experiences of weight informed the conceptualisation of the mind and cognitive phenomena in the sample of source texts.

In light of the findings of neuro- and cognitive science, as discussed in Chapter Two, it seems reasonable to suppose that intuitive ideas about weight do not develop separately from sensory experiences of weight in the world: rather, abstract ideas develop in response to sensory experiences.³²⁹ Furthermore, abstract ideas can affect people’s sensory experiences in various ways. As Clark has pointed out, people and many animals have a tendency to reconstruct the environment to make it fit with abstract concepts, attitudes, or assumptions: *e.g.* that certain materials like, say, gold or silver, have intrinsic value which can be measured in weight.³³⁰ Accordingly, we should remain mindful of the fact that the built environment almost certainly influences people’s experiences of weight. The availability of scales, standardised measures, and products or things that needed to be weighed in twelfth-century Europe can be expected, *inter alia*, to have informed how the authors relevant here experienced and conceptualised weight. Therefore, sensation and abstract thought do not just overlap in human reason: they respond to each other and thus develop in tandem.³³¹ In this way, neuro- and cognitive science tell us that we should treat

³²⁷ Brown, ‘The Science of Weights’, pp. 179-80.

³²⁸ On the science of weights, see *ibid.* There is some literature on weight in medieval numismatics, but otherwise little else.

³²⁹ Lakoff and Johnson are particularly relevant in this regard: see Chapter Two, sec. 2.1, pp. 44-5 and sec. 2.2.4.

³³⁰ For a discussion of Clark see Chapter Two, sec. 2.1, pp. 46-9.

³³¹ The cue for this conclusion is mainly taken from Lakoff and Johnson: see *Philosophy in the Flesh*, especially pp. 3-8.

weight, as it occurs in the sample of source texts, not just as a matter of abstract representation, but rather as a reflection of how abstract thought interacts with people's immediate embodied experiences of the world.

The following excerpts demonstrate the application of weight to cognitive phenomena, either as a property or as a force exerted by an object (which may also be a cognitive phenomenon) upon them:

3. I myself as mediator urge each of you to repay the honour due and I urge you **to weigh on equal scales** the honesty of the **character** and the case which he has brought before you, and to give honour to the character and judgement in the case.

*[U]trumque ad debitum honorem rependendum medius ipse commoneo vos ut honestatem persone et iustitiam quam habet ad vos equa liberatione **appendatis**, et **persone** honorem, causa iudicium reddatis.*³³²

4. When palace officials come down from palace business, wearied with the range of the affairs of monarchs, they like to stoop to talk with commoners, and **to lighten** with pleasantries **the weight of serious thoughts**.

*Cum a palatii descendunt palatine negociis, regalium operum immensitate defessi, placet eis ad humilium inclinari colloquia, ludicrisque **levare pondera seriorum**.*³³³

5. They do not accurately **weigh** the loss of **conscience** or **good name**.

*Nam iacturam **conscientiae** aut **famae** nequaquam subtiliter **pensant**.*³³⁴

6. [W]hen she **burdened** the many secret places of her **heart** with **sorrow** for her past life.

³³² Peter, *Letters*, 36.

³³³ Walter. *De Nugis*, iii: 1.

³³⁴ John, *Letters*, ii: 190.

[I]nnumeros *cordis* angulos ad praeteritae *deplorationem* vitae *congressit*.³³⁵

7. [T]he **mind** of an honourable man is **weighed down** as often as lack of resources or a temporary crisis has made him a debtor to a man to whom grounds of honour and manners forbid him to respect or love.

[E]t honesti viri *grauatur animus* quotiens eum aut rei familiaris angustia aut articulus temporis illi constituit debitorem, quem ratio honestatis et morum titulus coli prohibet vel amari.³³⁶

In items 3, 4, and 5 weight is clearly construed as a property of cognitive phenomena. In item 3 this applies to *persona* (Φ_1) and to *serii* (Φ_2) in item 4 (translated above as “serious thoughts” although “gravities” may be a good alternative). In item 5, the *loss* [*iactura*] of *fama* [reputation] and *conscientia* [conscience] is construed as a weighable object. However, this seems a roundabout way of saying that *fama* and *conscientia* are weighable objects in as much as their loss from something will affect its weight (hence *fama* and *conscientia*, in this context, must be weighable in themselves). Furthermore, although *iactura* is the subject of the verb, *penso* [to weigh], in the wider context of this letter it is clear that *iactura* is a stand-in or metonym for another subject, namely people, or at least, grammatically speaking, whatever part(s) of a person their *fama* and *conscientia* belong to.³³⁷ John’s concern in this letter is ‘certain friends [*quidam amici*]’ who (or so he thought) showed too much concern for the loss of worldly possessions (including reputation) and not enough for the loss of virtue [*i.e.* “*conscientia*”] or approval [*i.e.* “*fama*”] for their life (to God and perhaps “good” men).³³⁸ Thus, it seems reasonable to treat *fama* and *conscientia* in this instance as objects of a certain weight (as their loss from something else will affect the weight of whatever it is).

³³⁵ Guibert, i: 7.

³³⁶ John, *Letters*, ii: 192.

³³⁷ It becomes apparent as this letter progresses that John probably was thinking of *anima* as the part of the person from which *fama* and *conscientia* can be lost. The cited excerpt follows the current item 5 in letter 190.

³³⁸ John, *Letters*, ii: 192.

Still, can they be treated as cognitive phenomena? Firstly, regarding *fama* it is worth reconsidering Andy Clark’s theory of the extended mind.³³⁹ Clark has argued that cognitive processes are extended from the mind into the environment (which includes other people with their own minds). As a phenomenon, reputation occurs across a wide area and time and involves participation by multiple individuals (among whom, God could presumably be counted). In this regard, it is significant that weight should be attributed to *fama*. Furthermore, it is reasonable to treat *fama* as a secondary cognitive phenomenon in as far as the phenomenon of reputation requires participation from multiple minds (*i.e.* it is a result of cognitive processes across a wide spatial and temporal area). Regarding *conscientia*, this could be viewed as a primary or secondary cognitive phenomenon depending on the circumstances of its use (*i.e.* whether it indicates a discrete object [“conscience”] or cognitive processes). In its classical sense, *conscientia* indicates shared knowledge rather than a specific facet of human mental life [*i.e.* conscience]. Thus, given its use with *fama*, another communal phenomenon, it seems reasonable to assume that in this instance John intended *conscientia* to mean shared knowledge (*i.e.* among a community of individuals or even between an individual and God).³⁴⁰

Having established the status of *fama* and *conscientia* for current purposes, it can be noted that weight is directly and indirectly given as a property pertaining to all of the bulked nouns in items 3-7. That is, directly in item 4, in which *serii* are said to be *pondus* [heavy] and indirectly in item 3, in which *persona* is construed as a weighable substance in that it is the subject of the verb, *appendo*. In item 5, *conscientia* and *fama* are subject to weight in as far as their *loss* can be weighed. In contrast to this, items 6 and 7 involve cognitive phenomena (*cor* in item 6 and *animus* (Φ_1) in item 7) being weighed down or burdened by other things. In item 6 *cor* is burdened [*congero*] by *deploratio* (Φ_2), while in item 7, *animus* is weighed down [*gravo*] by a set of circumstances that involve, among other things, being indebted to an undesirable or perhaps unscrupulous debtor. With regard to items 6 and 7, it should be noted that in order for it to be possible for *cor* and *animus* to be weighed down, they must have some substance of their own. Furthermore, being “weighed

³³⁹ On which see Chapter Two, sec. 2.1, pp. 46-9.

³⁴⁰ Lewis and Short, *s.n. conscientia*; def. 1 A joint knowledge of something, a being privy to, a knowing along with others, privity, cognizance (accessed 16 / 06 / 09). Also, John uses a similar formula in *Letters*, ii: 297: ‘[E]xemplo pernicioso, et quod sicut vestram conscientiam laedit, sic non modice denigrat et famam...’

down” implies that *cor* and *animus* are in some sense hindered (perhaps hindered from a passive tendency, such as buoyancy, or from an action, such as moving freely). Additionally, it is significant that in item 6, the burden on Christina’s *cor* is none other than its own action (*viz.* being sorrowful [*deploratio*]). The result of this is a situation in which a secondary cognitive phenomenon acts as a weight on a primary cognitive phenomenon (which also happens to be the source of the former).

These metaphors are rich with entailments relating to the realms of society, culture, and individual phenomenology: most prominently, they provide reflections on the natures of good character, reputation, conscientiousness, the seriousness of thoughts, and indebtedness. For instance, items 4 and 6 carry the entailment that certain kinds of mental activity are laborious whereas others are more overtly pleasurable (the latter point is explicit in item 4 and implicit in 6) by drawing the relationship between weight and work or burden [*congero*].³⁴¹ In this way, we are invited not merely to think about certain kinds of mental activity in terms of weight, but also about the moral connotations of work and production and how these can apply to human mental life in addition to physical labour. By contrast, items 3, 5, and 7 focus on the usefulness of weight as a means by which to judge the value of something (*e.g.* the quantity or quality of a valuable material), in which respect they seem to draw on the domains of economics and trade. In this way, they provide tidy metaphors for describing how one might go about judging the value of something of no clear substance, in this case good character and reputation: that is, they provide a means for describing with relative brevity and simplicity the nature of a very complex and diffuse sociological phenomena (reputation) and the complex evaluative mental processes whereby people judge good character.

The excerpts examined in this section help to shed light on how people’s embodied experiences of the world influence how they conceptualise and reason about phenomena in it which either lack any apparent substance (*e.g.* social phenomena like reputation or mental processes) or that they believe to be substantive, but yet cannot be clearly understood as ordinary material objects (*e.g.* the soul and mind). Over the course of this section, cognitive and social phenomena have been seen to be described as though they are unremarkable material objects with properties like weight, mass,

³⁴¹ Again, note that “entailment” is a term used by Lakoff and Johnson: see Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.2.

size, solidity, malleability, receptivity to impressions, and so on. Of course, none of this is to say that the authors relevant here really believed that the soul or cognitive phenomena are material objects and hence subject to properties like weight, mass, and so on. As stated above, the point of this discussion is to show how metaphors reflect people's embodied experiences of the world, as Lakoff and Johnson have argued and, moreover, the integral role that the body plays in human mental and social life as shown by neuro- and cognitive science. Perhaps most importantly, it is about breaking down the ancient barrier in western thought that has traditionally separated the body from the mind and culture, which in turn may be taken as an aspect of the nature-culture dichotomy.³⁴²

3.2.3: *Motion, direction, and speed*

This section focuses on the ways in which motion and related phenomena (*i.e.* direction and speed) are used to represent cognitive phenomena in the source texts. Again, the purpose of this discussion is to examine how the representation of banal worldly phenomena in the sample of source texts may be seen to reflect the relationship, as documented by neuro- and cognitive science, between embodied sensory experiences and abstract thought.³⁴³

Motion was a major concern in medieval science from the twelfth century onwards when Aristotelian texts dealing with it became available in the Christian west (most notably Aristotle's *Physics* which was translated into Latin around the mid-twelfth century).³⁴⁴ There are no obvious reasons to believe that any of the authors relevant to this study either knew Aristotle's *Physics* or had any interest in the theories of motion that he offered in it or in his natural science writings in general. Orderic, Guibert, Peter, and the author of *The Life of Christina* do not show any clear interest in Aristotelian natural science in the works relevant to this study or in their

³⁴² For a critique of the nature-culture dichotomy see Lloyd, *Cognitive Variations*, pp. 131-50.

³⁴³ As discussed in Chapter Two, a wide range of evidence has been gathered by scholars working in neuro- and cognitive science which convincingly shows that sensation and abstract thought are intimately connected in human reason and strongly influence each other.

³⁴⁴ A full translation of the *Physics* was ascribed to Gerard of Cremona (c. 1114-87) by his students: see Lindberg, 'The transmission of Greek and Arabic Learning to the West', pp. 65-6. Also see Murdoch and Sylla, 'The Science of Motion'.

other surviving writings.³⁴⁵ Walter does not show any interest in Aristotelian science in *De Nugis*. However, he was educated at Paris in mid-twelfth century and he shows some knowledge and understanding of Aristotelian logic via his use of Porphyry's *Isagoge* in *De Nugis*.³⁴⁶ Whether Walter's knowledge of Aristotle extended to any of his natural science writings is a matter for speculation, although given the time frame (Walter was at Paris by 1154 and may have studied there on and off until the early 1170s³⁴⁷), he probably would not have come across the *Physics*.³⁴⁸ John, who was certainly the best read of the authors being considered here, must have had some understanding of Aristotelian natural science. He knew a good number of Aristotle's logical works, as is evident from the *Metalogicon* and he also seems to have known parts of the *Metaphysics*, parts of which supplemented Aristotle's argument in the *Physics*.³⁴⁹ However, his interest in Aristotle, as might be expected of a writer of the mid-twelfth century, appears to have been mostly limited to the contribution of his logical works to the teaching of the *trivium*.³⁵⁰

Importantly, motion implies a number of other phenomena: most notably orientation or direction (being / going “up” or “down”, “facing” “left” or “right”, “this way” or “that way” and so on) and speed (rate of change in position, or “velocity” in modern physics).³⁵¹ Additionally, motion implies a space, area, or “receptacle” [ὑποδοχή: *hypodochê*] (see *Timaeus*, 49a), in which objects can be in a state of motion. As was noted in the previous section (3.2.2), movement and rest were understood to be fundamentally different states of being in medieval science.³⁵² It may be reasonable to extend this assumption to the authors under consideration here in as far as it seems strongly intuitive to suppose that motion and rest are opposites. This is strictly a matter of speculation. However, it is worth noting the Newtonian alternative that the speed of an object “at rest” is constant (*i.e.* in equilibrium). Hence

³⁴⁵ For a brief discussion of some of the other surviving works of Orderic, Guibert, and Peter see the discussion of the source texts in the Introduction to Part II, pp. 66-8 above.

³⁴⁶ See Walter, *De Nugis*, i: 1 / pp. 2-3, i: 25 / pp. 86-7 and v: 7 / pp. 500-1.

³⁴⁷ See introduction to James' edition of *De Nugis*, pp. xv-xvi.

³⁴⁸ While this text may have been translated in the second half of the twelfth century by Gerard of Cremona, Brian Stock has noted that it was not widely available as a whole until the end of the century: see ‘Science, Technology, and Economic Progress’, p. 40.

³⁴⁹ For John using the *Metaphysics* see Nederman's edition of the *Policraticus*, p. 39, n. 12.

³⁵⁰ As was noted above (see p. 201), prior to the thirteenth century, Aristotle's influence on learning in the medieval west was largely limited to logic. Most of his scientific works were not widely available until the thirteenth century. The editorial subtitle used by McGarry for his translation of the *Metalogicon* is *A Twelfth-Century Defense of the Verbal and Logical Arts of the Trivium*.

³⁵¹ For a discussion of spatial cognition see Lloyd, *Cognitive Variations*, pp. 23-38.

³⁵² See p. 110 above.

in Newtonian mechanics, “rest” in the intuitive sense of the word is impossible.³⁵³ This view of motion was of course not available to medieval scholars. In its absence, it is hard to see how else medieval people could have understood the relationship between motion and rest other than in terms of opposites (this understanding would have been reinforced by the *Physics*, in which Aristotle argues that opposition is a principle of nature).³⁵⁴ Presumably people’s quotidian experiences of the natural world would lead them to this view if nothing else.

There is also an important point to be made here about agency. The psychologist, Steven Pinker, has argued that people tend to think of moving objects in terms of agency, including when moving objects are purely abstract (Pinker cites dots moving around on a blank screen as an example).³⁵⁵ Moreover, he has stressed the importance of apparently self-propelled objects in human reasoning about agency and movement:

People construe certain objects as animate agents. Agents are recognized by their ability to violate intuitive physics by starting, stopping, swerving, or speeding up without an external nudge, especially when they persistently approach or avoid some other object. The agents are thought to have an internal and renewable source of energy, force, impetus, or oomph, which they use to propel themselves, usually in the service of a goal.³⁵⁶

This is relevant here in as far as in some of the excerpts cited below cognitive phenomena are construed as wilful agents determining their own movements and sometimes those of other objects (e.g. as transporters in item 5). As Pinker puts it, they are able to “violate intuitive physics” by moving around of their own accord. The fact that the authors of the source texts were able to conceptualise cognitive phenomena not only in terms of material existence but also as independent agents is significant and worthy of inclusion in the following discussion.

Thus, consider the following excerpts in which cognitive phenomena are construed as sources of their own movements:

³⁵³ Brown notes this in ‘The Science of Weights’, p. 179. This view of motion is summarised in Newton’s first law of motion or “law of inertia”.

³⁵⁴ See Aristotle, *Physics*, 1: 5, 188^a19-189^a9.

³⁵⁵ Pinker, *How the Mind Works*, pp. 321-3.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

1. But when her [Christina's] **mind roamed freely**, sometimes she saw one, more often three lights shining with equal brilliance and splendour.

*Cum vero mens eius liberius evolaret: aliquando num tria sepius videbat lumina equo splendore luceque radiancia.*³⁵⁷

2. That my **soul may go forth** with greater joy **from the prison house of the flesh** into the sight of the most high...

*Verum ut anima de carnis ergastulo laetior exeat ad conspectum Altissimi...*³⁵⁸

3. [A]nd again we pour forth a prayer to God for you [Archbishop Eskil of Lund] that **your holiest soul** may find again **at its going out** the treasures which it has laid up in heaven through the hands of the poor, and that, replenished with the good things of the house of God, it may rejoice with the holy angels in eternal delight.

*[E]t pro vobis orationem fundimus ad Deum ut sanctissima anima vestra thesauros quos in celo posuit per manus pauperum in exitu suo reperiatur, et bonis domus Dei repleta cum sanctis angelis eterna letitia congaudeat.*³⁵⁹

In items 1, 2, and 3 cognitive phenomena are represented as being able to move by their own volition or at least some internal source of motion (e.g. a passive tendency towards rest or their natural place in the cosmos).³⁶⁰ In item 1, Christina's *mens* is said to have "roamed freely" [*liberius evolaret*], although "freely flew away" may be a better translation of this phrase as the verb *evolo* is related to flight.³⁶¹ Hence, it seems likely that the sense of this passage is that Christina's *mens* freely moved

³⁵⁷ *Life of Christina*, ¶ 75: this was cited previously as item 1 in sec. 3.2.1 above.

³⁵⁸ John, *Letters*, i: 8.

³⁵⁹ Peter, *Letters*, 95.

³⁶⁰ It seems relevant to note that in Aristotelian cosmology, the elements are supposed to have a passive tendency to move towards their natural places in the cosmos: for example, see Aristotle, *Physics*, iv: 4, 210^b40-2 and iv: 6, 212^a7-13.

³⁶¹ Lewis and Short give 'to fly out or forth, to fly away, to fly up' for *evolo* (accessed 18 / 06 / 09)

upwards. This, along with the three bright lights that she saw while in this state, is presumably meant to indicate that her *mens* moved closer to the place of God or Heaven. It may also be that Christina's biographer understood the soul to have a passive tendency to move upwards (*i.e.* towards Heaven and God). Meanwhile, items 2 and 3 ascribe the action of leaving [*exeo*] to *anima* (the supine form, *exitus*, is used in item 3). In item 2, it is clear that *anima* is leaving the body, which John describes using the Platonic phrase, "prison-house of the flesh" [*ergastulo carnis*], whereas in item 3 it is not entirely clear what *anima* is supposed to be leaving. However, given the content of the passage as a whole (whatever *anima* is leaving, it is certainly departing for heaven [*caelus*] or the house of God [*domus Dei*]), it seems reasonable to suppose that Peter here means that Eskil's *anima* will leave his body at the point of death and travel to *caelus* and *domus Dei*. Accordingly, items 1-3 project remarkably similar images of the soul or mind actively moving upwards, certainly towards Heaven and God in item 3, and probably also in items 1 and 2.

Meanwhile, the following two excerpts, both taken from Walter's *De Nugis*, raise different issues regarding the capacity of cognitive phenomena to undergo motion of their own accord:

4. Ah, would that I could obtain some such respite! As it is, I fear the confusion of a **mind** which has to **diffuse itself** in **all directions** may lead me into solecisms.

*He michi utinam inducie, ne per multos diffuse mentis radios error soloecismum faciat.*³⁶²

5. He burst through ranks of iron, walls and towers, and **the spirit which carried him to all his victories** became effeminated, nay, infeminated by himself, since it **passed** into the weakness of a woman.

*Vincit ferratas acies, muros et turres, et qui transuehit ipsum animus ad omnes victorias a seipso effeminatur, sed infeminatur, quoniam in femineam transit impotenciam.*³⁶³

³⁶² Walter, *De Nugis*, i: 13.

In item 4, *mens* is said to be able to spread [*diffusus*] its rays [*radii*] outwards, the result of which is errors in speech, or, as seems more appropriate here, written style (*i.e.* solecisms).³⁶⁴ There are two aspects to the movement of *mens* in item 4. Firstly, it is supposed to be projecting rays, which are presumably either of the same or a similar substance to itself, outwards. In this way, it can be viewed as expanding or stretching itself out in a medium or container, or projecting parts of itself through a medium. Secondly, *error*, taken in its immediate sense of “wandering” or “going astray”, implies that *mens* is able to *go off* without any clear purpose or in any determinate direction. On the other hand, in item 5 *animus* acts as a mode of transportation for its owner: [*Q*]ui *transuehit ipsum animus ad omnes victorias*. Thus, *animus* is capable of moving not only itself but also other objects such as a rider (*e.g.* we might think of *animus* as a mounted horse). Furthermore, *animus* is here said to have become effeminated [*seipso effeminatur*] in as much as it passed or crossed over [*transeo*] to a state of female impotence. So, to draw some inferences from the metaphor, *animus* moved from a place representative of male strength to another place representative of female weakness, in which respect it clearly draws on gender stereotypes current in twelfth-century Europe.

Finally, the notion of a wandering soul is used more explicitly by Guibert in the following excerpt:

6. Thou didst **fence in** my **wandering soul** [or mind; cf. *anima / animus*] with rising misfortune against me for such work and with great adversity, and Thou didst **hold me down** with bodily infirmity.

*Emergentibus enim contra me super tali opera infortuniis, et multa **animum evagantum** [sic.] adversitate **cinxisti**, et corporis infirmitate **perssisti** [sic.].*³⁶⁵

Note that Guibert’s mind [*animus*] is fenced in [*cingo*] by God in order to prevent it from going astray or wandering off [*evagor*].³⁶⁶ *Cingo* has a wide range of possible

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, iii: 5.

³⁶⁴ In the passage in question Walter is making an unfavourable comparison between his own style and that of a certain Guichard, a monk of Cluny (d.1137), whom Walter describes as “the Homer of the laity [*laicorum Homerus fuit*]”: see *ibid.*, iii: 5, n. 4.

³⁶⁵ Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, i: 17.

meanings, including to wrap a girdle around a body or to fortify something (*i.e.* by building a defensive barrier around it). However, in all senses *cingo* carries the basic concept of placing a physical *barrier* or *constraint* around something. Hence in item 6 the movement of *animus* is supposed to be restricted by a physical barrier. Furthermore, like *mens* in item 4, *animus* is able to wander off [*evagor*] which tends to suggest movement at a leisurely pace with no clear direction or purpose. Guibert may also be drawing on the common Judaeo-Christian metaphor of the faithful as the flock of the God, the shepherd (especially in Psalm 22(23)).³⁶⁷ Therefore, Guibert's *animus* can be viewed as a sheep in God's flock that has been set boundaries (*i.e.* bodily weakness [*corporis infirmitate*]) by Him. This prevents Guibert going astray (*i.e.* reading pagan literature), or speaking metaphorically, he has been herded by God in the right *direction* or *place* (*e.g.* into a pen).

Primary cognitive phenomena are doing the moving in all of the excerpts cited above (*i.e.* *anima*, *animus*, and *mens*). The importance of this is that it shows that at times the authors of these excerpts conceptualised things like the soul or mind as agents in the environment, capable of moving by their own volition (*i.e.* external force is not necessary to move them). Further investigation would be necessary to determine whether they thought about secondary cognitive phenomena, *qua* products of primary cognitive phenomena, in similar ways (*e.g.* can hope, sorrow, passion, and so on move themselves?). However, based on the material cited in this and the previous two subsections, to the extent that they are secondary to primary cognitive phenomena (or perhaps something else), to be capable of movement by their own volition would not be particularly consistent with their status as products.

In regard to all this, it is briefly worth returning to Steven Pinker's assertion, noted previously, that people have a tendency to view self-propelled objects as animals.³⁶⁸ I would not suggest that the relevant authors literally viewed the soul or mind as animals. However, it is worth bearing in mind the etymological root of the word, animal [*animalis*], in *anima*, which is left over from the ancient belief that lifeless matter is *animated* by an immaterial or highly rarefied soul or spirit (*e.g.* *psuchê*): we might also bear in mind that the Greek word for animal, ζῷον [*zôon*], is

³⁶⁶ Lewis and Short, *s.n.* *cingo* (accessed 19 / 06 / 09)

³⁶⁷ The phrase, '*Dominus pascit me*' is usually translated into English as 'The Lord is my shepherd' (this can be inferred from *pasco*, which means to graze or feed).

³⁶⁸ See p. 118 above. Pinker goes on to note, '[t]hese agents are animals, of course, including humans': *How the Mind Works*, p. 322. Chapter six of Lloyd's *Cognitive Variations* is also relevant on this point.

cognate to the word for life, ζωή [*zôê*], which perhaps reflects an older association between self-propelled matter and life.³⁶⁹

It is clear that in western thought there has long been a tendency towards conceptualising life as something separate from the matter of living beings, such as the soul or spirit, or even *a* life [ἡ ζωή / *vita*]: hence an animal is an animated or *living* being in so far as it consists of *materia* plus *anima* (*i.e.* the animal is the compound product of these two things). Aristotle demonstrates this kind of reasoning for us nicely when he states in *De Generatione Animalium* [*On the Generation of Animals*], ‘the animal is a body with soul or life’, and also in *De Partibus Animalium* [*On the Parts of Animals*], ‘when the soul has departed [the body] there is no longer an animal.’³⁷⁰ This is all relevant in that it highlights a set of etymological and conceptual associations in classical western thought which are to some extent still with us in the present: *e.g. materia + anima = (animalis + vita)*. And in light of this, it should not be even remotely surprising to us that the soul and mind feature in ancient, medieval, and even modern western thought as ostensibly autonomous agents in the world, capable of doing things by their own free will, such as inanimate matter is clearly not able to do. This is entirely consistent with the ancient belief that animals (*inter alia*) are the results of a merger between lifeless matter and a *vitalising* or *animating* force or substance. Indeed, the concepts of a vitalising force or substance, such as the *psuchê*, *anima*, *spiritus*, soul, or ghost, were evidently conceived, in response to embodied experiences like seeing self-propelled blobs of matter in the world, as means of rationalising the phenomenon of life itself.

3.2.4: Conclusion

Modern neuroscience and cognitive science present us with compelling reasons for believing that the human brain provides the substrate for any such representations, and moreover, that the sensory access that these representations provide us to the world is very much mediated via the sensory faculties of the body: in short, we experience the world via our bodies in the terms in which they present the world to us,

³⁶⁹ For more detail see the earlier discussion in sec. 3.1.1, p. 76 above.

³⁷⁰ Aristotle, *De Generatione Animalium*, 738^b20 and *On the Parts of Animals*, 641^a19-20 respectively.

among which may be included our experiences of things like space, proportion, weight, motion, and so on.³⁷¹

This has important consequences for what I am proposing here. It has been seen in this section that mental representations of embodied experiences of the world are not only of value in human mental life as practical knowledge about the workings of the environment: they are also potentially of value in abstract and imaginative mental processes such as metaphor. This fits in with the view of metaphor presented by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*: *i.e.* as a category of cognitive processes, defined by associative reasoning, that are necessarily shaped by individual embodied experiences of the world (natural and cultural). More to the point, this provides us with a method for relating the human body to abstract mental processes and thereby to representations of abstract and speculative thought figured in cultural artefacts such as texts.

The above discussion has been pertinent in this regard in that it has drawn attention to connections between embodied experiences of natural phenomena and abstract ideas and modes of reasoning about the natures of human mental life, social life, and the relationship between humanity and God. This section has shown that even though the authors relevant here may have believed that the mind, soul, and cognitive phenomena were subject to metaphysical properties such as immateriality or transcendence, they were only able to conceptualise these ideas in terms of their embodied experiences of the world. In this way, we are to some extent able to link the authors of the sample of source texts back to the embodied conditions of their respective existences: we can think of them as more than just names attached to texts.

*3.3: Taking an embodied approach to the mind-body relationship*³⁷²

Having provided an account of how embodied experiences inform and shape abstract and speculative reasoning on human mental life in the sample of source texts, this chapter now turns to consider the most fundamental concern of classical western

³⁷¹ The literature relevant here was surveyed in Chapter Two.

³⁷² As stated previously in Chapter Two, sec. 2.2, “mind-body dualism” is a somewhat simplistic label for a fairly broad range of beliefs about the nature of human existence (a range of which were documented in sec. 3.1 of this chapter). I have used *mind* in the title and subtitles of this section: it should be noted, however, that sometimes “soul”, “spirit”, or some other term may be more appropriate labels for the topic of discussion.

psychology as regards the nature of human existence: namely the relationship between the mind (or soul) and body. I should reiterate that it is important here to take the idea of soul-body dualism seriously as a *reasoned* view or belief about the nature of human existence.³⁷³ For whatever reasons, the western concept of soul-body dualism is often treated by proponents of cognitive science as though it is an inherently irrational idea: it is rarely considered in its historical context and it is frequently linked to the seventeenth-century French philosopher, Descartes, as though he alone was responsible for its prevalence in western thought up to the early twentieth century.³⁷⁴

In this section, I intend to investigate the embodied logic or “sense” of belief in the set of ideas which are now usually crammed under the umbrella-term, mind-body dualism, as they occur in the sample of source texts. My key argument in this section is that for medieval Europeans, such as the authors relevant here, mind-body dualism must have made a degree of *embodied sense*. That is, mind-body dualism could not have made sense to medieval people just on the level of abstract reasoning. As discussed in Chapter Two, the findings of neuro- and cognitive science show that abstract ideas, like mind-body dualism, must have some basis in embodied sensory experiences of the “ordinary” world.³⁷⁵ I am not ruling out abstract thought in this account. Instead, as in previous section, my key argument here is that the relevant authors conceptualised the mind-body relationship in response to the interplay between their embodied experiences of the world and the abstract modes of reasoning by which they conceptualised and thought about those experiences.

3.3.1: The separateness of mind, body, and soul

I shall begin by tackling the matter of the separateness of the main components of the human organism as it was conceptualised in premodern western thought: the mind, body, and soul (which, as noted above, is not necessarily the same thing as the

³⁷³ For an earlier discussion of this issue see Chapter Two, sec. 2.1, pp. 49-51.

³⁷⁴ For example, see Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, pp. 33-5, Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, p. 13, and Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, pp. 247-52. Pinker notes the unfair treatment of Descartes by modern scientists in *How the Mind Works*, pp. 77.

³⁷⁵ In particular, I take my cue here from the work of Lakoff and Johnson in *Philosophy in the Flesh*, discussed in Chapter Two, sec. 2.1, pp. 44-7. The whole of Chapter Two is relevant in this regard.

mind).³⁷⁶ To begin, consider the following set of excerpts (the first four have been cited previously) in which the mind, body, and soul, or facets of them, are represented in various ways as self-standing entities:

1. But when her [Christina's] mind [*mens*] roamed freely...³⁷⁷
2. That my soul [*anima*] may go forth with greater joy from the prison house of the flesh [*carnis ergastulum*] into the sight of the most high.³⁷⁸
3. Thou didst fence in my wandering soul [*animus*] with rising misfortune against me for such work and with great adversity, and Thou didst hold me down with bodily infirmity.³⁷⁹
4. [M]y spirit threatens its departure, yet still cleaves to my limbs in the desire and hope of your coming.

*[R]ecessum minatur spiritus, haeret tamen membris in desiderio et spe adventus vestri.*³⁸⁰

5. I have a firm intention, with God's help and so far as he grants, to follow procedure which virtue prescribes and not to lose my soul's salvation in the market of the world by selling it for any temporal gain.

*Fixum est michi, Deo auctore, propositum, quatenus ipse dederit, honestatis formulam sequi et animae salutem in mundi commercio non distrahere ad boni cuiuscumque precium temporalis.*³⁸¹

6. The victory of the flesh is against reason, for man desires the things of God little and those of the world much. But reason, when it is held to, is the

³⁷⁶ See sec. 3.1.1, pp. 76-7 and sec. 3.2.3, pp. 122-3 above.

³⁷⁷ *Life of Christina*, ¶ 75: cited previously as item 1 in sec. 3.2.1.

³⁷⁸ John, *Letters*, i: 8: cited previously as item 2 in sec. 3.2.1.

³⁷⁹ Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, i: 17: cited previously as item 6 in sec. 3.2.3.

³⁸⁰ John, *Letters*, i: 121.

³⁸¹ John, *Letters*, i: 190.

triumph of the soul, for it renders to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.

*Victoria carnis est adversus rationem, quod que Dei sunt minus appetit homo, que mundi maxime. Racio vero, cum tenetur, anime triumphus est; reddit que Cesaris Cesari, Deique Deo.*³⁸²

7. But the winter nights confer by their length not aversion or boredom but sometimes a double blessing. For they afford the body rest and renew the time-worn soul. On top of this they add the liberty to look again upon heavenly things, to inquire into one's own inner depths and also to call friends to mind again... They also conduct souls in their peace and silence 'even to the third heaven' [2 Cor. 12: 2], while they carry holy desires forth beyond the world, beyond the flesh, above the soul, to the regal bodies of the omnipotent Word.

*Hiemales autem noctes sua prolixitate non fastidium aut tedium sed interdum duplex beneficium conferunt. Tribuunt etenim corpori requiem et anime renouant vetustatem. Addunt insuper licentiam revisendi celestia, sua penetrabilia inquirendi, nec non et amicorum reminiscendi... Ducunt etiam sua quiete et silentio animas 'usque ad tertium celum', dum extra mundum, extra carnem, supra animam, ad regales sedes omnipotentis Verbi sancta desideria prouehunt.*³⁸³

There are numerous things going on in these excerpts which make them relevant here. Firstly, the spirit [*spiritus*] and soul [*anima*] are able to leave the limbs [*membra*] or flesh [*caro*] (items 2 and 4 respectively). The spirit, soul, and mind [*mens / animus*] are able to move around freely (items 1-4). In item 6, the flesh [*caro*] is said to inveigh against the soul [*anima*] in as far as it goes against reason [*ratio*] which is apparently an inherent quality or possession of the soul [*animae triumphus est*]. Therefore, the body and soul can be viewed as having incompatible tendencies. And finally in item 7 (and in contrast to item 6), rest [*requies*] is said to be beneficial to the

³⁸² Walter, *De Nugis*, ii: 1.

³⁸³ Peter, *Letters*, 128.

body [*corpus*] and soul [*anima*], in which case the natures of the body and soul are compatible although they are still discrete entities.

Given the importance of the body in the scheme of Christian Salvation, item 5 is somewhat problematic. For present purposes, the key point of this excerpt is that John names the soul [*anima*] as the beneficiary of salvation: that is, it is the soul, rather than the body or person as a whole, which is subject to salvation (and presumably also damnation). It is extremely doubtful that John in any way saw this statement as deviating from orthodox Western Christian interpretations of the doctrine of the Resurrection.³⁸⁴ As the Resurrection will happen at the end of time, there is no need for the body to have an afterlife until that moment. Prior to the end of time, as fashionable scholastic debates had it, only the soul need reside in heaven, hell, and later in purgatory. Accordingly, John's view that the salvation of the soul occurs separately from the salvation of the body is firmly in kilter with contemporary and later scholastic thought.³⁸⁵ What is most revealing about this here is that, according to John's thinking, the soul could be saved, or damned, and have a separate existence in heaven, or hell, long before either possibility became open to the body.

Thus, in all of these excerpts (items 1-7) cognitive phenomena are represented as logically or ontologically discrete things. This may be in as much as they are able to move freely (items 1-4), separate themselves from the body or flesh (items 2 and 4), be saved independently of the body (item 5), subject to their own nature which is different and indeed goes against that of the flesh (item 6), and gain different benefits from rest to those of the body (item 7). In each case they are conceptualised as *things* with natures, tendencies, and properties that are their own: *i.e.* not shared with the body or anything else.

Bearing this in mind, as well as the ways in which cognitive phenomena are often represented in the sample of source texts as self-propelled wilful agents, it seems quite possible that the relevant authors' beliefs and ideas about the mind and cognition were influenced by their embodied experiences of living beings in the world.³⁸⁶ This is not to say that these authors (or anybody else) innately formed the concepts of the soul, spirit, or mind-body dualism in response to their first

³⁸⁴ On the Resurrection of the body see Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, Vidal 'Brains, Bodies, Selves, and Science', and Morrison, *Excrement in the Middle Ages*, pp. 41-4.

³⁸⁵ On the afterlife of the soul see E. Cohen, *The Modulated Scream: Pain in late Medieval Culture* (Chicago, 2010), pp. 180-7.

³⁸⁶ See the earlier discussion at sec. 3.2.3, pp. 122-3.

experiences of living beings. The set of ideas that they entertained about the nature of the mind and its relationship with the body clearly developed in western thought over many centuries, becoming increasingly sophisticated and abstract (as discussed in sec. 3.1). Instead, my argument here is that the range of beliefs and ideas about the mind, cognition, and the mind-body relationship which can be found in the sample of source texts may be accounted for in terms of interplay between socio-cultural biases favouring those ideas in the first place and embodied experiences of self-propelled, and apparently wilful, living beings. Furthermore, according to this account, the said socio-cultural biases must have developed in the first place in response to embodied experiences of self-moving things in the world. It seems a small logical step to advance from noticing that some things in the world move by themselves while others don't to the conclusion that self-moving things must have something that non-self-moving things don't: *i.e.* a source of agency; *viz.* “mind”, “spirit”, or “soul”.

In this way, a reasonably strong case can be made for grounding key ideas within the ancient tradition of western psychology, such as the soul, spirit, and mind-body dualism, in people's embodied experiences of the world. Contrary to the teachings of premodern western psychology, the basis of ideas like the soul, spirit, and mind-body dualism may thus be seen to be in the embodied conditions of human existence rather than a supposed capacity of human beings to engage directly with a transcendent and eternal reality through strictly abstract modes of rational thought.³⁸⁷

3.3.2: *Partitioning the mind*

In light of the findings of the previous section, I shall now discuss an anecdote from Guibert's *De Vita Sua* in which, recounting a period when he studied at the abbey of Bec under St Anselm (1033-1109), he imputes the following views on the structure of the mind [*spiritus*] to Anselm:

1. His teaching was to divide the mind in a threefold or fourfold way, to treat the operations of the whole interior mystery under the headings of appetite, will, reason, and intellect.

³⁸⁷ This argument is strongly influenced by the work of Lakoff and Johson in *Philosophy in the Flesh* (as discussed in Chapter Two, sec. 2.1) and also Lakoff's collaborative work with Núñez in *Where Mathematics Comes From*.

*Is itaque tripartito aut quadripartito mentem modo distinguere docens, sub affectu, sub voluntate, sub ratione, sub intellectu commercia totius interni mysterii tractare.*³⁸⁸

Anselm's way of dividing *spiritus* (Φ_1) into parts sits firmly within the tradition of Platonic psychology: indeed, Guibert makes it clear that the schema noted in item 1 was not Anselm's own.³⁸⁹

The main point of interest about this schema for present purposes is its utility, both for Anselm (assuming Guibert's report is accurate) and Guibert who describes it with approval. Thus, to state the key question bluntly, why would Anselm believe, or teach, his students that the human spirit can be divided into three or four parts: *affectus*, *voluntus*, *ratio*, and *intellectus* (all Φ_1)? Firstly, it is necessary to determine whether Anselm or Guibert believed that this schema reflected the reality of the spirit (*i.e.* that it really is or can be divided into three or four parts) or rather that it was a conceptually useful way of thinking about the spirit, but not representative of its actual existence: *i.e.* the spirit is a homogenous entity, which, for certain intellectual purposes, can be divided into distinct segments.

This matter becomes clearer as Guibert's account progresses:

2. By a resolution, based on clear analyses, of what I and many others thought to be one, he showed that appetite and will are not identical, although it is established by evident assertions that in the presence of reason or intellect they are practically the same.

*[E]t quae una a plerisque et a me ipso putabantur certis divisionibus resoluta, non idem duo prima fore monstrabat, quae tamen accedentibus quarto vel tertio eadem mox esse promptis assertionibus constat.*³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, i: 17.

³⁸⁹ '[I]t was plain however, that he did not originate this, but got it from books at hand which did not so explicitly deal with these matters [*quae tamen non ex se, sed ex quibusdam contiguis voluminibus, at minus patenter quidem ista tractantibus eum habuisse constaret*]': Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, i: 17 / Benton, p. 90. Platonic psychology was discussed previously in sec. 3.1.1.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, i: 17.

It seems reasonably clear from this that Anselm, and eventually Guibert, believed that the spirit could in reality be divided into parts at least in as far as these could be discerned by scholastic analysis. But additionally, in order for these labels to have made embodied sense they must somehow have correlated with Theobald's and Guibert's conscious experiences of themselves and other people in the world.

It is significant that this schema allowed Anselm and Guibert to identify a set of cognitive phenomena as the causes of their manifestations in human consciousness and behaviour. So, for instance, by this account a part of the human spirit, which can be named *voluntas*, is sufficient to account for conscious experiences of the will and observable instances of wilful behaviour in the world. In other words, wilful behaviour is caused by a discrete entity in the world, namely will, which can be treated as synonymous with the phenomena that it causes. Therefore, the embodied basis of this idea may be seen, at the very least, in conscious experiences of free will and also in observations of other people or animals apparently exercising their free will. This can be tied in with the point made earlier that the ideas of the soul, spirit, and mind-body dualism may have an embodied basis in observations of self-propelled objects.³⁹¹ Hence it may be that it was not only conscious experiences of their own affection, will, reason, and intellect that led Anselm and Guibert to accept the utility of partitioning the soul along these lines, but also observation of other beings in the world which exhibit behaviour which is best understood in terms of them also having affection, will, reason, and intellect: *i.e.* other people and to a lesser extent some animals.

If this is the case, however, then Anselm's tri- or quadripartite schema raises some difficult questions regarding precisely how it accounts for phenomena that it does not name. For instance, how could it account for *spes* without identifying a part of *spiritus* with or as *spes*? Presumably Anselm and Guibert would have accepted that there are such things as hopes in the world so why not also a part of the spirit that specifically causes hopes? Or would they have charged one of the four named facets of the spirit with responsibility for the production of hopes in the world? Perhaps Anselm would have tackled this difficulty in the latter manner by drawing a distinction similar to that posed here between primary and secondary cognitive phenomena: hence *affectus*, *voluntas*, *ratio*, and *intellectus* could be construed as Φ_1

³⁹¹ See sec. 3.2.3, pp. 118 and 122-3, and also sec. 3.3.1, pp. 128-9.

and all other qualitative mental phenomena as Φ_2 because the former cause the latter. These issues cannot be resolved here: however, it is worth noting that they were pointed out in antiquity by Aristotle in *De Anima* in criticism of Plato's theories of the soul.³⁹² Additionally, in posing a tri- or quadripartite schema of the human spirit, Anselm was probably also influenced by attitudes towards those numbers in medieval philosophy, science, medicine, and theology.³⁹³

Another issue that this schema appears to have addressed for Anselm and Guibert is their concerns about the correct management of the person as whole, including the body. Thus, prior to items 1 and 2 Guibert states:

3. While he was still prior at Bec, he admitted me to his acquaintance, and though I was a mere child of most tender age and knowledge, he readily offered to teach me to manage **my inner self** [alt. my inner man / person], how to consult the laws of reason in the government of the body.

*Qui cum in prioratu praelibati coenobii adhuc ageret, suae me cognitioni ascivit, et omnino puerulum, et in summa et aetatis et sensus teneritudine positum, qualiter **interiorem meum hominem** agerem, qualiter super regimine corpusculi, rationis jura consulerem, multa me docere intentione proposuit.*³⁹⁴

In light of this, the meaning and purpose of Anselm's theory on the composition of *spiritus* alters somewhat. Firstly, knowing the composition of *spiritus* is apparently advantageous in as far as it improves "management" or "conduct" [*ago*] of, as Guibert puts it, one's "inner humanity" [*hominem interiorem*]: note that this was probably intended as an agrarian metaphor in that *ago* immediately means to drive or herd animals hence *interiorem hominem* is being driven or impelled like a domesticated

³⁹² See Aristotle, *De Anima*, 432^a22-432^b6. Although this text was not widely known or available in Western Europe until the thirteenth century, the objection in question seems a fairly "common-sense" one and as such, we should not rule out the possibility, or perhaps even likelihood, that it occurred to many medieval thinkers who had not read or picked it up from *De Anima*.

³⁹³ The numbers three and four were most obviously significant in medieval Europe as the numbers of the Trinity and the four elements and humours respectively: these could also be associated with the number of angles pertaining to the two most basic geometrical shapes, the triangle and square. There has been a relatively continuous tradition of numerical mysticism in Europe from the Greeks up to the present: see *s. n.* "numerology", *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*. Additionally, Esther Cohen independently makes the same observation in regard to attitudes towards pain in late medieval medical discourse in *The Modulated Scream*, pp. 156-7.

³⁹⁴ Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, i: 17. The Anselm in question was prior and then abbot at Bec between 1063-1093 and Archbishop of Canterbury 1093-1109.

animal. Furthermore, it follows from items 1 and 3 that Anselm had taught that *ratio* was the best judge of bodily conduct, presumably by contrast with *intellectus*, *affectus*, and *voluntas*. If so, this sets up an important, metaphorical relationship between the body and *spiritus*: namely, that the body is under the “government” [*regimen*] of the spirit. We might go further by stating that the spirit is, in effect, ruler or king [*rex*] of the body. These issues will be explored further in following chapter in regard to the “body politic” metaphor.³⁹⁵

At present, it will suffice to note that Anselm and Guibert clearly viewed bodily control as a function of the spirit in as far as they construed it as a collective of functioning parts, each responsible for overseeing different aspects of cognition and behaviour. As such, terms ordinarily used to describe control as a phenomenon extended across areas wider than the individual human organism (e.g. “driving” [*agens*], “consulting” or “advising” [*consulens*], “controlling” or “governing” [*regens*]) could be appropriately used by Guibert to discuss the internal mechanisms controlling the overall behaviour of the individual human organism. The parts of the spirit are able to apply force to control the individual [*ago*]: they can be consulted or sought out as advisors [*consulo*] (the wording of item 3 implies that there is an *exteriorem hominem* which *should*, although need not necessarily, consult its counterpart, the *interiorem hominem*). Finally, the parts of the *spiritus*, individually or together, are able to control the individual in an organised fashion [*regimen*] as opposed to, say, randomly exerting force with no guiding or overall purpose. There is also a strong trace of ancient Stoic thought in this, specifically as regards the separation of the appetite and will, such as was recommended by the Stoics in order for the individual to obtain an ultimate form of embodied freedom from the trappings of the world.³⁹⁶

Although Anselm’s theory of the composition of the soul has a clear basis in western psychology from the Greeks onwards (particularly in Platonism), it can also be understood in terms of Anselm’s more direct experiences of his own mental life. The embodied view of the mind, discussed in Chapter Two, strongly suggests that Anselm would not have identified *affectus*, *voluntas*, *ratio*, and *intellectus* as the parts of the soul if he did not have embodied experiences of things to which he could apply

³⁹⁵ See Chapter Four, sec. 4.3.

³⁹⁶ On the influence of Stoic thought in the medieval west see Lapidge, ‘The Stoic inheritance’.

these labels.³⁹⁷ As noted above, this theory of the soul was not originally Anselm's. Neither were the labels *affectus*, *voluntas*, *ratio*, and *intellectus*, the conceptual and semantic histories of which stretch back far beyond the late eleventh century. Nevertheless, Anselm and Guibert both found value in this theory, undoubtedly because it in some way fitted with their consciousness experiences of themselves and probably also their perceptions of the behaviour of other people. Furthermore, it clearly had useful applications in the world for both men, especially as a means of improving self-control, in which regard it was not merely an abstract theory: it was a means of self-improvement.

3.3.3: Conclusion

In brief, my argument in this section is that premodern western beliefs and ideas about the nature of the mind and the composition of the human organism had a partial basis in people's embodied experiences of the world. I am in no way suggesting that any of the beliefs and ideas discussed in this section are innate. It should be clear from the content of sec. 3.1 that the views of the authors considered here on the mind, cognition, and mind-body relationship were to a significant degree underpinned by an ancient tradition of western psychology.³⁹⁸ Neither embodied reasoning nor cultural biases are sufficient to account for the development of the range of beliefs and ideas that constitute what I have described in this chapter as premodern western psychology. Instead, what is needed is an appreciation of how these two elements influence each other and so develop in tandem. The mutual influence of embodied reasoning and cultural biases is nicely exemplified by Anselm's theory of the soul discussed above. In this case, Anselm can be seen to be borrowing terms and concepts from well-established traditions of thought on the nature of the mind because he could relate them to his experiences of his own mental life. Anselm's *choice* of terms and concepts, and the theory which he spun from them, however derivative, must have had some basis in his immediate conscious experiences of himself and the world.

I shall explore the link between mind, body, and culture further in the next two chapters. At present, it will suffice to conclude that the various beliefs, ideas, and

³⁹⁷ For relevant discussion see Chapter Two, sec. 2.1.

³⁹⁸ I clarified the sense in which I use the term, "psychology", in n. 1 of this chapter.

theories about the mind that have been surveyed in this section provide insights into how the authors of the sample of texts experienced their own minds and bodies, and the world around them. These beliefs, ideas, and theories undoubtedly had a wide range of potential applications and significances in the socio-cultural environment of twelfth-century Europe, only some of which can be recovered by modern historical scholarship. To this, it can be added that beliefs and ideas about the mind such as these are probably advantageous in that they provide people with representations of mental processes and the mind which can help them to form theories about their own and other people's minds which have potentially useful applications in human social life as well as in helping people to manage and modify their own behaviour and habits in relation to their personal morality and goals and also those of the societies in which they live. This at least explicitly fits with Anselm's theory of the spirit as it is related by Guibert and it also accords with Dennett's view that the human mind makes use of self-stimulating cognitive and behavioural (especially linguistic) routines to improve problem-solving reasoning.³⁹⁹

3.4: Final conclusion

Throughout the history of western thought, beginning with the Greeks, there has been a strong tendency to conceptualise, describe, and discuss human cognition in abstraction from the body and the wider world. Today it is still normal in everyday language to talk about the mind or "psyche" as though these things are logically, and even physically, discrete from the body even though modern neuro- and cognitive science have shown that neither can be the case. Rather, as discussed in Chapter Two, these disciplines have shown that the material and structural properties of the human body, along with environmental stimuli, are causally sufficient and necessary to bring about human mental life. Accordingly, it is no longer intellectually tenable to think of the mind (including its functions and effects) as being logically, and even less physically, discrete from the body and environment. Instead we need to have some understanding of how the mind and body develop in tandem with each other, and to some extent in response to environmental stimuli, and the consequences of this for human reason.

³⁹⁹ See Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, pp. 193-99 and 275-80.

Therefore, it is now necessary to turn the dualism of premodern western psychology on its head by asking how people's embodied experiences of the mind could lead them to entertain the view that the mind is physically discrete and separable from the body. I have tried to supply some of the answers in this chapter, firstly by outlining the development and transmission of the set of ideas underpinning soul-body dualism in western thought from Greek antiquity up to the twelfth century (sec. 3.1), secondly by examining how cognitive phenomena are represented in the sample of source texts in terms of how the body experiences and represents the world to itself (sec. 3.2), and thirdly by considering the embodied rationality of soul-body dualism in the context of twelfth-century Western Europe (sec. 3.3). In taking this course, it has been shown that the dualistic concept of the mind integral to premodern western psychology arose from complex interactions between people's embodied experiences of the mind and a socio-cultural environment which predisposed them to view the mind as a self-standing entity, logically and ontologically separable from the body.

Chapter Four

The Body

This chapter builds on the findings of the previous one by examining how the body is represented and conceptualised in abstraction from, and in relation to, the mind and cognition in the sample of source texts. The purpose of following this course is to explore the interacting influences of mind and body on the representation and conceptualisation of human existence in the source texts. I shall make use of relevant theory from neuro- and cognitive science to help to illustrate this point.⁴⁰⁰

This chapter also deals with the socio-cultural significance of the body, particularly as regards the culture of gesturing in the medieval west and other forms of non-verbal communication, including potentially unwitting forms of bodily communication such as facial expressions and posture. As will be discussed below, one way in which the mind, body, and culture can be seen to interact is through witting and unwitting “body language” of this sort. In this way, this chapter draws into question the validity of the distinction, often widely held but unstated in western academic literature, between *biology* and *nature*, on the one hand, and *society* and *culture* on the other. As noted previously, I take my cue here from the multidisciplinary scholar, Lloyd, who has recently challenged the validity of these distinctions as they occur in modern western thought in his book, *Cognitive Variations* (2007).⁴⁰¹ I shall have more to say on Lloyd’s work in the conclusion to this chapter. For now, it will suffice to say that in addition to problematising the distinction between mind and body, I also intend this chapter to problematise the distinction between biology and culture as it is commonly entertained in modern western thought. This sets up the key theme of the next and final chapter of this study, which explores the interplay between mind, body, and culture in the sample of source texts.

⁴⁰⁰ Much of the relevant theory was discussed in Chapter Two. Some supplementary work is also cited accordingly.

⁴⁰¹ This was noted earlier in the Introduction to Part II. For direct reference see Lloyd, *Cognitive Variations*, chapter seven.

4.1: *Body parts*

This section focuses on the representation and conceptualisation of the make-up of the body. A key point which will be made here is that the make-up of the body is conceptualised in the source texts in terms of two categories of things: discrete *structures* (e.g. limbs, bones, and the body itself) and continuous *substances* (e.g. flesh, blood, or the spirit). In order to demonstrate this, I shall make use of a distinction held in modern linguistics between “mass” and “count” nouns, the significance of which will be discussed below shortly (see p. 141).⁴⁰² This distinction helps to account for a feature of Western European languages in terms of a non-conscious cognitive tendency which leads speakers of those languages (at least) to conceptualise their experiences of things in the world as being either discrete structures or continuous substances. The value of this approach is that it offers a way of connecting the ways in which the body is represented in the sample of source texts to their respective authors’ cognitive responses to their experiences of the body in the world. In this way, it will be seen below that the relevant authors most frequently, if not invariably, thought about the composition and nature of the body, and by extension the human person, in terms of structures and substances which, additionally, perform various *functions* by virtue of their properties *qua* structures and substances. The findings of this section will be explored further in the next, sec. 4.2, which focuses on how the representation of the body in spatial environments carries socio-culturally significant messages or symbolism.

The following excerpt is taken from a letter ascribed to Theobald, the archbishop of Canterbury (1139-61), and addressed to Henry II:

1. And if I may speak of my own case, be moved also by my desolation; for by reason of my age and infirmity, I shall not be able to wait for your coming that I yearn for, “for my flesh is wasted and my bone cleaves to my skin”; my spirit threatens its departure, yet still cleaves to my limbs in the desire and hope of your coming. It waits and hopes and turns a deaf ear meanwhile to the

⁴⁰² My source for this distinction is Steven Pinker who discusses it in *The Stuff of Thought* (New York, 2007), pp. 167-74.

summons of nature; it refuses to close its *eyes* till it has seen your face. The sum of my prayers and my desires is that you will return as soon as is conveniently possible. [My italics]

*[N]e propriam praetereamus moveat animum vestrum desolate mea; qui prae aetate et aegritudine desideratum adventum vestrum diu non potero expectare. “Pelli meae consumptis carnibus adhaesit os meum” [cf. Job, 19: 20⁴⁰³]; recessum minatur spiritus, haeret tamen membris in desiderio et spe adventus vestri; expectat quidem et sperat, et interim aurem surdam praestat vocanti naturae et recusant oculos claudere nisi praevisa facie vestra. Summa itaque precum et desiderii mei est ut quam cito opportune poteritis redaetis.*⁴⁰⁴

This letter is followed by another in a similar vein:

2. My flesh is worn away and my limbs are exhausted by age and toil, while long and grievous sickness tells me that my end is very near. I hoped to *look* upon your *face*, desired so long, before I die, and had resolved myself in person, with God who knows my inmost heart for witness, to commend to you those whom He had entrusted to my charge here in your realm [alt. **and those in your realm whom God had entrusted to me, Himself overseer and witness of this, I had resolved to commend to you in your presence**]. But seeing that I am summoned so quickly to His judgement, before whose tribunal I shall soon stand one and all, bowing my heart low before your royal feet, I address your serene highness in these letters before God the judge of all, and earnestly entreat you that you will deign to hear your faithful servant, whose loyalty towards you has never grown cold, now at the hour of his death. [My italics]

Attrita est caro ea et tam aetate quam laboribus prefatigati sunt artus, et aegritudo gravis et diuturna dierum meorum finem in brevi adesse denuntiat. Desideratam diu faciem vestram videre sperabam antequam moriar, et eos

⁴⁰³ Job 19: 20: ‘[P]elli meae consumptis carnibus adhesit os meum et derelicta sunt tantummodo labia circa dentes meos...’

⁴⁰⁴ John, *Letters*, i: 121.

*quos meae custodiae in regno vestro commendaverat Deus, ipso inspectore et teste, vobis praesentialiter decreveram commendare. Sed quia ad eius examen citius vocor, ante cuius tribunal in brevi stabimus omnes, serenitatem vestram, regios corde provolutus ad pedes, litteris coram Deo iudice omnium praesentibus alloquor, attentius supplicans ut fidelem vestrum, cuius in vos numquam devotione tepuit, agentem in extremis dignemini exaudire.*⁴⁰⁵

Both excerpts contain a wide range of ideas about the nature of the body as well as presenting a striking image of the dualistic nature of human life and existence: specifically, that the body is animated by a transcendent spirit which leaves it at the point of death.

For present purposes, the sentences that stand out the most are:

[F]or by reason of my age and infirmity [*aegritudine*], I shall not be able to wait for your coming that I yearn for, “for my flesh is wasted and my bone cleaves to my skin [*Pelli meae consumptis carnibus adhaesit os meum*—Job, 19: 20]. [Item 1]

My spirit threatens its departure, yet still cleaves to my limbs [*membra*] in the desire and hope of your coming.⁴⁰⁶ [Item 1]

‘My flesh [*caro*] is worn away and my limbs are [*praefatigati sunt artus*] exhausted by age and toil, while long and grievous sickness tells me that my end is very near.’ (Item 2)

Theobald or perhaps John’s choice of biblical citation is particularly significant and discussed further in the next chapter.⁴⁰⁷ Of more immediate interest are the senses of cohesion and wasting in these excerpts. This is particularly clear from the use of the verbs *adhaesio* and *haereo*, which give the impression of different materials cohering to form complex structures. In this way, the skin [*pellis*], flesh [*caro*], bone [*os*], and spirit [*spiritus*] of the text can be viewed as cohering among each other to form

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, i: 135.

⁴⁰⁶ This excerpt was cited and discussed earlier as item 4 in sec. 3.3.1.

⁴⁰⁷ See Chapter Five, sec. 5.2, pp. 222 and 226 below.

complex structures such as Theobald's limbs [*membrae* and *arti*], his body, and also his very person (*i.e.* Theobald, the *individual*).

As noted above, a distinction made in modern linguistics between “count” and “mass” nouns can shed light on this.⁴⁰⁸ Mass nouns refer to things that are viewed as continuous and measurable (*e.g.* by weight, size, or mass) substances and count nouns to things that are viewed as discrete and countable (*i.e.* by number) structures. So, for example, in modern English “water” is a mass noun because water is generally viewed as a measurable substance rather than a kind of structure in the world: hence if two quantities of water are added together we are left with “water” or “more water” rather than “waters” or “two waters”. By contrast, a count noun is used to describe a glass of water because the glass is viewed as a particular kind of structure: or in other words, the glass is a glass by virtue of it having certain structural properties (*e.g.* being a water-tight container). Therefore, if one glass of water is added to another, then there are “glasses of water” or “two glasses of water” because the focus is on the glass as a discrete structure rather than water as a continuous substance. This distinction is useful here because it helps to highlight an underlying cognitive basis to linguistic conventions grounded in people's immediate experiences of the material world (keeping in mind that the body is very much a part of the material world).

Considered in these terms, *membra* and *artus* [*prae-fatigati sunt artus*] seem to behave as count nouns in items 1 and 2, which is to say they are conceptualised as discrete objects as opposed to continuous substances. Structure and function are the crucial factors here. Discrete objects, such as limbs, tend to be viewed as what they are by virtue of them *having* structural and functional properties. For instance, we do not view part of a hand as *some hand*, presumably because it has neither the structural nor functional properties of a hand (*e.g.* it does not have four fingers and an opposable thumb and it cannot pick things up). Accordingly, we would view it as a substance rather than a hand (*e.g.* flesh or bone), even though it previously formed part of a hand, because it lacks crucial properties that pertain to hands as we view them. *Spiritus* in item 1 is probably also intended to behave as a count noun, like *membra* and *arti* above, in that it is construed as an autonomous cognizant agent (Φ_1) which is actively cohering with the substance of Theobald's body for a preconceived *purpose*: namely, in hope of witnessing Henry's return to England.

⁴⁰⁸ Again, for more information on this distinction see Pinker, *The Stuff of Thought*, pp. 167-74.

In this way, as highlighted in the last chapter, the spirit is discrete in this excerpt for a similar reason to why animals tend to be thought of in western thought as discrete individuals (*i.e.* countable objects): namely, because they are able to act on their own volition, or more specifically in this case, make reasoned decisions about whether to move or keep themselves still.⁴⁰⁹ There is no suggestion here that Theobald believed that his spirit would leave his body following his death as a material object or in some other kind of embodied state: but certainly this is how he conceptualised the movement (*i.e.* in terms of a material object moving itself around in the world) even if he believed to the contrary that disembodied spirits were completely free of the material conditions of existence.

By contrast, *caro* and *os*, as they occur in items 1 and 2, seem to behave as mass nouns in that they are construed as substances cohesive unto themselves. Hence a quantity of one of them can be added to, or subtracted from, an initial quantity of the same substance without affecting the ontological status of the resulting object. For example, if more *caro* is added to an initial quantity of *caro*, then we still have *caro* (as opposed to *duo caro* or *carnes*). The Latin *os* (like the English “bone”) may act as a mass or count noun depending on context. In this case, however, Millor and Brooke seem to have translated the *os* in the Job citation as a mass noun (*i.e.* “my bone cleaves to my skin”), hence this is the sense taken here.

The mass- and count-noun distinction bears similarities to Lakoff’s and Johnson’s notions of ontological and structural metaphor.⁴¹⁰ Considered along these lines, mass nouns may be thought of as expressions of ontological metaphor in that they construe certain kinds of thing in the world as cohesive substances, albeit with no clearly defined boundaries. Meanwhile, count nouns may be viewed as structural metaphors in that they imbue their referents with structural properties which in turn have clear functional *entailments* (*e.g.* hands have functional properties, such as being able to carry objects, by virtue of their structural properties).⁴¹¹ Mutability is also important to this in that mass nouns are not fussy about the size, shape, mass, or functionality of their referents, while count nouns are strictly so. And furthermore, they roughly correspond to analogue and digital modes of quantification: *i.e.* mass

⁴⁰⁹ The relationship between conceptual thought on animals and cognitive phenomena was discussed in Chapter Three, sec. 3.2.3, pp. 118 and 122-3, and also 3.3.1, pp. 128-9.

⁴¹⁰ See Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.1.

⁴¹¹ Again, note that “entailment” is Lakoff’s and Johnson’s term: it is explained in Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.2.

nouns relate to things which are quantified by measurement along a continuous scale (e.g. weight, size, or mass) whereas count nouns relate to objects which are quantified numerically as discrete units. In this way, the mass and count noun distinction helps to show how a non-conscious cognitive tendency to conceptualise the material contents of the world in terms of two categories of “stuff” influenced how John and Theobald conceptualised and represented the human body in language.

Furthermore, the count and mass noun distinction sheds light on a conceptual link in item 1 between the *health* [*sanus*] of the body and its substances and structures. This excerpt indicates that the cohesion of the body as a whole, namely as the structure identifiable as the individual, Theobald, is crucial to the health of the latter. The loss of cohesiveness among the body’s structures and substances results in a decline in Theobald’s health or well-being. Hence item 1 indicates strong conceptual links between wholeness and health and, conversely, dispersal and death.⁴¹² This is particularly apparent from the emphasis placed on the wasting [*consumptus*] of skin and flesh in the text. Citing Job 19: 20, Theobald associates the loss of body mass, or weight (which had left his skin clinging closely to his bones: “[F]or my flesh is wasted [*consumptus*] and my bone cleaves to my skin [*caro*]”) with poor health, pain, and proximity to death. There may be an experiential element in Theobald’s choice of biblical metaphor since in this context *consumptus* (from the verb to swallow, *consumo*) suggests that weight loss is *like* being consumed or eaten: hence here it has the metaphorical entailment, *losing weight is like being eaten up*.⁴¹³ To be sure, this formula is not Theobald’s: the Latin, in particular, is Jerome’s. However, this does not reduce the need to consider why Theobald (or John) chose this metaphor, to express Theobald’s experiences of weight-loss and his aging body.

The experiential element of Lakoff’s and Johnson’s theory of metaphor is potentially helpful here.⁴¹⁴ Theobald’s letter (item 1) suggests that he conceptualised the wasting of his body in terms of eating (*i.e. losing weight is like being eaten away*). So it seems entirely possible that the meaningfulness of this metaphor to Theobald was based on similarities between his experiences of eating, weight loss, and presumably also aging. For example, body mass that has been lost for whatever

⁴¹² This fits with the later Aristotelian tradition of attributing pain to ruptures in the continuity of human existence (bodily and spiritual): see Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, p. 175. Also note that the notions of health and “well-being” are explored in more detail in Chapter 5, sec. 5.1.3, pp. 209-12.

⁴¹³ On metaphorical entailments see the discussion of Lakoff and Johnson in Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.2.

⁴¹⁴ See Chapter Two, sec. 2.2 and subsections and Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, chapters 15 and 29.

reasons and food that has been swallowed or eaten could both seem to disappear (*i.e. moved out of sight*). In this way, experiences of disappearance and weight loss may potentially “cross wires” thereby making metaphors that link them together valid among people for whom this experiential parallel has at some point become apparent (which is not to discount other possible common entailments from weight loss and eating).

Again, it should be stressed that this metaphor is borrowed from the Vulgate Bible which provides many precedents for using *consumo* or *consumptus* in this way.⁴¹⁵ The force of the metaphor in question could hardly have escaped the competent Latinist who composed the passage presently of concern, so it is reasonable to consider why he (John or Theobald) selected it with the intention of using it to express weight loss and proximity to death. Yet again, a plausible answer to this is provided by Lakoff and Johnson, this time with their notion of conceptual systems. The metaphorical links in item 1 between weight loss, nearness to death, and consumption were clearly well-established in the dominant conceptual systems of the medieval west because they are used repeatedly in the Bible.⁴¹⁶ Therefore, it is possible to account for the significance of this metaphor, firstly, in terms of how it reflected the user’s experiences of the world, and secondly, in terms of how it fitted into the dominant conceptual system(s) of their society. In this way, the meaningfulness of this metaphor can be seen to be dependent on both the biological realities of human embodiment and the socio-cultural conditions and discourses to which the minds attached to individual bodies are exposed over the course of their lives. By following this course, we are able to move beyond accounting for human reason in either strictly culturalist or biological terms, instead working towards a fusion of both.

In addition to this, it was noted above that *spatial* separation between the body and spirit is construed as a cause or consequence of death in item 1:

⁴¹⁵ For example, *consumptus* is used a number of times throughout the Book of Job to imply death or destruction of the body: see 4: 9, 7: 6, 10: 18, 14: 10, 19: 20, and 30: 24. It is used similarly in the Psalms: for example, Ps. 6: 8(6: 7), 38: 12(39: 11), 72: 26(73: 26), and 89: 7(90: 7) (references in brackets are to the corresponding King James text).

⁴¹⁶ On conceptual systems see Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.1 and Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, chapters 1 and 2.

My spirit threatens its departure, yet still cleaves to my limbs in the desire and hope of your coming [*R*]ecessum minatur spiritus, haeret tamen membris in desiderio et spe adventus vestri].

Some significant details regarding how Theobald and John understood the physical nature of the body can be gleaned from this. Firstly, *spiritus* is represented as a thing actively cohering [*haereo*] to *membra*: hence it would seem that these two things are solid objects held together by the effort of the spirit. Secondly, spatial proximity between the spirit and body or limbs is construed as a matter of life and death: closeness to the point of contact is necessary and perhaps also sufficient to sustain the life of the organism whereas death is either a cause or consequence of them becoming spatially separated. Therefore, it can be seen that ideas about the kinds of relationships that may possibly inhere between objects in a spatial environment, as well as by virtue of their physical properties (e.g. “stickiness”: cf. *haereo*; *adhaesio*), are relevant to this excerpt.

The broader significance of this is that it shows the relevant author(s) drawing on embodied experiences of relatively concrete phenomena in the world to provide understanding of less certain aspects of human existence: in this case the phenomena of life and death. The difference between life and death is partially elucidated in terms of the difference between two or more objects or substances being or not being in contact with each other in a spatial environment. Attendant to this is the idea that body parts or substances are sticky, or at least have a natural tendency to stick or adhere to one another. To be sure, the spirit is not conventionally thought of as a “body part”. However, it is helpful here to consider the significance of what it means for the spirit to adhere to the material body. I suggest that this echoes the Pre-Platonic belief in western psychology that the matter of living things is vitalised by a life-inducing substance or physical presence (soul, spirit, *pneuma*, *aithêr*, *aer*, or whatever else): that is, emphatically *not* an active cognitive agent, such as we now tend to think of things like the spirit, soul or mind, but rather a thing or stuff which has the passive property of causing matter to live by virtue of it being present *in* or *through* it.⁴¹⁷ As noted above, Theobald and John appear to have been thinking of the spirit as a discrete, and probably also immaterial [*incorporalis*], entity rather than continuous

⁴¹⁷ For a discussion of this idea see Chapter Three, sec. 3.1.1.

substance. Nevertheless, in representing the spirit as something *vital* for the sustenance of the life of the body, they do seem to be drawing on the perhaps more “primitive” idea that matter is animated by a substance, material, or element with *special* life-inducing properties.⁴¹⁸

The excerpts given above as items 1 and 2 provide a variety of insights into how their author(s) conceptualised and understood the human body: particularly the material nature of the body, the causes of its life and death. An important conclusion which can be drawn from this is that these writers’ abstract reasoning about the human body is not isolated from their everyday experiences of it. On the contrary, neuro- and cognitive science help to demonstrate the extent to which abstract thought and banal experiences of the body are entwined and feed off each other in the relevant texts. The mass and count noun distinction in particular helps to show how abstract conceptualisation of the body is continuous with experience of it: people experience the body as a collection of cohering substances (*e.g.* flesh and blood) and structures (*e.g.* bones and organs) and so reason about it in those terms. In the next section it will be seen that the interplay between abstract reasoning and direct experiences of the world influenced how the relevant authors interpreted their experiences of the body in the socio-cultural contexts which applied to them.

4.2: The situated body

As the philosopher Charles Taylor has pointed out, people’s behaviour in relation to the environment is heavily influenced by the realisation that these spaces contain other people who will perceive, interpret, and respond to their behaviour in different ways:

The very way we walk, move, gesture, speak is shaped from our earliest moments by our awareness that we appear before others, that we stand in public space, and that this space is potentially one of respect or contempt, of pride or shame.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ Again, the issues relevant here were discussed in the previous chapter: see in particular sec. 3.1.1, pp. 76-7 and 3.2.3, pp. 118 and 122-3.

⁴¹⁹ C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: the making of modern identity* (Cambridge Mass., 1989), p. 15.

As Taylor points out, people tend to modify their behaviour in relation to “public” spaces in order to elicit desirable or intended responses from other people. This section concentrates on how these sociological processes are figured via the representation of the body in the sample of source texts. It will be shown that the ways in which the body is represented in the relevant texts frequently carry abstract symbolic significances which can only be properly understood if we take into account the interacting influences on the texts’ respective authors of, on the one hand, socio-culturally-constructed attitudes towards the body, and on the other, immediate sensory experiences of bodies in the world. From this finding, it will be concluded that mental processes, the body itself, and socio-culturally contingent attitudes towards the body are inextricably entangled and, therefore, that the representation of the body in the sample of source texts must be understood in terms of the interplay between these three elements: that is, mind, body, and culture.

4.2.1: Time, space, and the social world

To begin, relevant examples were discussed previously in sec. 4.1: namely Theobald’s gesture to Henry II. Thus, reconsider the following two excerpts:

1. [B]owing my heart low before your royal feet.

*[R]egios corde provolutus ad pedes.*⁴²⁰

2. Therefore prostrate at the feet of your clemency and with the utmost devotion I beseech you to regard him as one commended to yourself by me.

*Ad pedes ergo clementiae vestrae provolutus quanta possum devotione supplico ut eum commendatum habeatis ipsique.*⁴²¹

Socio-cultural context is provided here by the systems of gestures used by the elite social groups of twelfth-century Europe to express various kinds of social, cultural,

⁴²⁰ John, *Letters*, i: 135.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, i: 126.

political, and religious message.⁴²² The specific gesture in question is almost certainly prostration in that in both cases Theobald is laying himself flat on the ground in front of Henry's feet. Both descriptions of this act are clearly intended to invoke a common understanding of the meaning of such a gesture, in light of the more specific circumstances in which it was notionally being made, between the letter-writer and recipient. Hence Theobald's act of prostration, as described in the text, was presumably intended to carry the same significance as an actual *vis-à-vis* performance would have: that is, Theobald presumably wished to express politeness, loyalty, obedience, and trust towards Henry.⁴²³ Therefore, at the very least this sentence can be seen to express and reinforce a social relationship between Theobald and Henry (*i.e.* Theobald is Henry's social inferior, at least in secular contexts).

These two excerpts carry some common metaphorical entailments which are explicitly discussed by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We live By*: thus, to use their phrases, *having control or force is up; being subject to control or force is down*.⁴²⁴ This draws our attention to some points in both excerpts at which everyday experiences and abstract conceptualisation of the body cross paths. The symbolic relationship between height and the body in both excerpts could conceivably follow from everyday experiences of the body in a variety of obvious ways. Firstly, smaller people (or even animals) tend to be less physically powerful than larger people. Secondly, by prostrating himself before Henry, Theobald is making himself more vulnerable to attack or assault by Henry. Thirdly, Henry is able, merely by his presence or status, to *compel* Theobald to lay down in front of him without any exertion. Henry does not cause Theobald to do this, but Theobald presumably does it, at least in this literary context, because he knows that Henry has the power to cause him to do it (or to cause him greater harm if he doesn't). What this all serves to show is that the conceptual link between height and power in these excerpts is not merely an abstract, or disembodied, idea: it is intimately linked to the ways in which Theobald, *inter alia*, experienced the embodied conditions of his and other people's existences.

⁴²² On gestures in medieval Europe see Althoff, *Family, Friends, and Followers*, pp. 136-59, Burrow, *Gestures and Looks*, pp. 11-68, Schmitt, 'The rationale of gestures in the West', Phythian-Adams, 'Ritual constructions of society', and Kerr, 'Hospitality in twelfth-century England'.

⁴²³ On prostration see Burrow, *Gestures and Looks*, pp. 18-19.

⁴²⁴ See Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, pp. 14-15.

It is also important to take account of the symbolic significances attached to *pedes* and *cor* in items 1 and 2 in twelfth-century Anglo-French culture. Firstly, the feet are quite literally the most abject part of the human body. They are closest to the ground and thus dirt, and furthest away from the head, which was most commonly identified in post-classical Europe as the seat of reason.⁴²⁵ What is more, the feet are symbolically important in the Bible in a number of ways. References to Jewish *mores* concerning the cleanliness of the feet, especially in people's houses, are frequent in the Bible, and carry with them powerful moral implications. There are also numerous episodes involving typically lowly people falling at, and even kissing or licking, the feet of more powerful or revered persons, as signs of submission or respect: for instance, the rabbi Jairus falling at Jesus' feet as a sign of respect.⁴²⁶ It seems reasonable to assume that literate medieval Christians would have been able and even inclined to relate contemporary gestures such as prostration or bowing down to the feet to similar gestures described in the Bible and *vice versa*. Therefore, it may be concluded that the conceptual significance of the feet is not only tied to people's everyday experiences of feet in the world. Received wisdom about the abstract significance of the feet may also influence how people conceptualise the feet and thus feedback onto their everyday experiences of the feet in the world. Abstract reasoning, everyday experiences, and inherited wisdom all interact to such a degree that their relative influences on how people experience and conceptualise the world are inextricable: in short, they should be taken as a package rather than isolated facets of human life.

The symbolic value of *cor* in item 1 is more difficult to determine for a number of reasons. The "heart" of premodern western language and discourse is not necessarily the same "heart" of modern western language and discourse in at least two important respects. Firstly, in premodern western psychology the heart was often understood as a cognitive agent (hence Φ_1)⁴²⁷ or at least a locus of cognitive activity in the body.⁴²⁸ It may have been thought of as a transcendent entity, much like the soul or mind, or alternatively as a seat of the mind or parts of it (particularly the

⁴²⁵ The location of reason in the human body is the topic of the next section (4.3).

⁴²⁶ For Jairus' gesture see Mark 5: 22: an extensive list of episodes in which feet play a significant role in the Bible may be found at <http://www.bible-topics.com/Feet-The.html> (accessed 1 / 06 / 2010)

⁴²⁷ For an explanation of the Φ rubrics see Chapter Three, sec. 3.2.

⁴²⁸ What I mean by "premodern western psychology" was defined in Chapter Three, n. 1.

emotions [*passiones*]).⁴²⁹ In any case, “mind” is often a reasonable translation of *cor* as it occurs in Latin texts and *kardia* as it occurs in ancient Greek texts. Secondly, heart may function in Latin as a catch-all label for the internal organs or *viscera* around the midriff, which itself, as noted in the previous chapter, had associations with cognition lingering from early Greek thought [*i.e. phrên*].⁴³⁰ It is probably for this reason that the modern English word, “core”, derives from the Latin and Romance words for heart, *cor* and *cœur*, etc. Because of this variety of meanings the heart presents some very specific issues which will be addressed in some detail in the next section of this chapter (sec. 4.3).

It is important to note that the supine used in both excerpts, *provolutus* [to lay oneself flat or prostrate], represents an action which necessarily occurs in space and time: that is, Theobald lays himself, or his heart in abstraction, flat on the ground, in some sense *towards* [*ad*] Henry during a finite period of time (or “time frame” as it will be described here). The space and time that I am referring to here is not the space and time of everyday life. It is rather the concepts of these phenomena that people invariably develop in response to their embodied experiences of them and how they are interpreted and represented in different socio-cultural and linguistic environments.⁴³¹ As regards space, the up-down and forward-backward dimensions are crucial to the meaning of the gesture as it is represented in relevant excerpts. The act of lowering oneself is symbolic, most probably of Theobald’s loyalty and submission (at least on non-religious matters) to Henry’s authority as king of England.⁴³² Furthermore, in directing the gesture towards Henry’s feet, and thus presumably also his body, Theobald makes it clear that the symbolic force of the act of prostration holds between him and Henry: that is, as opposed to Theobald just doing the gesture in relation to nobody.⁴³³

⁴²⁹ The association between the heart and emotions in classical western thought (especially Stoic thought) is briefly discussed in sec. 4.3.

⁴³⁰ See the discussion of *phrên* in Chapter Three, sec. 3.1.1, p. 76.

⁴³¹ There is a substantial literature in cognitive science on the concepts of space and time, among other things, which people develop in response to their experiences of those phenomena in the world: for broad discussions of how people perceive and reason about the world see Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, chapter eleven and Pinker, *How the Mind Works*, chapter four and *The Stuff of Thought*, chapter four.

⁴³² Prostration is discussed by Burrow in *Gestures and Looks*, pp. 17-18.

⁴³³ It seems worth noting that modern research into non-verbal communication has shown that spatial relationships between bodies carry symbolic significances which vary between different cultures and language groups: see M. Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 2nd edn. (London, 1990), pp. 168-87.

Another significant example of how the body can be used to represent inter-personal relationships may be found in *The Life of Christina*. The following excerpt illustrates how different facets of the body can be used to express or reinforce strength, closeness, and love, among other things, as aspects of inter-personal relationships:

3. Meanwhile, the maiden looked closely in front of her, and saw an upper chamber, lofty and quiet, which could be reached only by a series of steps, steep and difficult for anyone wishing to climb. Christina had a great desire to climb up, but as she hesitated on account of its difficulty, the queen whom she had seen just a short time before helped her, and so she mounted the upper chamber. And as she sat there enjoying the beauty of the place, behold, the aforesaid queen came and laid her head in her lap as if she wished to rest, with her face turned away. This turning away of her face was a source of disquiet to Christina, and not daring to speak she said inwardly: "O, if only I were allowed to gaze upon your face." Straightway the empress turned her face towards her and said with winning kindness: "You may look now; and afterwards when I shall bring both you and Judith also into my chamber, you can gaze to your full content."

*Interea virgo prope **prospiciebat** et videbat quasi solarium unum **altum** et quietum. ad quod **ascendere** volenti: per interpositos **gradus** arduus et gravis patebat **ascensus**. Huc etiam Christine habenti magnam **ascendendi** voluntatem. sed hesitanti propter **ascensus** difficultatem: subito regina quam paulo ante viderat ministrabatur adiutorium et sic **ascendebat** in solarium. Cumque resideret ibidem delectata loco. Ecce predicta regina **veniebat**. Et instar quiescere volentis. Caput sum reclinabat in gremio sedentis: sed **adversa** facie. Cuius adversionis Christinam non mediocriter tenebat et non ausa loqui: tantum in corde suo dicebat: "O si licuisset michi vultum tuum contemplari." Et continuo convertit vultum tuum imperatrix illa dixitque blanda affabilitate: Et licet et contemplare contemplativa postmodum ad*

*sacietatem: quando introduxero te in thalamum meum te et Iudith una tecum.*⁴³⁴

This passage relates one of Christina's dreams or visions in which she meets the Virgin Mary. In this case, the meeting between Christina and Mary (*i.e.* the "queen" [*regina*]) occurs in what would seem to be Mary's private space (the *solarium*): hence their relationship is not merely intimate in terms of the closeness of their bodies in a generic physical space. Intimacy is also implied by the social significance attached to the specific kind of place that a *solarium* is (or was considered to be in twelfth-century Europe). It is also significant that in order for Christina to fulfil her desire to meet the queen, she must exert herself by climbing [*ascendo*] the steep steps to the chamber. She achieves this goal with the help of Mary, thus casting their relationship in a cooperative, as well as amicable, light. Nevertheless, Mary's superior status is always clear as she is identified as a queen. This aspect of their relationship also seems to be reinforced by Mary's beneficent attitude towards Christina: she helps Christina fulfil her desire to meet her and the meeting takes place in what seems to be Mary's *private* space.

In addition to this, while Christina sits admiring the room, Mary rests her head [*caput*] on Christina's lap or breast [*gremio*], albeit turned away [*adversa facie*] from some part of Christina [*cuius adersionis Christinam*]. In what respect Mary's face is turned away from Christina is not stated in the passage. Nevertheless, given that this circumstance stirs in Christina a desire to gaze directly on Mary's face [*O si licuisset michi vultum tuum contemplari*], it can at least be inferred that there is no direct line of sight between Christina's and Mary's faces. It may thus be that Mary's face is *adversus* in relation to Christina's. This is, however, an intuitive assumption rather than a definite fact about the situation related by Christina's biographer. The lack of a line of sight between faces is not in itself a sufficient condition for them to be viewed as *adversus*. *Being turned away from each other* requires some kind of intent or attitude, which is to say either Mary intended to turn her face from Christina or Christina believed that Mary's face was turned away from hers. Therefore, at the very least it can be concluded from the text that Mary's face is *adversus* from Christina in as far as Mary intended it to be and / or Christina viewed it as such. Furthermore, the

⁴³⁴ *The Life of Christina*, ¶ 25.

fact that Mary soon repositions her face, thus fulfilling Christina's desire to gaze on it, reinforces the already intimate and amicable qualities of their relationship at that moment.⁴³⁵

Space and orientation play important roles in the representation of the interpersonal relationship between Christina and Mary. Firstly, the proximity of Christina's and Mary's bodies in a space is indicative of the *closeness* of their socio-religious relationship: it may be legitimate to view this, in Lakoff's and Johnson's terms, as an orientational metaphor in as much as intimacy or friendliness are construed as being *like* being in close contact.⁴³⁶ The reasoning here is perhaps analogous to that which leads modern English speakers to describe intimate or friendly relationships as "close": closeness provides understanding of these aspects of relationships even though it is not in fact a guarantee or even reliable measure of intimacy or friendship (*e.g.* complete strangers or even enemies may often be in close contact, although perhaps rarely in direct physical contact). Secondly, the orientation of Christina's and Mary's faces in relation to each other is also construed as a significant measure of the intimacy and good-nature of their relationship. This may also be viewed as an orientational metaphor, although it perhaps has a stronger experiential element than the latter case in that the faces of people on friendly, or *a fortiori* amorous, terms are more likely to meet each other's gaze, to do so more frequently, and to hold it for longer than people who are either unacquainted or on poor terms. By contrast, aversion of gaze ("looking askance"), as in item 3, may be interpreted as a negative sign, although certain forms of gaze, such as glaring, are explicitly intended to be interpreted as negative signs.⁴³⁷

Again, item 3 represents a situation in which mind, body, and culture can be seen to interact to such a degree that their respective influences on the relevant phenomenon, namely Christina's and Mary's friendship, are inextricably linked. Christina's and Mary's mental states, the positioning of their bodies or parts of it (especially the face) in relation to each other, and the socio-cultural significance in a medieval Western Christian society of being visited in a dream by the Mother of God, even invited by her into her personal space (*i.e.* the *solarium*), all contribute to the

⁴³⁵ For more on this see the following section on faces (sec. 4.4).

⁴³⁶ See Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.1 or for direct reference, Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, chapter 4.

⁴³⁷ Burrow discusses amorous gazes at length in *Gestures and Looks*: in particular, see pp. 91-8; he also notes the significance of looking askance (*ibid.*, pp. 98-9) and disapproving gazes (*ibid.*, pp. 99-101).

representation of the friendship pertaining between Christina and Mary.⁴³⁸ The content of item 3 is informed by the interplay between these three aspects of human existence: that is, the mind, body, and culture.

4.2.2: Conclusion

This section has examined the entanglement of mind, body, and culture through representations of bodies situated and interacting in spatial and socio-cultural environments. It is necessary to take account of the relative influences of mental states (*e.g.* consciousness, beliefs, attitudes, preferences, likes and dislikes), the posture and expression of the body (*i.e.* non-verbal communication or “body language”), and the socio-cultural environment in order to provide well-rounded accounts of the contents and significance of the three excerpts given above (items 1-3): each of these three elements needs to be acknowledged and the interplay between them studied. We cannot properly understand why people have beliefs and attitudes about the body, or why the body and parts of it accrue different symbolic significances in different socio-cultural contexts, if we do not first accept that people are embodied beings who experience the world through the sensory media provided by their bodies. Likewise, we cannot properly understand the highly variable symbolic significance of the body if we do not take account of how different socio-cultural circumstances influence how people interpret their experiences of their bodies. Moreover, we cannot properly understand embodiment or socio-culturally contingent interpretations of the body and human life in general if we do not take account of people’s individual mental lives.

Finally, the importance of spatial reasoning was highlighted in this section. Much research has been done in cognitive science on the influence of people’s experiences of space on how they conceptualise and understand the world.⁴³⁹ For present purposes, what needs to be stressed here is that people invariably experience the world as a three-dimensional space with three-dimensional contents. People’s experiences of everything in the world are in some way subject to their experiences of space. For instance, in item 3 Mary’s *solarium* cannot just be conceptualised as a

⁴³⁸ On greetings and reception into private spaces see Kerr, ‘Hospitality in twelfth-century England’.

⁴³⁹ Relevant references were given above in n. 32. Also, Lloyd discusses spatial reasoning in *Cognitive Variations*, chapter two.

purely abstract social thing: it must be conceptualised as a *space* of some kind. Likewise, Theobald's prostration towards Henry in items 1 and 2 cannot be thought of in purely abstract terms: it must also be conceptualised as happening in some kind of spatial environment.

4.3: *The mind-body relationship in John of Salisbury's "body politic" metaphors*

This section explores how the mind-body relationship was understood in twelfth-century Europe by examining a series of body politic metaphors composed by John of Salisbury in some of his letters and the *Policraticus*.⁴⁴⁰ Part of the motivation for doing this is to address the issues raised by the overlapping language of mind and body in premodern western thought (this was highlighted in the previous section with regard to the heart [*cor*]).⁴⁴¹ In addition to this, John's body politic metaphors are of interest in themselves because they involve an explicit metaphorical conflation of mind and body. By examining the logic underpinning this conflation, this section is intended to shed some light on John's beliefs and understanding of the mind-body relationship. Furthermore, in following this course this section will highlight a significant conceptual difference between modern and premodern western ideas about the nature of the mind-body relationship: specifically that whereas in modern thought, the mind tends to be located in one discrete organ (*viz.* the brain), in premodern thought the mind was often thought to be spread more widely throughout the body.

* * *

⁴⁴⁰ The body politic metaphor has been widely studied by medievalists, particularly as it became popular from the thirteenth century onwards with the absorption of Aristotle's political writings into Western European academic life. See for example, T. Shogimen, "Head or Heart?" Revisited: physiology and political thought in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries' in *History of Political Thought*, xxviii: 2 (2007), pp. 208-229, A. Alexander, 'Heart and soul of the state' in *The World of Marsilius of Padua*, ed. G. Moreno-Riano (Turnhout, 2002), pp. 163-86 or Nederman, 'The living body politic' in *Healing the Body Politic: the political thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. K. Green *et al* (Brepols, 2005), pp. 19-33. A collection of translated and abridged source material has also been published as *Medieval Political Theory – A Reader: The Quest for the Body Politic 1100-1400*, ed. and trans. C. J. Nederman *et al* (London, 1993).

⁴⁴¹ See sec. 4.2.1, pp. 149-50.

4.3.1: Contextualising John's thought

The label *body politic* essentially covers a range of metaphors which draw parallels of one kind or another between the structure and nature of human communities and the human body. This idea has its roots in classical Greek philosophy. For instance, Plato famously drew a parallel between the healthy human body, as he understood it, and the healthiness of his ideal community [πόλις: *polis*; cf. politics⁴⁴²] in the *Republic*: Aristotle made a similar comparison in his *Politics*.⁴⁴³ Importantly, the two most common themes in western body politic metaphors are health and the location of mental faculties, both of which apply to John's formulae.

John's body politic metaphors concern the relationship between the secular and ecclesiastical institutions of the kingdom or state [*regnum*], and in particular the need to maintain a healthy relationship between them. Health [*sanitas*] is a crucial aspect to this in that the state can be construed as healthy or sick [*morbus*] depending on how the metaphor is applied: hence a healthy body is like a healthy state and *vice versa*.⁴⁴⁴ However, the metaphor leads us to the seemingly intuitive conclusion, doubtless informed by our experiences of healthy and diseased bodies in the world, including our own, that a healthy state is inherently more desirable than a sick one (*i.e.* for similar reasons to healthy bodies being valued over sick bodies). Another important aspect of this metaphor is the diversity of the parts of the body and state and, more to the point, the extent to which their functions mutually benefit each other and by extension the body or state as a whole (*i.e.* *harmony* among the parts).⁴⁴⁵ It will be seen in the following two excerpts that John uses the head [*caput*] to stand as the primary member of the state (*viz.* the Church according to his perspective) and the limbs [*membra*] to stand for other parts of the state which should be subordinate to the

⁴⁴² This etymology should warn us that by "politic", we should not necessarily be thinking in terms of modern states (certainly not modern, secular, nation states). To be sure, John's body politic metaphors are about the state as he understood it: however, the focus of premodern body politic metaphors is often on communities rather than states.

⁴⁴³ For example, see Plato, *Republic*, 462c-d and 464b and Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge Mass., 1932), 1253a. Furthermore, Plato's *Republic* draws a parallel between the structure of an ideal community and the mind in which respect it is similar to, but not quite an example of, the body politic metaphor.

⁴⁴⁴ The themes of sickness and health are explored further in Chapter Five, secs 5.1-2.

⁴⁴⁵ By contrast, as was seen in sec. 4.1, disharmony or dispersal of the parts of the body can lead to sickness and death: see pp. 144-6 above.

principal member (*i.e.* the head: regarding which it should be noted that his use of *membra* is a pun).

The key points of interest in John's body politic metaphors are how he maps the mind onto the body (*i.e.* where he places different cognitive faculties in the body) and what significance he saw in this. It will be seen that John splits the mind mainly between the head and the heart and, in doing so, identifies this split as a potential source of conflicts within the mind and thus, according to his metaphor, diseases of the state. John's thinking in these respects is clearly indebted to ancient Greek philosophy and medicine: especially Plato.⁴⁴⁶ Accordingly, attention is given below to the influence of these disciplines on John and the ways in which human existence was conceptualised and understood in the medieval west.

As noted previously, by the standards of his time John was exceptionally well-read in classical and contemporary philosophical works.⁴⁴⁷ It can be demonstrated from his surviving writings that he was familiar with Aristotle's six logical works and his *Politics*.⁴⁴⁸ He also knew Plato's *Timaeus* and, by reputation, the *Republic*.⁴⁴⁹ In fact, it has been suggested that John's interest in body politic metaphors may reflect the influence of the broad influence of the *Timaeus* on scholasticism during the first half of the twelfth century.⁴⁵⁰ Furthermore, in his treatise on education and the liberal arts, the *Metalogicon*, John shows some understanding of the three major branches of classical philosophy (*i.e.* the Academics, Peripatetics, and Stoics), at least to the extent that he was able to ascribe different views to them.⁴⁵¹ This is not to mention his extensive knowledge of the Bible, Latin Patristics, pagan Roman authors (although perhaps largely through *florilegia*), and the works and thought of his contemporaries or near-contemporaries in the west (especially the group of teachers

⁴⁴⁶ See Chapter Three, sec. 3.1.1, pp. 78-80.

⁴⁴⁷ For details and relevant notes on John's learning see the section on the sources in the Introduction to Part II: pp. 68-9 below.

⁴⁴⁸ See the index of McGarry's edition of the *Metalogicon*, pp. 297-8, in which he has noted hundreds of citations or references to Aristotle throughout the work. For details on the use of Aristotle in the *Policraticus* see Nederman's edition, pp. xx-xxi.

⁴⁴⁹ John cites the *Timaeus* in the *Metalogicon* (see iv: 17) and alludes to aspects of it in the *Policraticus* (vii: 1-2 and 5). Nederman notes that John knew some of the *Timaeus* in the introduction to his edition of the *Policraticus* (p. xx). This was mostly likely Calcidius' translation, on which see Somfai, 'Reception of Plato's *Timaeus*'.

⁴⁵⁰ See Gregory, 'The Platonic Inheritance', pp. 56-7: Gregory draws a link between the *Timaeus* and the *Policraticus*, vii: 5.

⁴⁵¹ See John, *Metalogicon*, ii: 2 and 7, iii: 7, iv: 31 and 36 and John, *Policraticus*, vii: 1-2.

associated with the school at Chartres in the early twelfth century).⁴⁵² Therefore, in these and other respects, John offers a good opportunity, albeit an atypical one given the extent of his reading at that time, to discuss how literacy and access to ancient and contemporary wisdom through texts could influence attitudes towards human existence in the medieval west.

Meanwhile, by the mid-twelfth century, original Greek and Roman philosophical and medical texts, as well as the works of Arabic and Persian intermediaries, were becoming increasingly available and well-known among Western European scholars.⁴⁵³ From these traditions medieval Europeans inherited inconsistent and to some extent clashing wisdom on the respective natures and functions of the heart and head, as organs, and in relation to the body as a whole. In particular, they inherited conflicting views from Greek thought on whether human reason resided in the heart or the head. These two positions can be broadly identified with Aristotle and Plato respectively (which is not to say that these views were original to them): that is, Aristotle located reason in the heart whereas Plato located it in the head.⁴⁵⁴ With the exception of the *Timaeus*, which survived in two partial Latin translations, Plato's works were almost entirely unknown until the later middle ages.⁴⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the *Timaeus* was widely read in the west from the ninth century onwards and many scholars would have known from it that Plato located reason firmly in the head.⁴⁵⁶ Some of Aristotle's logical works (collectively known as *The Organon* [*i.e.* "the tool"]⁴⁵⁷) survived antiquity through Latin translations by the late Roman scholar and author, Boethius. However, his natural scientific works, in which medieval readers would have found him locating reason in the heart, were not widely

⁴⁵² On John's sources for pagan authors see Nederman's introduction to his edition of the *Policraticus*, p. xx. John was well-acquainted with the works of many of his contemporaries, including Peter Abelard and the masters associated with Chartres: see John, *Metalogicon*, i: 5 and 24. Also see Wetherbee, 'Philosophy, Cosmology, and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance', pp. 34-5 and 48 and Mews, 'Philosophy and Theology', pp. 173-80.

⁴⁵³ Basic information about this can be found in Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine* and on philosophy, Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy*. More references will be given on these topics as this chapter progresses.

⁴⁵⁴ For instance, see Plato's *Timaeus*, 44d-45e: for a summary of Aristotle's views on the location of reason in the body see Donini, 'Psychology'.

⁴⁵⁵ On the translations of the *Timaeus* see Somfai, 'Reception of Plato's *Timaeus*'. The *Timaeus* was discussed in detail previously in Chapter Three, sec. 3.1.1.

⁴⁵⁶ See Plato, *Timaeus*, 44d-45a.

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. ὄργανον: see Liddell and Scott, *s.n. organon* (accessed 04 / 06 / 2010)

known by western scholars until the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries (none of these seem to have been known by the authors relevant to this study).⁴⁵⁸

The Platonic view on the location of reason in the human body was certainly dominant towards the end of antiquity, not least thanks to the second-century Greek physician and writer, Galen, who, in spite of his reverence for Aristotle's scientific writings, strongly sided with Plato on the matter.⁴⁵⁹ Galen's writings were crucial to the survival and authority of Greek medicine into the middle ages. Most of his works were lost in the west following the collapse of Roman civilisation. However, some did survive and many more were preserved in the Greek and Islamic worlds and gradually reintroduced to the west, particularly during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁴⁶⁰ In addition to Galen, the surviving writings of other classical authors were also important to the transmission of ancient wisdom about the natures of the heart and head into the medieval west. The most notable among these for present purposes is Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* (particularly books four and eleven which respectively focused on medicine and the human organism). It will be seen below (see items 6-7 below) that Isidore understood the functions of the head and heart and their relationship to the human organism as a whole in a similar fashion to John (at least as he presented things in his body politic metaphors).

4.3.2: *Mapping the mind onto the body*

Consider the following excerpts from two of John's letters:

1. When the members of the Church are united in loyalty and love, when princes show due reverence to priests, and priests render faithful service to princes, then do kingdoms enjoy true peace and tranquillity that must always be the goal of our desire...For it [the Church of Canterbury] is the head of all your

⁴⁵⁸ On the transmission and reception of Aristotle's works in the twelfth-century west, see Jacquart, 'Aristotelian thought at Salerno', Maccagnolo, 'David of Dinant and the beginnings of Aristotelianism in Paris', and Marrone, 'Medieval philosophy in context', pp. 32-6. For more general discussions of the translation and transmission of Greek learning to the west see Lindberg, 'The Transmission of Greek and Arabic Learning to the West' and Williams, 'Transmission and Translation'. On Boethius' translations of the works of the old logic see Marenbon, *Boethius*, pp. 17-18. John is the only author studied here who shows any substantial knowledge of Aristotle's works (mainly those of the old logic).

⁴⁵⁹ See Donini, 'Psychology'.

⁴⁶⁰ On the transmission and reception of Galen's works see Talbot, 'Medicine' and Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, pp. 78-114.

realm, and for yourself and all your realm it is the mother of the faith of Christ. Whatever loss it suffers will besmirch your honour; for honour due to the head will never equally befit the other limbs.

*Illa est regnorum vera pax et semper optanda tranquillitas, cum in fide et dilectione sibi cohaerent membra ecclesiae, et sacerdotibus debitam reverentiam principes et principibus plenae fidelitatis obsequium exhibent sacerdotes...Ipsa est enim caput regni vestri, et vobis et toti regno fidei parens in Christo. Quicquid autem ei detractum fuerit vestrum deturpabit honorem, eo quod honor capitis aequè nunquam cetera membra decebit.*⁴⁶¹

2. Unless the limbs are joined to the head, the body cannot survive in sound condition and everyone who is set against the Church's successes is rightly branded a public enemy. Since I am agreed to be a member of the church of Canterbury, though a small one, I must join my voice to the common wish as best as I can and with full zeal pursue the end to which I see the energies of its more potent limbs directed.

*Nisi membra capiti cohaeserint, corporis incolumitas non subsistit et merito publicus hostis arguitur quisquis ecclesiae profectibus adversatur. Quia ergo me sanctae Cantuariensis ecclesiae membrum, licet, modicum, esse constat, necesse est ut votis communibus pro facultate feram fuffragium et tota diligentia prosequar id in quod se ostendunt studia potiorum.*⁴⁶²

Item 1, taken from a letter addressed from Theobald to Henry II, concerns the papal schism of 1159. Theobald is urging Henry to reach a decision on whether to recognise Victor or Alexander (the latter of whom eventually became Alexander III) as the legitimate pope. Meanwhile, item 2, addressed to Archbishop William of Sens (1168-76), was written after the assassination of Thomas Becket and concerns the

⁴⁶¹ John, *Letters*, i: 116.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, ii: 314.

election of a new Archbishop of Canterbury to the then vacant see. Now John is recommending Richard Pont l'Évêque to William as Thomas' successor.⁴⁶³

The body is represented in both examples by the head [*caput*] and the limbs [*membra*], while the body [*corpus*] itself is mentioned in item 2. As previously noted, the head is given precedence over the limbs, although the precise nature of this precedence is not stated. This view of the head, and how it contrasts with the alternative view in ancient thought that the heart is the principal organ of the human body (perhaps reproduced in item 3 shortly), will be discussed further below with reference to the most sophisticated body politic metaphor penned by John in the *Policraticus* (see item 3). For present purposes, items 1 and 2 illustrate that concepts of well-being and an overseeing organ or place played important roles in how John conceptualised and understood the nature of the human body. Moreover, as with the excerpts discussed in sec. 4.1, cohesion and harmony among the parts of the body are key elements in the concept of health underpinning items 1 and 2.⁴⁶⁴

The excerpt which follows is part of the best known and most detailed of John's body politic metaphors. John invented an almost certainly bogus source for this: supposedly a pamphlet by the Greco-Roman author, Plutarch, entitled *The Instruction of Trajan*. This, he claims, came attached to a letter sent by Plutarch to the Emperor Trajan, which, as John puts it, 'describes the idea of a certain sort of political constitution.'⁴⁶⁵ It is tempting to view it as a nod towards the classical roots of the body politic metaphor. But whatever the case, John seems to have felt more comfortable ascribing this metaphor to a classical author than to himself.

Thus, consider the following passage, in which John relates the functions of the heart and head to parts of the state:

3. The position of the head in the republic is occupied, however, by the ruler subject only to God and to those who act in His place on earth, inasmuch as in

⁴⁶³ A good account of the difficulties encountered in electing a new archbishop after the assassination of Thomas Becket, and on the character of Richard of Dover can be found in R. Foreville, *L'Eglise et la Royauté en Angleterre sous Henri II Plantagenet* (Paris, 1943), pp. 368-88.

⁴⁶⁴ That is items 1 and 2 in sec. 4.1. The idea that harmony among the parts of the body and mind engender health is derived from Greek philosophy, and in particular, Platonic philosophy. For a brief explanation of Plato's views on harmony see Andrew Gregory's introduction to the Oxford edition of the *Timaeus*, pp. xxviii-xxxii.

⁴⁶⁵ John, *Policraticus*, v: 1-2. Nederman notes that this method of lending credibility to an original argument was not uncommon during the middle ages: see *ibid.*, p. xxi. On bogus sources see R. Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 231-48.

the human body, the head is stimulated and ruled by the soul. The place of the heart is occupied by the senate, from which proceeds the beginning of good and bad works.

*Princeps vero capitis in Republica obtinet locum, uni subjectus Deo, et his qui vices illius agunt in terris, quoniam et in humano corpore, ab anima vegetatur caput et regitur. Cordis locum senatus obtinet, a quo bonorum operum et malorum procedunt initia.*⁴⁶⁶

This can be compared to items 1 and 2, in which John ascribes primacy to the head over the body but no functions to the heart. Again, the head is identified as the principal member, although this point is now qualified further as it is clear that the head is the principal member by virtue of it being the bodily location or housing for the soul.⁴⁶⁷ In contrast, the heart is identified as the senate [*senatus*], which, we are told, is the source of good and bad deeds [*bonorum operum et malorum procedunt initia*], regarding which it might be thought of as being like a debating chamber for the good and bad aspects of itself or alternatively the person to whom it belongs. In this way, John gives an appreciably ambiguous account of the functions and relationship between the head, heart, body, and individual as a whole. On the one hand, the head rules over the body, while on the other, the heart has the power to make the body perform good or bad deeds, which, presumably by association at least, have consequences for the person. So in short, it is not at all clear whether the head has any direct control or influence over the heart and therefore whether the head should be seen as the effective or merely titular ruler of an otherwise cognitively devolved entity.

It is probably significant that elsewhere in his writings John seems to have specifically associated the emotions, but not necessarily reason, with the heart. For instance, consider the following excerpt from one of his letters:

4. He who searches out our hearts knows the sadness and continuing sorrow I feel in my heart to see foreigners alone bring us help when our ship foundered, while you slept on in peril of your life.

⁴⁶⁶ John, *Policraticus*, v: 2.

⁴⁶⁷ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 45a-b.

*Novit inspector cordium quia michi tristitia est dolor continuus cordi meo quod, vobis dormientibus in periculo vitae, soli alieni naufragio nostro ferunt opem.*⁴⁶⁸

Hence it is worth considering at this point in what ways John distinguished between the emotions and reason and their relationship with the body. As the latter excerpt shows, he certainly found it meaningful to ascribe emotional states like sadness [*tristitia*] to the heart. Among other things, this may help to shed light on why John (or perhaps Theobald) represented the latter's gesture to Henry II, discussed previously in sec. 4.2, in terms of him bowing his heart before Henry's feet. It is also worth referring to the brief discussion in Chapter Three of the Greek term, *phrên*, best translated as midriff [cf. *praecordia*], in regard to which it was noted that in early Greek psychology the emotions were often believed to emanate from the fleshy areas enclosed within the central torso (so the heart, lungs, liver, and so forth). Accordingly, we should be mindful that these archaic beliefs are possibly the source of the association in western psychology between the heart and certain emotions (especially love and anger).⁴⁶⁹

The emotions were treated by most schools of classical philosophy as distinct from reason and mostly with distrust in as much as they were viewed as unpredictable and potentially dangerous by virtue of their freedom from reason. This was especially true of Platonism and Stoicism. Although direct access to the views of adherents to these schools of classical philosophy was limited in John's time (minimal in the case of Stoicism), nuggets of their wisdom could be gleaned from a variety of texts.⁴⁷⁰ And indeed, certain aspects of their morality were absorbed into Christian thought in late antiquity.⁴⁷¹ For example, Augustine gives a significant summary of aspects of Stoic attitudes towards the emotions, *via* Aulus Gellius, in *City of God* (the chapter

⁴⁶⁸ John, *Letters*, II: 243.

⁴⁶⁹ For the earlier discussion of *phrên* see Chapter Three, sec. 3.1.1, pp. 76.

⁴⁷⁰ See Gregory, 'The Platonic inheritance' and Lapidge, 'The Stoic inheritance'. Very few western intellectuals read any Greek in the twelfth century, and accordingly, had very little access to the most important works of Plato and his followers. Likewise, some of the more important Stoic texts to have survived antiquity, such as Marcus Aurelius' *Meditationes*, were written in Greek and simply not known in the Christian west. However, there were some exceptions, including the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius, which were translated by Eirugena in the ninth century, and also Latin commentators such as Augustine (as will be seen shortly: see the following quotation). For more detail on the transmission of Platonism see Chapter Three, sec. 3.1.

⁴⁷¹ Again see Chapter Three, sec. 3.1.

subtitle is: ‘The opinions of the Peripatetics and Stoics about the feelings [*De perturbationibus quae animo accidunt, quae sit Peripateticorum Stoicorumque sententia*]’⁴⁷²:

Gellius tells us that he read in the book that the Stoics had concluded that there are certain mental phenomena [*quod animi visa*], to which they give the name “fantasies” [*phantasias*], which we cannot control. We cannot decide when this will happen or when they will happen...It is as if these passions are too quick for the functioning of his [*i.e.* a hypothetical Stoic philosopher] intellect and reason [*tanquam his passionibus praevenientibus mentis et rationis officium*]...The soul [*animus*] of the fool gives way to these passions [*passiones*] and accords them the consent of his mind, while the wise man’s soul [*animus*], although it cannot help experiencing these emotions [*passiones*], still keeps its mind [*mens*] unshaken and holds firmly to its right decision about what aims it ought, in reason [*rationabiliter*], to pursue, and what it should reject.⁴⁷³

John surely could have pieced together from passages like this, among other things, an understanding of the principles of ancient, but especially Stoic, psychology, which influenced many late-antique Christian writers, Augustine included.

In fact, much like in the book of which Augustine provides a third-hand account, while John grants the soul, residing in the head, stewardship of the body, it may nonetheless be led astray by whatever happens in the heart to cause good or bad deeds. Thus, in contrasting John’s account of the roles of the head and heart in directing human behaviour with those ascribed to the soul [*animus*] and emotions [*passiones*] in Augustine’s report of Gellius’ work, it is worth considering two points: firstly, whether John followed his classical pagan and Christian predecessors in viewing reason as a discrete faculty of the mind which often falls into conflict with the others (especially the emotions); and secondly, whether he believed that the mind, even if not the soul, was spread across different parts of the body so that, in this case,

⁴⁷² Note Bettenson translates *sententia* as passions: this does not seem quite right to me so I have altered it to read “feelings” which I believe gives a better sense of what Augustine meant in this context by *sententia*; see next note for reference to *City of God*.

⁴⁷³ Augustine, *City of God*, ix: 4.

reason could be located in the head and other cognitive faculties, such as the emotions, in the heart.

First, given his discussion of reason [*ratio*] in the *Metalogicon*, it seems probable that John did view it as a highly distinct cognitive faculty:

5. Stimulated by sense perception, and keyed up by the solicitude of prudence, the conscious soul [*anima*] exerts itself. Summoning its strength, it endeavours strenuously to avoid errors arising from sense perceptions and opinions [*sensus et opinio*]. By dint of its intensified effort, it sees with greater clarity, holds with greater security, and judges with greater accuracy. This more perspicacious force [*vis*] is called “reason” [*ratio*], which is spiritual nature’s power to discriminate and distinguish material and immaterial entities [*discretiva rerum corporalium et incorporalium*], in order to examine things with sure unvitiated judgement.⁴⁷⁴

This passage unquestionably shows that John saw reason, *qua* a faculty or “force” [*vis*] of the soul, as something distinct from other faculties of the mind: namely “sensation and cognition” [*sensus et opinio*]. Moreover, the translator of this passage, Daniel McGarry, suggests two points of comparison with Calcidius’ translation of the *Timaeus*.⁴⁷⁵ This is important because this passage strongly echoes the Platonic view, expressed in the *Timaeus* and elsewhere, that there is a rational part of the soul which is drawn away from material reality towards the transcendent and eternal reality of the “forms” [εἶδοι / ἰδέαι] which, Plato tells us in the *Timaeus*, were used by God to fashion the universe: in a Christian context, if John thought anything of the Platonic forms, then he may have associated them with the Word of God [*Verbum Dei*].⁴⁷⁶

Second, there were clear precedents in ancient and medieval thought for ascribing different cognitive faculties to different areas or parts of the body. Although Plato’s account in the *Timaeus* of the spread of the soul and thus cognitive faculties through the body was not available to John, similar accounts or ideas on the soul-body

⁴⁷⁴ John, *Metalogicon*, iv: 15: cf. *Policraticus*, vii: 1-2.

⁴⁷⁵ See *ibid.*, nn. 161-2.

⁴⁷⁶ See Plato, *Timaeus*, 28a-b. The link between the Platonic forms and Word of God was made by a number of Jewish and Christian scholars in later antiquity, but perhaps most significantly Philo: see Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 25-6.

and thus mind-body relationship certainly were.⁴⁷⁷ For instance, consider the functions ascribed to the head and heart by Isidore in book eleven of the *Etymologiae*:

6. The primary part of the body is the head [*caput*], and it was given this name because from there all sense and nerves [*sensus omne et nervi*] originate, and every source of activity [*vigendus*] arises from it. In it, all sensations [*sensus*] become evident. Whence it plays the role, so to speak, of the soul itself, which watches over the body.⁴⁷⁸
7. The word heart [*cor*] is either derived from a Greek term, because they call it καρδία, or from care [*cura*], for in it resides all solicitude and the origin of knowledge [*scientiae*].⁴⁷⁹

The significance of this is that Isidore is doing more or less what John does in item 1: that is, ascribing different cognitive functions to different body parts. There is no suggestion here that John derived his views on the head and heart directly from Isidore, although he certainly could have known the passages from the *Etymologiae* cited above. There are some noteworthy similarities between John's and Isidore's accounts of the head and heart, such as both associating the soul with the head. But there are also some significant differences. For example, Isidore names the head as the source of action [*vigendus*: cf. *vigeo*] whereas John seems to locate this in the heart (*qua* the source of good and bad deeds). Nevertheless, the crucial point stands that an influential medieval thinker like John *did* locate different cognitive faculties or facets of the mind in different body parts and, moreover, that he very possibly believed that this view reflected, with some degree of accuracy, the realities of the mind-body relationship.

The idea that the whole of human mental life must be locatable in a single, discrete organ or area of the body is inextricably entwined with the modern western brain and medical sciences. It does not necessarily follow in premodern western contexts. Moreover, it was noted in Chapter Two that this idea has recently come in for some criticism in neuro- and cognitive science where the reciprocal influence of

⁴⁷⁷ For Plato's account of the distribution of the soul around the body see *Timaeus*, 69d-71e.

⁴⁷⁸ Isidore, *Etymologiae*, xi: 1 (25).

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, xi: 1(118).

the body and environment on the brain and hence mental life have become important topics of research and discussion.⁴⁸⁰ Some scholars have disparagingly described the tendency in modern western science to confine mental life to the brain as “embrainment”.⁴⁸¹ To be sure, none of this lends any retrospective support to premodern western psychology: nobody, for instance, is arguing that certain aspects of mental life can be attributed to the heart and others to the brain. What it does highlight, however, is the problematic nature of the assumption that mental life is confined to the brain or any other circumscribed parts or areas of the body. At the very least, the brain needs sense organs, a body, and external stimuli to function *as* the brain. More speculatively, cognition may also extend into the environment, as Andy Clark has argued, in various non-biological forms.⁴⁸²

4.3.3: Conclusion

Three conclusions can be drawn from this section. First, even though the mind and body were typically thought of as discrete and separable entities in premodern western thought, in so far as they merged to form individual people, it made sense to think of how they mapped on to each other: or in other words, whereabouts the parts of the mind could be located in the body. John’s body politic metaphors should not be viewed as *mere* metaphors (in the traditional sense of linguistic tropes or rhetorical devices).⁴⁸³ As I have argued above, they probably also reflect the influence of ancient ideas about the locations of faculties of the mind, especially reason and the emotions, in the body: a trend of thought that can be traced back to Plato and Homer, among others.⁴⁸⁴ Accordingly, it is very possible that John intended these metaphors to be partially accurate statements about the nature of the mind-body relationship.

Second, this section has highlighted a significant difference between the ways in which the mind-body relationship is conceptualised in premodern and modern

⁴⁸⁰ For the relevant discussion see Chapter Two, sec. 2.1.

⁴⁸¹ See Damasio, *Descartes’ Error*, p. 118 and Murphy and Brown, *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?*, p. 12.

⁴⁸² See *ibid.* or for direct reference, Clark, *Being There*, chapter 3.

⁴⁸³ As noted in Chapter Two, the opposing non-traditional theory of metaphor which I am using throughout this study is provided by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (see sec. 2.2). Lakoff’s and Johnson’s theory of metaphor was contrasted with a more conventional western view of metaphor, grounded in classical rhetoric and widely accepted in the medieval west, in sec. 2.2.5.

⁴⁸⁴ Plato’s theory of the mind was discussed in Chapter Three, sec. 3.1.1. The concept of the mind in Homer and archaic Greek thought has been widely discussed by classicists. For a brief summary of the relevant issues see Lloyd, *Cognitive Variations*, pp. 116-19.

western thought. In the modern era, particularly since the twentieth century with the fast development of the sciences of the brain and mind, human mental life has increasingly come to be understood as the product of one particular bodily organ: namely the brain (a view which, as noted previously, has recently come under some criticism within neuro- and cognitive science).⁴⁸⁵ By contrast, in the premodern west different faculties of the mind could be associated with different parts of the body. Premodern western thinkers were not beholden to any definitive proof of which part of the body produces and maintains mental states hence they were not committed to placing the mind in a single distinct part of the body. Therefore, we should be open to the possibility that the relevant question for a thinker such as John was not so much whether the mind was in the head or heart, but rather how its parts were distributed around the body.

Finally, it should be kept in mind that cultural and embodied factors are again at play in John's body politic metaphors. As noted in sec. 4.3.1 above, there is a clear cultural background to John's reasoning in his body politic metaphors, but we should not lose sight of the fact that if John himself had not been subject to embodied experiences of the kinds of mental faculties that he names in the metaphors then it would be hard to make any sense of why he penned them or engaged with the relevant cultural background in the first play. As is being argued throughout Part II of this study, the representation of human existence in the sample of source texts is best accounted for in terms of the interplay between cultural and biological factors. John's body politic metaphors do not just involve inherited cultural preconceptions about the nature of the mind-body relationship: they involve modes of reasoning which are, or were, inherently grounded in the embodied conditions of his existence. As argued in Chapter Three, sec. 3.3 previously, inherited cultural wisdom can only make sense if people are able to relate it to their immediate sensory experiences of the world. This follows for John's metaphors above in that he must have found correspondences between the ideas he inherited from the classical past about the mind-body relationship and his everyday sensory experiences of the world.

* * *

⁴⁸⁵ See pp. 166-7 above.

4.4: *The face*

This section explores the significance of the ways in which the face and its parts (*i.e.* “facial features”) are represented in the sample of source texts.⁴⁸⁶ Sec. 4.2 touched on the face’s importance in social life.⁴⁸⁷ This issue is explored further below with particular regard for the ways in which it functions as a communicative medium. Furthermore, this section discusses the role of the face in social life as an identity-marker and also the sense of direction and orientation that it gives people: especially front-back. Lakoff’s and Johnson’s theory of metaphor is also relevant here in that the face and its parts form the basis of a wide variety of metaphors in the sampled source texts.

Importantly, the status of the face as a body part is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, it may be viewed as a distinct bodily organ in as much as it seems to perform distinct functions in social life (*e.g.* communication and identity). However, on closer inspection it can be seen to consist of a series of smaller and more functionally discrete organs and tissues: the eyes, nose, mouth, skull, muscles, and so on. Given these difficulties, it is worth stressing that a particularly remarkable feature of the face is that it is experienced as *the face* in individual phenomenology: *i.e.* it is typically perceived as a structured and functionally discrete body part as opposed to an unstructured mass of cohering sense organs and tissues.⁴⁸⁸ Although the causes of this phenomenon are unclear, the wealth of perceptual experiences that the face can

⁴⁸⁶ There is a historiography on the theological significance of the faces of revered persons: especially Christ and Mary. Of particular relevance on this is a special 2007 issue of the art history journal, *Gesta*, (46: 2), subtitled ‘Contemporary Approaches to the Medieval Face’. Several articles from this are referenced below. There is also a modest discourse on how physiognomy, or the science of discerning somebody’s character from their appearance, which often placed especial emphasis on the interpretation of the face, was understood and used in the medieval west: for instance, see P. Squatriti, ‘Personal appearance and physiognomics in early medieval Italy’ in *Journal of Medieval History*, 14 (1988), pp. 191-202, J. Ziegler, ‘Text and Context: On the Rise of Physiognomic Thought in the Later Middle Ages’ in *De Sion exhibit et verbum domini de Hierusalem: Essays on Medieval Law, Liturgy, and Literature in Honour of Amnon Linder*, ed. Y. Hen (Turnhout, 2001), pp. 159-82, Perkinson, ‘Rethinking the Origins of Portraiture’ in *Gesta*, 46: 2 (2007), pp. 136-8, and T. Dale, ‘Romanesque Sculpted Portraits: Convention, Vision, and Real Presence’ in *Gesta*, 46: 2 (2007), pp. 105-7.

⁴⁸⁷ See the discussion of item 3, sec. 4.2, pp. 151-4.

⁴⁸⁸ Again, this may reflect the human tendency, noted in Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.1 to view the world as inherently structured.

elicit in human observers (e.g. visual recognition, identity, expression, or symmetry) is certainly suggestive of its importance to human mental and social life.⁴⁸⁹

The most prominent features of the face as people experience it are probably the surface features of the series of sense organs that are spread across it: the eyes [*oculi*], ears [*aures*], nose [*nasus*], mouth [*os*] and tongue [*lingua*]. These are among the most common body parts to recur throughout the chosen source texts. A variety of examples of their use, mostly in metaphors, will be discussed in this and the following section.⁴⁹⁰ A significant corollary of this is that four of the five senses, as noted in antique and modern medicine, are confined to the face, or more broadly, the head: vision [*visus*], hearing [*auditus*], smell [*olfactus*], and taste [*gustus*].⁴⁹¹ The fifth sense, touch [*tactus*], is also sensed on the face *via* the skin. By contrast, facial features that are not in some sense connected to the four sense-faculties bound to the head are rarely used, if at all, in the chosen source texts. For example, it is hard to find any examples of hair [*capillus, crinis*], cheeks [*genae*], lips [*labra*], the chin [*mentum*], and brow [*frons*], being used descriptively or as metaphors.⁴⁹²

It was noted in sec. 4.3 that Isidore viewed the head as the principal part of the body.⁴⁹³ This can be expanded further with reference to his views on the face:

The word for face comes from *visible likeness* [*effigie*], for all of the characteristic form of a human being and the ability for every person to be recognised resides in the face.⁴⁹⁴ [My italics]

Thus, Isidore acknowledges the role of the face as an identity-marker. However, he does not discuss which features of it, or faculties of human mental life, make this possible. Additionally, he goes on to explain the utility of facial expressions [*vultus*] in social life:

⁴⁸⁹ On symmetry, Dennett notes the possible survival value of being able to pick out symmetrical patterns in the natural environment in *Consciousness Explained*, pp. 179-80.

⁴⁹⁰ That is sections 4.4.1-2 and 4.5.

⁴⁹¹ For example, Isidore notes this in *Etymologiae*, xi: 1 (18-25).

⁴⁹² A cursory glance through any of the chosen source texts will throw up numerous examples of the sense organs, including the mouth and ears, being used descriptively and metaphorically. The same is not true of the other body parts noted in the texts. Incidentally, this may be a quirk of Latin texts: I cannot comment to what extent, if at all, this follows for medieval vernacular literatures.

⁴⁹³ See items 6 and 7 in sec. 4.3.2, p. 166 above.

⁴⁹⁴ Isidore, *Etymologiae*, xi: 1 (33).

But facial expression [*vultus*] is so called because the inclination of the will [*animi voluntas*] is displayed [*ostendo*] by it. The expression changes in various movements according to the will, whence the two terms for face [*facies*] differ from each other, for while the face refers simply to someone's natural appearance [*naturalis aspectus*], facial expression [*vultus*] reveals what he has on his mind [*animus*].⁴⁹⁵

It is noteworthy that the Latin word which now tends to be identified with the modern English term, “facial expression”, namely *vultus*, shares its root with the verb to will or wish, *volo*.⁴⁹⁶ Isidore highlights this connection in his etymology by pointing out that *vulti* show the “will of the soul [*animi voluntas*]”. Hence in this regard Isidore appears to have viewed facial expressions, to use the jargon of current analytical philosophy, as “intentional” phenomena, which is to say he viewed them as outwardly directed expressions of mental states.⁴⁹⁷

Isidore's evaluation of the face is helpful here to the extent that it shows us that the appearance of the face was viewed as significant by well-educated people in the late antique and medieval west: at least as an identity-marker and according to its “expression” [*vultus*] in response to differing circumstances, and surely in other unnoted ways. Furthermore, in making these connections Isidore draws attention to the relationship between the face and the mind, both in the package of the individual, and more broadly in the outward world where there are many people, all with faces and minds, connected in innumerable ways through the channels of the human social world. In this way, the face can be seen to act as a communicative medium, whereby aspects of people's mental lives are represented, intentionally or not, in a fashion which may be observed and interpreted by other people in the world.

In regard to all this, I will argue in this section that the face and its parts (especially the sense organs) tend to assume symbolic, including metaphorical, significances, in medieval cultures, as will be seen in this and the following section

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, xi: 1 (34).

⁴⁹⁶ *Vultus* may also be taken to mean likeness or portrait (cf. *simulacrum*): see Lewis and Short, *s.n. vultus* (accessed 22 / 09 / 09): Burrow notes that “expression” first began to be used in English to describe the appearance of the face in the early modern period; see *Looks and Gestures*, p. 82.

⁴⁹⁷ For a now classic discussion of the importance of intentionality to human mental and social life see J. R. Searle, *Intentionality: an essay in the philosophy of the mind* (Cambridge, 1983): Searle has recently iterated his previous views on intentionality in *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilisation* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 25-41.

(4.5), because of the intimacy between its expression and the state of the mind and also its prominence in the visual aspect of human phenomenology. The basic tendency that people have to form ideas about what is going on in other people's minds by observing their faces is probably innate. But this still leaves plenty of room for variation in the more specific significances that people draw from the appearance of the face in a wide-range of socio-cultural settings.

The interpretation of specific facial expressions offers a case in point. Since the nineteenth century western scientists and anthropologists have been studying how people, as well as some primates and higher order mammals, respond to their peers' facial expressions. From an outsider's perspective, it seems that there is a broad consensus in these fields that at least some human and animal facial expressions are "hard-wired", both in their physiological performance and interpretation by observers of the same species: the most common example invoked to demonstrate this is smiling, not least because smiles are notoriously hard to fake.⁴⁹⁸ This seems a reasonable, but also limited conclusion, not least given the infamously "artificial" settings in which research of this sort has often been undertaken (as well as the Eurocentric assumptions directing the course of most such studies).⁴⁹⁹ It is entirely conceivable that smiles automatically connote happiness or pleasure of some sort throughout the human world: but this has nothing to say about the place and timing of smiles, nor variation in what counts as "happiness" and "pleasure", and thus the reasons why people may smile, and the kinds of responses that smiles are likely to elicit from observers, in a potentially infinite range of socio-cultural circumstances.

In short, the probable innateness of the performance and superficial interpretation (*i.e.* smile = happiness / pleasure) of some, but certainly not all, facial expressions provides only a limited account of the importance of the face in human mental and social life. It seems absolutely necessary to augment this with a culturalist understanding of the circumstances in which performance and interpretation occur (including in laboratory conditions). But if this is so, then as noted above, should we

⁴⁹⁸ On the interpretation of smiles, there is the matter of "fake smiles": see Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, pp. 141-2 and Pinker, *How the Mind Works*, pp. 414-16. The importance of the difficulty of faking smiles is that it gives an indication of how strongly connected to hardwired physiology certain facial expressions are. For some more relevant discussions of facial expressions among humans and primates see Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, pp. 35-7, 41-2, and chapter 8 (especially pp. 124-5); Pinker, *How the Mind Works*, pp. 272-4 and 365-6; additionally, Smail's comments on facial expressions in chapter four of *Deep History and the Brain*, although brief, raise important caveats: see pp. 114-15 and 130-1.

⁴⁹⁹ Lloyd discusses issues raised by this kind of research throughout *Cognitive Variations*: chapter three is especially instructive.

be maintaining two discrete modes of explanation for phenomena such as the face? That is, is it really helpful to think of the biological basis of the face and its cultural effects as belonging to separate logical or ontological domains, or would it be better to collapse the difference? I shall postpone providing an answer to this until the conclusion to this section: suffice to say for now the face is an excellent example of a phenomenon which can only be properly explained in terms of the interacting influences of mind, body, and culture.

Finally, as the most important and widely read text in the medieval west, it is important here to take account of the Bible as a potential source of facial metaphors available to the relevant authors. For example, consider the following excerpts taken from Psalm 16 only:

- O Lord, my justice: attend to my supplication. Give ear unto my prayer, which proceedeth not from deceitful lips.

[A]udi Deus iustum intende deprecationem meam auribus percipe orationem meam absque labiis mendacii. [Ps. 16: 1]

- Let my judgment come forth from thy countenance: let thy eyes behold the things that are equitable.

[D]e vultu tuo iudicium meum prodeat oculi tui videant aequitates. [Ps. 16: 2]

- That my mouth may not speak the works of men: for the sake of the words of thy lips, I have kept hard ways.

[C]ogitationes meas transire os meum in opere hominum propter verbum labiorum tuorum ego observavi vias latronis. [Ps. 16: 4]

- From them that resist thy right hand keep me, as the apple of thy eye. Protect me under the shadow of thy wings.

[A] resistentibus dexteræ tuæ custodi me quasi pupillam intus in oculo in umbra alarum tuarum protege me. [Ps. 16: 8]

- From the face of the wicked who have afflicted me. My enemies have surrounded my soul.

[A] facie impiorum vastantium me inimici mei animam meam circumdederunt. [Ps. 16: 9]⁵⁰⁰

I quote these passages as general examples showing how frequently ideas about the face occur in the Bible. A specific example of one of the relevant authors, namely Peter, echoing a biblical passage is discussed below in sec. 4.4.2.⁵⁰¹ For now, as discussed elsewhere in this study, it should be noted that the Bible was of crucial importance in the literate cultures of medieval Europe.⁵⁰² The Bible can be credited with some degree of influence on many, if not most, aspects of the conceptual reasoning of the authors relevant here, including how they thought and wrote about the face.

4.4.1: Facial expressions

The following excerpt, taken from Guibert's *De Vita Sua*, gives some idea of how he experienced and understood the value of the face in a socio-religious context:

1. Thereupon we saw the face of the Holy Mother changed to a **tranquil expression**.

*[I]llico piae Matris faciem in **serenum** versam vidimus.*⁵⁰³

Guibert is here describing a change in the face of a statue of the Virgin Mary that immediately followed an act of divine punishment meted out to the community of the

⁵⁰⁰ All translations taken from www.LatinVulgate.com (accessed 10 / 01 / 10)

⁵⁰¹ See sec. 4.4.2, p. 184.

⁵⁰² This is discussed in particular detail in Chapter Five, sec. 5.2.1.

⁵⁰³ Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, i: 23.

monastery of St Germer-de-Fly, and in particular, three monks of apparently dubious character who were killed by the event.⁵⁰⁴

Firstly, there is a significant conceptual difference between how Guibert and Benton, the translator of the above passage, construe the relationship between the face and its appearance in item 1. In contrast to the immediacy of the relationship between the face and its appearance in Guibert's text, which has the sense that Mary's face *turned* or *became* serene [*faciem in serenum versam*], Benton adds an additional object, *viz.* "facial expression", which stands in itself for the face's appearance. Taking account of this, I propose an alternative translation:

Immediately we saw that the face of the holy mother had *become* tranquil.
[My translation]

Thereupon we saw the face of the Holy Mother changed to a tranquil expression. [Benton's translation]

The change that Guibert describes, using *versam*, is more direct than Benton's translation: hence my suggestion, "become", to describe the transition ("Mary's face *becomes* tranquil" as opposed to "changes to a tranquil expression"). Benton's translation unnecessarily imposes a different conceptual structure on the sentence in that the quality of tranquillity is ascribed to an aspect or possession of the face rather than the face itself. This is as opposed to Guibert's Latin, in which tranquillity is construed as a quality directly pertaining to the face.

Guibert could conceivably have used *vultus* to express a change to Mary's face (*e.g. Illico piae Matris faciem in vultum serenum versam vidimus*). However, he did not. Therefore, it can be seen that there is nothing about Latin, or indeed modern English, that forces its users to conceptualise the appearance of the face as an object in itself: either way, the face may become tranquil just as easily as it may adopt a tranquil expression. Of course, to some extent, it is reasonable to think about what Guibert represents as a change in the appearance of Mary's face as a "facial expression", providing, however, we acknowledge this as an inference from the text, and more importantly, that it changes the conceptual structure and thus meaning of

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, i: 23.

Guibert's Latin, ostensibly, it seems, to satisfy a conceptual understanding of the face now common among modern English-speakers.

Guibert clearly believed that changes in Mary's mental state were sufficient to cause changes to the appearance of her face: hence there is an explicitly acknowledged link between qualitative states of the mind and body. In this way, Mary's face is important both for its changing form and the symbolic value of the change in its form as perceived by Guibert and his fellow monks in relation to a complex socio-religious setting. Accordingly, the change to Mary's face is seen by Guibert and the monks, not merely in terms of its superficial content as "serene", but more powerfully as an expression of the God's omniscience and will as regards the behaviour befitting the monks of a religious community (according to medieval Western European stereotypes of monasticism).⁵⁰⁵

Furthermore, Guibert employs a telling facial metaphor to describe how he and the monks were provoked by the miraculous punishment to reflect on their own consciences and state of the community:

2. When we had recovered from the amazement which had fallen on us through this event, after making confession, we sadly began to consider why we had suffered for our sins beyond human expression, and, being brought by God **face to face with ourselves**, by **looking into our consciences** we discovered how justly we had been punished.

*Postquam autem a stupore, qui ex eventu illo acciderat, experrecti sumus, et confessione facta, quid pro peccatis nostris passi eramus, supra quam dici ab homine potest, tristes pensare coepimus, et statuti a Deo **contra facies nostras ex respectu conscientiarum nostrarum** didicimus quam juste pertulerimus...*⁵⁰⁶

It seems fairly clear that by *contra facies nostras*, Guibert meant "face-to-face" in abstraction as opposed to reflection (hence this is taken here as an explicit metaphor). Nevertheless, it is worth flagging up the possibility that to some degree this might

⁵⁰⁵ Burrow provides a wide overview of the functions and significances ascribed to the face in Western European medieval literature in *Gestures and Looks*, pp. 69-113.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, i: 23.

have been informed by embodied experiences of seeing one's own face in reflection. This point is not intended to take any force away from the metaphor. In fact, it sits quite happily with Lakoff's and Johnson's theory of metaphor, which, as explained, proposes that metaphors are informed by sensorimotor experience. Accordingly, in highlighting this possible source of sensorimotor input for Guibert's *facies-ad-faciem* formula, there is no need to propose that Guibert saw the metaphor strictly in terms of a particular kind of sensorimotor experience. It is simply a matter of highlighting one of many possible sensorimotor inputs, which may help to account for the sense of the metaphor in *embodied* terms.

This is closely followed by another metaphor, which carries an even stronger basis in embodied experiences of sight and gaze: *ex respectu conscientiarum nostrarum*. Importantly, this expands on the former metaphor in so far as by naming the conscience [*conscientia*] as the object of Guibert's and the monks' gazes, it provides by inference the probable object of sight beyond the face in the previous metaphor. That is, when Guibert says that he and his fellow monks were brought up *against* their faces [*contra facies nostras*], given what he then goes on to say, it seems clear that "face-to-face" is intended here as a metaphor for introspection, specifically on a supposed facet of the mind, the conscience.⁵⁰⁷

This is illustrative of the strength of the perceived link between the face and mind in human phenomenology in an important way. Metaphor is often understood as a linguistic process whereby something complex is represented as something simpler in order to render the complex referent of the metaphor more easily understandable. Yet in a sense Guibert's face-to-face metaphor does the opposite: that is, it illustrates something very simple, or better, *more direct* (*i.e.* pure mental self-examination), in terms of something *less direct* (*i.e.* looking at one's own face, presumably because the appearance of the face provides understanding of the current mental state of the person to whom it belongs). So we must consider in what way inserting the face into the mind as a barrier illuminates, rather than obscures, what Guibert intended to express through his face-to-face metaphor.

I would argue this does two important things, the first informed by how people experience themselves as conscious beings, while the second reflects deeply-rooted

⁵⁰⁷ Medieval and ancient theories involving the partition of the mind into distinct parts were discussed in the previous chapter: see 3.1.1 and 3.3.1.

suspicious in Western Christian theological discourse about the kind of self-understanding which may be achieved directly through consciousness.

Firstly, it makes the process of introspection more easily understandable by pushing the powerful illusion of the internal observer, or in different words, the so-called homunculus or audience in the “Cartesian theatre”, into the foreground.⁵⁰⁸ Hence instead of the object of self-inspection being the continuously changing mass of evanescent mental states, many of which are only ever experienced on the periphery of consciousness, which form the phenomenon called “the mind” in western cultures, it is the rather more consistent body part that people recognise, perhaps innately, as sharing an intimate link with the mind, namely the face. Therefore, Guibert’s face-to-face metaphor serves both to reflect the illusion that our bodies apparently create for us of there being an observer of the mind in the mind, and also to give this observer a reasonably stable object over which to cast its gaze. In these ways, the metaphor reflects not so much a linguistic stab at making the phenomenon of introspection easier to understand, but rather the body’s own physiological mechanism for making our own minds more easily understandable to ourselves.

Secondly, there is element of force here in that Guibert and the monks need to be *brought by God to stand against their faces* (as the Latin more literally reads). That is, to draw the obvious inference, it was not enough simply for Guibert and the monks to have knowledge of their sins immediately available to them in their conscious minds: their awareness of it needed to be forced by God via a miracle which made examples of the worst offenders (the three monks who died). So the potential immediacy of self-knowledge through consciousness is not in itself a guarantee that people will be self-aware of what they ought to be (things can always be “repressed”), nor that being self-aware of what one ought to be will necessarily lead one to the right conclusions about oneself (in this context, according to Western Christian morality): the latter distinction presumably marks the difference between mere awareness of sins and genuine contrition.⁵⁰⁹ Ideas such as these are prevalent throughout Augustine’s *Confessions* and elsewhere in the corpus of Western Christian theological discourse, in which there is always the sneaking suspicion that conscious self-awareness may not be what it seems: to use St Paul’s pithy metaphor, self-

⁵⁰⁸ For earlier discussions of this see Chapter Two, sec. 2.1, pp. 39-41: for direct reference see Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, pp. 101-11.

⁵⁰⁹ On the nature of contrition, particularly as opposed to mere confession, see Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, pp. 29-31.

awareness is like *seeing through a glass darkly* [*per speculum enigmatē*], at least until the dark is dispelled by the light of God.⁵¹⁰

Finally, I turn to another excerpt from Guibert's *vita* in which he describes how his mother presented her face in the social world (*i.e.* for other people to observe):

3. The seriousness of her manner was such as to make evident her scorn for all vanity; the gravity of her eyes, the restraint of her speech, and the modesty of her **expression** [or “**face**”] gave no encouragement to light looks.

*[I]llius enim habitudinis gravitas totius vanitatis poterat insinuare contemptum, oculorum namque pondus, raritas eloquendi ac faciei motuum difficultas, minime levitatibus intuentium obsecundat.*⁵¹¹

Guibert here uses a series of concepts grounded in sensorimotor experience to represent the way in which his mother presented her face and body in the social world, her *habitus*, and the kind of attention this invited: most significantly, weight [*gravis*], lightness [*levitas*], motion [*motuum*], and *difficultas*, which is perhaps best taken here to mean exertion (*i.e.* the use of force to achieve some kind of effect in the world). In this way, we can clearly see that Guibert was able to draw on his embodied experiences of apparently unremarkable physical phenomena to represent various aspects of the social world of northern France as he knew it.

Additionally, this excerpt presents a somewhat different understanding of how the face may function in social and mental life to that seen above in items 1 and 2. In item 1 Mary's face merits attention because of its remarkable expressivity and thus the access it granted into the Will of God. Similarly, the face is important in item 2 because it potentially grants access to the mind. In contrast to all this, Guibert's mother's face in item 3 is supposedly significant for its lack of expressivity and so, we might be led to infer, the lack of access it granted observers into her mind. Yet lack of expressivity, both on the face and body, is in fact construed here as an oblique form of non-verbal communication, whereby Guibert's mother projects signals in the social world that actively discourage certain forms of undesirable attention: namely, “light

⁵¹⁰ Paul, I Cor. 13: 12.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, i: 2.

looks” [*levitates intuentium*]. What is more, Guibert represents the opposition between his mother’s *habitus* and the kind of attention in the social world it was calculated to repel in terms of the two opposing qualities of the phenomenon of weight [*pondus*]: heaviness [*gravis*] and lightness [*levitas*].

This gives us a particularly good illustration of the problems inherent in separating the biological nature of human life from the socio-cultural effects brought about by it. There is a clear cause-effect relationship between human biology and culture and society and it is not at all clear how we are supposed to draw an analytical, or logical, line between them. This is one example among many highlighted in this study: but all the same, it is particularly striking that embodied experiences of an unremarkable phenomenon such as weight can provide so much insight into the nature of the complex social environments that human beings navigate on a daily basis.

4.4.2: *The face and its effects in the world*

Of the sample of source texts, the letters of John of Salisbury and Peter of Celle offer some particularly vivid examples of the face and parts of it being used in metaphors. Thus, consider the following two excerpts, which are conceptually similar in many respects:

1. For I only saw the face, for which I longed, by night and scarce even then, and that evil fortune which is so often mine, stole it from me all too swiftly, so that I could not see it again in the morning to salute it, when I departed all the more anxious for the sight.

*Cum enim desideratam facie vestram nocturno tempore et ad modicum et vix viderim, eadem michi solito infortunio cito nimis subtracta est ut eam nec ad salutandam michi discedenti et eo magis cupienti mane licuerit revidere.*⁵¹²

2. You have with you those intermediaries by whose intervention friendship sprang between us, on whose love your soul depends as much as mine.

⁵¹² John, *Letters*, i: 97.

Behold in them and from them our face, and consider what affection we have towards you.

*Mediatores illos quorum interventu familiaritas inter nos oborta est penes vos habetis, de quorum amore tam vester quam noster animus pendet. In ipsis et ex ipsis faciem nostram aspiciate, et quam habeamus erga vos affectionem pensate.*⁵¹³

In both items the face functions as a point of social contact between individuals, in spite of the circumstances related in each example.

Firstly, item 1 is taken from a letter by John to an unknown addressee.⁵¹⁴ John laments the limited contact that he had had with the face [*facies*] of the person to whom the letter was addressed while staying somewhere on official business, and more so because he was not able to bid him farewell upon leaving. In this case, the face functions as a metonym for this person and also as a point of social contact and communication between them. Furthermore, in representing the person in this way, John draws attention to certain aspects of his being as a person: he is associated with his face and thereby whatever functions or qualities his face, and faces in general, were understood to perform or carry in the twelfth-century west. Clearly the communicative functions of the face are relevant in this respect. John may also have had in mind the qualities of the face that make it suitable as an identity-marker. But in any case, what is evident from this is that there are no clear boundaries between the biological and socio-cultural significances of the face. We may choose to analyse it in these terms, but then the distinction between biology and society and culture is imposed rather than inherent in the text.

Meanwhile, item 2 is taken from a letter by Peter, addressed to Abbot Hugh of Bury St Edmunds. The face again serves as a metonym, but this time for a group rather than an individual: specifically the community of Celle, of which Peter was then abbot (note he instructs Hugh to see “our”, rather than his, face [*faciem noster*] in the messengers). Once again, the face is construed as a point of social contact and thus communication between the two communities: Bury is asked to discern the affection [*affectio*] in which it was held by Celle. However, this involves effacement

⁵¹³ Peter, *Letters*, 117.

⁵¹⁴ Millor and Butler rule out Peter of Celle as a possible recipient: see John, *Letters*, i., p. 149 (n. 2).

of the identities and mental lives of the messengers, from whose faces Bury is supposed to discern Celle's affection for it. Haseldine suggests that the intermediaries in question are John of Salisbury and his kinsman, Geoffrey of St Edmund's.⁵¹⁵ Whoever they were, they were probably more than mere messengers, not least as Peter describes them as *mediatores* rather than the more common *nuntii* [messengers]. Still, the point stands that their identities and personal mental lives are subsumed under the "public face" of Celle (so to speak), even though they were probably not members of that community.

Again, this demonstrates the difficulty in separating the body from its socio-cultural effects since the way in which the face is represented in this excerpt can be seen to be influenced by, first, the literary conventions which constrained the style of Latin letters in twelfth-century Europe, second, how its appearance was interpreted in socio-cultural circumstances familiar to Peter, and third, Peter's immediate embodied experiences of the face (be that his own and other people's faces). Therefore, in short, there is no clear separation between the biological face and its socio-cultural effects: they are surely continuous.

Another important way in which the face is represented in the sample of source texts is by the ascription of functions or capacities to its parts (especially the sense organs). For instance, consider the following two examples, taken from Peter's letters, in which the eyes [*oculi*], mouth [*os*], and tongue [*lingua*] are used to represent reading and writing:

3. The heights, my dearest one, of your letters recede, raised up into such a density of the clouds that they scarcely admit by any means, even the most strenuous efforts, the gaze of my **eyes**... Certainly I do not by any means envy you with a mean **eye**, but I still pity myself because the more brightly your fortune, the neighbour of mine shines out, so the more dimly this one glimmers. So as long as you closed the bolts of your **mouth**, as long as you allowed your **eyes** to sleep, as long as you did not lay your hand on the quiver, I spoke with greater fluency and greater words...

⁵¹⁵ See Haseldine, n. 1, to Peter, *Letters*, 117.

*Cacumina, dilectissime, litterarum tuarum in tantum nubium densitatem sublevata sese recipient quod vix conatibus difficillimis acumen **luminum** meorum quoquomodo admittant...Tibi quidem **oculo** nequam nequaquam invideo, attamen michi condoleo quia quanto sors tua mec vicina relucet splendidior tanto ipsa subluceat obscurior. Dum ergo repagula **ori** induxisti, dum **oculis** dormitationem indulxisti, dum manum ad pharetram non adduxisti, magna maiorum celeritate verborum effabar...*⁵¹⁶

4. The **eye** cannot see so let the pen speak. I cannot go but at least I have the strength to write [alt. I hasten to come by written parchment as my limbs are presently hampered by my decrepit body]. Let parchment report back what the **tongue** cannot. Let the dead image make up for what the living and true one lacks the strength to do. Let syllables give word of our circumstances because utterance from the **mouth** cannot. I long to see you.

*Cernere non potest oculus, alloquantur stilus. Currat in **membranis** littera quia in **membris** suis retardatur corporalis praesentia. Referat carta quod non potest lingua. Suppleat imago mortua quod non valet viva vera. Syllabe fortunam nostram nuntient quia eloquia oris nequeunt. Desidero vos videre.*⁵¹⁷

Most obviously, in both excerpts the eyes, mouth, and tongue act as metonyms for the senses and abilities they make possible. Bearing this in mind, it seems noteworthy that the hands [*manūs*] don't get a mention here as they are surely also integral components in the production of written verbal communication: more so in fact than the mouth and tongue. The manual tools of writing, pens [*pharetra* and *stilus*] and parchment [*membranum*], are noted, but the greater weight of representation and understanding is nevertheless placed on the aforesaid parts of the face.

This may reflect, as noted above, an uneven distribution of bodily-awareness in human consciousness and phenomenology.⁵¹⁸ The sensory faculties of the body are more concentrated in and around the head than any other part of the body. Four of the

⁵¹⁶ Peter, *Letters*, 50.

⁵¹⁷ Peter, *Letters*, 100. I have switched the first two clauses of the translation to the order in the Latin.

⁵¹⁸ See sec. 4.4, pp. 169-70 above.

five conventional senses are sensed only around the head. While people’s conscious awareness of themselves and the outside world may be informed by feelings originating throughout the body, the great majority of these feelings originate from the sense organs of the head (most of them positioned at its “front”).⁵¹⁹ Therefore, as argued above, if human reason is earthed in the conditions of human embodiment and sensorimotor experiences then it is important to give some consideration to the differing degrees of *sympathy* with which people experience the different parts or areas of their bodies.⁵²⁰ The senses of the head dominate human consciousness and phenomenology, and so by virtue of this, it seems, they may exert a disproportionate influence over human reason (when considered in light of the complexity and extent of the rest of the body). The head is also the external source of spoken language, so in addition to the communicative functions performed by the face the capacity to speak may also be located in the head. This connection is made by Peter in items 3 and 4. However, he also draws attention to the ineffectiveness of the body’s immediate capacities to make sensorimotor contact with people over long distances: that is, seeing, speaking to, and hearing them. It is in regard to this that he refers to pens, parchment, and the general activity and culture of letter-writing that he knew. It is also very likely that Peter was influenced in this regard, as his letters so often are, by the content of the Bible. For instance, the remarkably similar idea about the nature of writing is expressed by the following extract from the Book of Psalms: My tongue is the pen of a swift scribe [[L]*ingua mea stilus scribae velocis*].⁵²¹

At this point, it is worth returning to Andy Clark’s views on the relationship between the human organism (mind and body) and its cultural effects.⁵²² Peter represents the activity and products of letter-writing in items 3 and 4 as though he conceived of them as extensions of his biological mechanisms for making visual and

⁵¹⁹ The fact that people experience the faceward side of their bodies as its front offers a case in point. This idea is based on how people experience their bodies rather than the faceward side of the body carrying the intrinsic property of “frontness”. I would hazard that this is how Lakoff and Johnson would set out the point in *Philosophy in the Flesh*: for a discussion of the content of this work and relevant notes see Chapter Two, sec. 2.1, pp. 44-7.

⁵²⁰ It is worth bearing in mind the etymology of our word sympathy. It comes from the Greek, συμπαθεια, defined in Liddell and Scott as “fellow-feeling” (or more obliquely, “affinity”), which itself can be broken into its roots, σύν [with], and πάσχω [to suffer or be affected by anything whether good or bad]: see Liddell and Scott, *s.n. sumpatheia, sun*, and *pasxw* (accessed 19 / 06 / 2010). The point in noting all this is that the concept of sympathy, which, in many ways, has changed little since antiquity, has its roots in sensory experience: it is not quite as abstract an idea as modern usage may often suggest (not least as it is often confused with “empathy”).

⁵²¹ Ps. 44: 2: my translation. Augustine uses this in *Confessions*, xi: 2.

⁵²² See Chapter Two, sec. 2.1, pp. 47-9.

verbal contact with people. More specifically, by conceit of the pen and parchment Peter is able to overcome the limitations of his body: there is a relevant pun in item 4, which cannot be translated into English; parchments [*membrana*] do the work that Peter's *membra* [limbs] cannot.

Clark's analysis exposes the difficulties inherent in drawing anything more substantive than an arbitrary, albeit, in some ways logically helpful, distinction between the sensorimotor capacities of the biological body and its effects in the world. As the present example shows, this insight may be usefully applied to premodern texts. The continuity between Peter's body and its effects, *viz.* written letters, is explicitly described in items 3 and 4, for example. This seems best exemplified by his *membra-membrana* pun, which absolutely begs to be read in terms of parchment functioning as an extension or enhancement of the limbs. Furthermore, although, as argued above, the sensory organs of the head and face provide the most explicit reference points in both items because they feature so strongly in human consciousness, the motor functions of the body are implied throughout. The limbs and particularly hands are necessary to write letters, and the locomotive capacity of the body may be inferred from Peter's claim in item 4 that decrepitude prevented him from travelling.

4.4.3: *Conclusion*

This section has highlighted the importance of the face to how several of the authors relevant to this study, namely Guibert, John, and Peter, experienced the body, and via the body, the world. It seems that the face features more prominently in human consciousness and phenomenology than any other localised part or area of the body. The intensity with which people experience, and thereby sympathise, with their faces is unquestionably a result of it being the only part of the body through which all five of the conventional senses are experienced, four of which are experienced *only* via the face (or perhaps head in the case of the ears). Hence, considered from an embodied perspective, it is not surprising that the face is afforded so much significance in human social life and the production of cultural media in the excerpts considered in this section (as well as item 3 in sec. 4.3): nor that John, and many other premodern

western intellectuals, saw the head as the principal member of the body, as was seen in sec. 4.3.

There is also a strong element of conventionality in how the face may be represented and conceptualised. While embodied experiences of the face place it in a prominent position in human consciousness and phenomenology, socio-cultural pressures can be seen to modify how people experience and interpret its importance in their mental lives. This can be seen in various ways in the excerpts examined above. For instance, Guibert's claim that his mother's lack of expression repelled the "light looks" of undesirable observers is clearly informed by his own experiences of the nature of human social life. Peter's view that written letters could serve as substitutes for the limited effectiveness of vision and the spoken word is obviously informed by letter-writing customs and Latin literary culture in twelfth-century Europe as well as, presumably, by his own immediate experiences of reading and writing letters: as noted above, Peter's thinking in this regard may also have been influenced by the content of the Bible. Accordingly, the key conclusion here is that neither strictly embodied nor culturalist approaches to the face are sufficient to account for its observable complexity as a phenomenon: rather, understanding is needed of how the face reflects the interplay between mind, body, and culture.

4.5: Compound metaphors

This section is concerned with metaphors that combine two or more ostensibly clashing ideas to form coherent propositions about some other thing that is not directly referred to (*i.e.* "compound metaphors"). The three examples given below, taken from John's and Peter's letters, follow a similar formula in that they all combine an idea about a part of the face or head, and another about some other body part (bearing in mind that the body part featured in item 3, the heart, may also be seen as a cognitive phenomenon), to provide understanding of mental states.⁵²³ In this respect, they should be viewed as a specific kind of compound metaphor rather than as a representative sample of the full range of compound metaphors to be found in the sampled texts. A full analysis of compound metaphors as they occur in the relevant

⁵²³ The status of the heart as a cognitive phenomenon or faculty of the mind was discussed in sec. 4.3.

texts is beyond the scope of this study. However, for present purposes, the following examples serve to illustrate their broad significance:

1. [Y]ou first tickled my ears with sweet words...

*[A]ures michi ante dulciloquio perfricuisti...*⁵²⁴

2. [S]preading the snares of daily concerns beneath my feet so that I have made void what issued from my lips.

*[E]xpandentes retia cotidianarum sollicitudinum pedibus meis ut quod egressum est de labiis meis facerem irritum.*⁵²⁵

3. When I saw your letter my heart was filled with rejoicing, my mouth with laughter.

*Vt uidi litteras tuas cor meum iubilo, os meum impletum est risu.*⁵²⁶

In item 1, John conceptualises the hollow pleasures of being subject to flattery in terms of hearing through his ears [*ures*] and his ears being tickled or rubbed [*perfrico*]: being tickled or rubbed presumably involves a set of hands or some other limb or object that can be used for these purposes.⁵²⁷ Thus, the sense of item 1 is something like *being flattered is like having one's ears tickled*. Item 2 provides understanding of the frustration caused to Peter by the daily concerns of his abbey in terms of standing on his feet [*pedes*], speaking through his lips [*labia*], and his words being ineffective or unable to achieve their desired purpose. And finally, in item 3 Peter links the pleasure elicited by reading a letter sent by a close friend to his heart [*cor*] acting as a container for joy and his mouth [*os*] as a vent for laughter: perhaps because the joy, overflowing from his heart, has risen up to his mouth and overflowed in the form of laughter.

⁵²⁴ John, *Letters*, i: 110.

⁵²⁵ Peter, *Letters*, 59.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁵²⁷ John is rebuking an unnamed “man of Lisieux” for tarnished his reputation hence being tickled in this context refers to disingenuous flattery: See John, *Letters*, i: 110.

These excerpts each demonstrate in analogous ways how people may construct logically mixed reasoning strategies from their embodied experiences of the world. In each case, mental states (*e.g.* suspicion, anxiety, and happiness), behaviours (*e.g.* speech and laughter), and complex socio-cultural phenomena (*e.g.* flattery, the day-to-day management of a monastic estate, and friendship) are conceptualised and represented, by way of networks of experiential and logical entailments, in terms of each other.⁵²⁸ It seems reasonable enough to assume that there is no direct *qualitative* sense in which being flattered by means of words *feels* at all like having one's ears tickled: likewise, the anxieties caused by running a monastic estate without doubt cannot feel, *in any immediate qualitative sense*, like having one's feet ensnared. But, nevertheless, the conceptual links between sensorimotor experiences, on the one hand, and subjectively-felt mental states, on the other, are there and can be interpreted by other people, in whose mental lives the links may not have been made previously.

Item 3 is slightly more problematic as while we in the present can be certain that mental states such as joy are certainly not felt in the heart (although they may be influenced by its behaviour), Peter certainly could have believed this to be the case.⁵²⁹ Still, it is instructive that he demonstrates some degree of appreciation for the continuity between the mind and the body, for the state of his heart, filled with joy, is clearly linked to the behaviour of the mouth and its resulting effect, *viz.* laughter. There is some ambiguity about whether *cor* is merely a passive container for joy (hence Φ_2), or instead a location at which it is felt (so Φ_1).⁵³⁰ Yet when it came to understanding the causal relationship between human behaviours and mental life, Peter evidently could not help but conceptualise the mind and body as continuous phenomena, regardless of whatever he formally believed about their ontological and logical relationship. In any case, item 3 draws a clear conceptual link between a qualitative experience, joy, and a related behaviour, laughter.

The causal link between joy and laughter, as it is construed in item 3, is stronger than those drawn in item 1 between hearing and being tickled and in item 2 between anxiety and being ensnared. This is to say, item 3 highlights a more plausible connection than items 1 and 2 between mental life and behaviour or

⁵²⁸ My thinking is heavily influenced by Lakoff's and Johnson's views on conceptual systems and entailments, coherence, and consistency between metaphors in *Metaphors We Live By*: for relevant discussion and notes see Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.

⁵²⁹ On the possible cognitive functions of the heart in premodern western thought see sec. 4.3.

⁵³⁰ The symbols used here were defined and discussed previously in Chapter Three, sec. 3.2.

sensorimotor experiences: *i.e.* laughter seems a “natural” behavioural response to pleasure; joy *causes* laughter. However, the ostensible “realism” of the conceptual link between laughter and joy in item 3 does not detract from the key argument being made here: namely that sensorimotor experience informs abstract reasoning. In fact, the link in item 3 between joy and laughter sheds stronger light on the basis of this link since it draws attention to a circumstance in which a behavioural motor response seems to follow, quite “naturally”, on the feeling of a certain kind of mental state. It is perhaps clear cases like this, in which the mind and body are so obviously connected, that provide the foundations for more adventurously abstract associations between sensorimotor experiences and mental life, such as those to be found in items 1 and 2.

4.6: Final Conclusion

This chapter has consistently highlighted the interplay between mind, body, and culture in the sample of source texts. It has been shown above that the representation and conceptualisation of the body in the relevant texts invariably raises questions which cannot be ignored about the mind and culture. The body is never *just* the body, be it in the world or as it is represented and conceptualised in verbal media. Bodies are cognitive agents which interact with one another in ways that produce the wide variety of phenomena which we in the west subsume under the labels, “society” and “culture”. Although it is conceptually convenient to distinguish between mind, body, and culture for the purposes of academic discourse, we must accept that in the world the phenomena to which these labels relate share the same plain of existence and are in many ways barely distinguishable.

This leads on to the point made at the beginning of this chapter about the pressing need, raised by Lloyd in his recent book, *Cognitive Variations* (2007), to problematise the sharp distinction, widely held in western thought since classical antiquity, between nature, on the one hand, and culture or society on the other. Lloyd highlights the deep roots of the idea of “nature” in certain strains of western thought, which he contrasts with the apparent lack of an analogous concept in ancient Chinese thought. Moreover, he notes the presence of ideas about group-being and belonging in both western and eastern thought. From these observations, Lloyd draws the eye-

opening conclusion that some idea of group-being (*i.e.* “society” or “culture”) is more necessary, or at least more prevalent, than a concept of nature in human thought: that is, whereas people will very likely conceptualise the world as containing relatively homogenous human groups (*e.g.* cultures, societies, tribes, or communities) they will not necessarily see human groups or their cultural effects as being ontologically or categorically distinct from the non-manmade contents of the world (*i.e.* nature).⁵³¹ In this way, Lloyd’s analysis instructively problematises the long-standing distinction in western thought between nature, as well as biology, and culture and society by showing that there is no innate imperative for human beings to see the products of human groups as being distinct from everything else, living and nonliving, in the world.⁵³²

The analysis of the sample of source texts in this chapter lends support to Lloyd’s views on the nature-culture distinction by highlighting the interplay between embodied reasoning and socio-culturally constructed attitudes towards the body. This also gels with the findings of cognitive science discussed in Chapter Two: especially Clark’s analysis of the relationship between biology and culture.⁵³³ Thus, it can be concluded here that the analysis of the sample of source texts in this chapter supports the view that human biology and its effects in the world, whether we call them society, culture, or whatever else, are observably entwined in a cause-effect feedback loop, and moreover, that there is nothing necessary about the nature- or biology-culture distinction which has long pervaded western science and philosophy. This distinction may be logically cogent in abstract thought, but abstract thought only ever provides a dim reflection of the complexity of the world, and, as argued by Lakoff and Johnson, certainly does not reach out directly to a transcendent reality of absolute truths.⁵³⁴ Therefore, as seen in this chapter, the nature-culture distinction does not do justice to the complex relationship underpinning how medieval writers experienced and conceptualised their minds and bodies.

⁵³¹ Lloyd, *Cognitive Variations*, pp. 150.

⁵³² For Lloyd’s full argument see *ibid.*, chapter seven.

⁵³³ See the discussion of Clark’s work in Chapter Two, sec. 2.1, pp. 47-9.

⁵³⁴ See the discussion of Lakoff’s and Johnson’s work in *Philosophy in the Flesh* in Chapter Two, sec. 2.1, pp. 44-7.

Chapter Five

Mind, Body, and Culture

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight how the mind, body, and culture underpin the existence and mutually reinforce the development of certain aspects of human life. I shall argue that neither biological, psychological, nor culturalist views are enough in themselves to provide well-rounded accounts of them. Instead, what is required is an appreciation of the complex interplay between the human mind, body, and culture, and the specific circumstances in which this relationship was configured in twelfth-century Western Europe. The aspects of human life which are explored in this chapter as they are represented in the sample of source texts are, in order, pain and suffering (sec. 5.1), aging (sec. 5.2), and sex and excretion (sec. 5.3). These topics have been selected for discussion because of their prominence in the relevant texts. Furthermore, there are existing bodies of secondary literature covering each of these topics to which this chapter will give some consideration as well as offering new perspectives.

5.1: Pain and suffering

The term pain, *dolor* in Latin (cf. cognate verb *doleo*), may be used to describe a wide variety of changes to the body and mind. Like its English equivalent, it is very flexible in the range of sensations it may be used to describe. It may just as easily refer to the pain caused by tissue damage or mental distress (indeed, *dolorous* in modern English typically refers to the latter kind of pain).⁵³⁵ There is a tension between what, qualitatively speaking, counts as a painful sensation and the ways in which socio-cultural attitudes towards pain influence how people experience and

⁵³⁵ See Lewis and Short, *s.n. dolor* (accessed 4 / 7 / 2010). Medieval words for pain are discussed by E. Cohen in 'Naming Pains: Physicians Facing Sensations' in *In Laudem Hierosolymitani: studies in the crusades and medieval culture in honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar*, ed. I. Shagrir *et al* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 245-62 and *The Modulated Scream*, chapter five.

respond to painful sensations. These are both aspects of the phenomenon of pain and will be discussed here.

As Esther Cohen's recent book, *The Modulated Scream* (2010), attests, while there is plenty of surviving evidence showing how pain was interpreted and expressed in medieval European cultures and societies, the immediate sensuality of pain as it was experienced by medieval people is a far harder topic to discuss.⁵³⁶ Cohen writes off this possibility at an early stage in her book, declaring that her interest is instead in how pain was interpreted in a series of discourses of late medieval European societies: medicine, law, and theology.⁵³⁷ I take a different approach here by attempting to relate the ways in which pain is conceptualised and interpreted in the relevant source texts to their respective authors' embodied experiences of it, specifically in light of Lakoff's and Johnson's theory of metaphor and the embodied view of the mind (both discussed in Chapter Two).

It is noteworthy in this regard that recent advances in medical science have helped to bring this area of medieval life partially into view: for instance, osteoarchaeology has improved historians' understanding of the dietary and health problems commonly faced by medieval people and, as highlighted in Chapter One, Kroll and Bachrach have made use of neuro- and medical science in *The Mystic Mind* to shed light on the *likely* effects of astatic practices and lifestyles on the psychology of medieval mystics.⁵³⁸ Of course, there is no way to fully compensate for the loss of the conditions, bodily and environmental, in which medieval people individually experienced pain. Cohen is right in this respect to point out that historians cannot have any *direct* access to how medieval people experienced pain. Nevertheless, I aim to show in the subsections which follow that grasping some of the more immediate personal conditions in which medieval people experienced pain is not out of the question for historians.

⁵³⁶ As Cohen states in the introduction to *The Modulated Scream*, '[t]his book is not about pain in the Middle Ages, for pain itself cannot be known': p. 3. This book reflects Cohen's long running work on pain in the medieval west. She has also published on the topic 'An Animated Pain of the Body' *American Historical Review*, 105: 1 (2000), pp. 36-68, 'The expression of pain in the later Middle Ages: deliverance, acceptance, and infamy' in *Bodily Extremities: Preoccupations with the Human Body in Early Modern European Culture*, ed. F. Egmond *et al* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 195-219, and 'Naming Pains'. Much of the content of these articles is repeated in *The Modulated Scream*.

⁵³⁷ See Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, p. 3.

⁵³⁸ For example see R. Fleming, 'Bones for Historians: Putting the Body back into Biography' in *Writing Medieval Biography*, ed. D. Bates *et al* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 29-48 and Kroll and Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*.

Cognate to pain is the notion of suffering which was typically covered by the Latin word *passio*, from the verb to suffer, *patior* (itself derived from the Greek πάσχω [*paschō*]). In the medieval west, this word was invariably associated with the sufferings and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, so it had a strong theological dimension and hence, by extension, was often used to describe the sufferings and deaths of Christian saints and martyrs.⁵³⁹ This idea will be of particular concern in regard to the sufferings of Christina of Markyate (the only saint of immediate concern here), discussed below in sec. 4.1.2. As this word had such powerful Christological connotations in the medieval west, it is worth stressing that medieval writers often used *dolor* in ways that would more naturally correspond in modern English to *suffering* (i.e. undergoing or experiencing pain over a protracted period rather than the immediate sensation of pain). This word was obviously less loaded with religious significance than *passio* and hence more widely used.

5.1.1: Transferred pain

The following passage, taken from *De Vita Sua*, provides significant insights into how Guibert experienced and understood pain:

1. When my studies, such as they were, had come to an end about the time of vespers, I went to my mother's knee after a more severe beating than I had deserved. And when, as often happened, she began to ask me repeatedly whether I had been whipped that day, I, not to appear a telltale, entirely denied it. Then against my will she threw off my inner garment (which is called a shirt or *chemise*) and saw my little arms blackened and the skin of my back everywhere puffed up with the cuts from the twigs. Grieved to the heart by the very savage punishment inflicted on my tender body, troubled, agitated, and weeping with sorrow, she said: "You shall never become a clerk, nor any more suffer so much to get an education." At that, looking at her with what reproach I could, I replied: "If I had to die on the spot, I would not give up studying my lessons and becoming a clerk."

⁵³⁹ For a discussion of the theological significance of *passio* see Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, chapter seven.

Soluto igitur vespertinis quibusdam horis qualicunque illo studio, ad materna genua graviter etiam paeter meritum caesus accesseram. Quae cum an eo vapulasse die, ut erat solita, rogitare coepisset, et ego, ne magistrum detulisse viderer, factum omnino negarem ipsa, vellem nollem, reiecta interula, quam subuculam, imo camisiam vocant, liventes attendit ulnulas dorsiculi ex viminum illusionem cutem ubique prominulam. Cumque meae teneritudini ad nimium saeve illatam visceraliter doluisset, turbulenta et aestuans, et oculos moerore suffusa: Nunquam ait “deinceps clericus fies, nec ut litteras discas ulterius poenas lues.” Ad haec ego eam cum qua poteram animadversione respiciens: Si, inquam, proinde mori contingeret, non desistam quin litteras discam, et clericus fiam.⁵⁴⁰

In this excerpt Guibert explicitly ascribes the sensation and experience of pain [*doleo*] to his mother, but not to himself even though he had been afflicted with bodily injuries which presumably were in some sense painful. So, notwithstanding Guibert’s bodily injuries, the feelings of pain in response to them were more strongly felt by his mother than himself.

The likelihood here, as regards Guibert’s apparent lack of expressivity in response to his bodily injuries (nothing can be said about what he felt), is not that he intended to portray himself as impassible to pain, but rather that he wished to show his resolve to become a cleric in spite of the ostensible hardships he faced in pursuit of that goal.⁵⁴¹ Considered in this light, Guibert’s lack of response to his injuries may be viewed as a conspicuous performance of fortitude, calculated to elicit certain emotions in his mother. It is also likely that Guibert, by this statement of his determination to become a cleric, aimed to impress the projected readership of *De Vita Sua* (most probably other monks). Hence within the context of *De Vita Sua*, Guibert’s behaviour in response to his injuries is perhaps most significant as an exercise in identity-making or “self-fashioning” in a society in which pain-sensation,

⁵⁴⁰ Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, i: 6.

⁵⁴¹ Cohen has argued that the possibility of impassibility was not widely accepted in the late middle ages, particularly because by that period (c. eleventh century onwards) the passion of Christ had become one of the central foci of Western Christian theology and piety. Unlike in late antiquity, impassibility was not widely ascribed to martyrs as pain had moral value in late medieval thought. By contrast, perhaps the only group of people genuinely believed to be capable of impassibility, at least towards the end of the medieval period, were witches: hence if anything, impassibility had sinister connotations. See Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, chapter eight.

especially when linked to religious ideals, was often valued as being morally instructive.⁵⁴²

Whatever might be speculated about how Guibert experienced his bodily injuries, he ascribes the sensuality of pain in this excerpt entirely to his mother. What is more, the description he gives of his mother's pain is highly metaphorical:

Cumque meae teneritudini ad nimium saeve illatam visceraliter doluisset, turbulenta et aestuans [erat].

And grieved to the guts by the great cruelty inflicted on my tender body, [she was] disturbed and seething.⁵⁴³

The key point here is that Guibert modified the verb to feel pain, *doleo*, with the adjective, *turbulentus*, and participle, *aestuans* [ff. *aestuo*]. These words both mean disturbance, disruption, or agitation, but in significantly different ways. *Turbulentus* can also have the sense “stormy”. On the other hand, *aestuans* implies heat and particularly the disturbance caused to water by heat, in which respect it has additional riders in boiling and also anger. Accordingly, *aestuans* can also be translated as burning, boiling, or perhaps best of all, seething which carries over the senses of boiling and anger.⁵⁴⁴

These words offer significant insights into Guibert's conceptual understanding of pain. Their clearest contribution here is to add a sense of disturbance and heat to *doleo*, in respect of which pain can be viewed as a form of disturbance to bodily or mental order and also as cause or consequence of heat and anger.⁵⁴⁵ Lakoff's and Johnson's theory of metaphor is highly relevant here and, in particular, their argument that the entailments which form between metaphors are based on similarities in the

⁵⁴² On the moral value of pain in late medieval Europe see Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, chapter one. As noted in Chapter One, the term “self-fashioning” is Stephen Greenblatt's: see Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. For a discussion of this idea in a medieval context see Rubin, 'Identities', pp. 395-402.

⁵⁴³ My translation: cf. Benton's translation in item 1: 'Grieved to the heart by the very savage punishment inflicted on my tender body, [she was] troubled [and] agitated.'

⁵⁴⁴ See Lewis and Short, *s.n. turbulentus* and *aestuo* respectively (accessed 30 / 09 / 09)

⁵⁴⁵ Pain was often defined as being a result of change or rupture in the continuity of the body. This was noted previously in Chapter Four, sec. 4.1, pp. 143, in regard to Theobald's aged body. For more on this see Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, pp. 1-2 and 88.

ways in which people experience the world.⁵⁴⁶ In this respect, Guibert's use of *turbulentus* and *aestuans* to modify the sense of *doleo* suggests that he understood pain as a form of disturbance similar to that caused by storms or the application of heat to water. This seems particularly plausible in light of the Galenic idea that pain and illness are caused by disturbances to the humoral balance of the body, which was widely held as a truism by western physicians from the twelfth century at least.⁵⁴⁷ Although as far as we know Guibert underwent no medical training, it is certainly not implausible that he had come across this view in the course of his studies, or that he had received some basic education in medicine.⁵⁴⁸ In any case, the key point is that Guibert's evident idea that pain is a form of disturbance of the mind and / or body (see next paragraph) may be accounted for in terms of a complex interaction between his embodied experiences of physical disturbances in the world, such as storms or boiling water, and a learnt predisposition to view pain as a physical rupture or disturbance of a balance between the humours of the body.

It is important to stress that Guibert's choice of words in describing his mother's pain strongly suggest the embodiment of her pain. There is no easy way of translating his phrase, *visceraliter doluisset* (Benton gives "grieved to the heart").⁵⁴⁹ The adverb, *visceraliter*, is derived from *viscus*, or plural *viscera*, which unambiguously refers to any soft or fleshy matter of the body, especially around the chest or midriff so as to include the internal organs. This may perhaps seem somewhat unexpected given the often dualistic bent of premodern western psychology. Benton evidently interpreted this phrase as reflecting the conceptual association between the heart and midriff and facets of the mind, as discussed previously.⁵⁵⁰ This is a fair extrapolation. However, it probably misses another possible connotation of this phrase: namely Guibert's flesh and blood link with his mother. Guibert was quite literally a product of his mother's *viscera*: the "fruit of her

⁵⁴⁶ See Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.4 and for direct reference Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, chapters 15-17.

⁵⁴⁷ Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, pp. 88-9.

⁵⁴⁸ Edward Kealey has stressed the role that monastic, clerical, and lay physicians played in the provision of health-care in late eleventh and twelfth century England in *Medieval Medicus* (Baltimore, 1981), chapters 1-2.

⁵⁴⁹ The sense of this phrase is apparently omitted from an alternative published translation of *De Vita Sua* by Paul Archambault: cf. 'My mother groaned when she saw how cruelly I had been treated at such a tender age. She was disturbed and quite agitated, and her eyes filled with tears.' P. J. Archambault, *A Monk's Confession: the memoirs of Guibert of Nogent* (University Park Penn., 1995), p. 20.

⁵⁵⁰ See Chapter Three, sec. 3.1.1, pp. 76 and Chapter Four, sec. 4.3.2, pp. 163.

womb” [*fructus utris*].⁵⁵¹ Accordingly, Guibert may have thought of his mother’s pain as being more closely linked to his bodily injuries than we might immediately assume reading the text with current western assumptions about the nature of pain, be it corporeal, mental, or otherwise.

Cohen makes the point in *The Modulated Scream* that pain is untransferable.⁵⁵² This is surely correct in the superficial sense that one person cannot feel another’s pain precisely, in a qualitative sense, as they do. However, this does not preclude the possibility of empathy (towards which Cohen gives some modest attention in *The Modulated Scream*), nor even that Guibert believed there to be an unusually strong bond between himself and his mother, such that she could *sympathise*, in the strongest sense of the word, with his pain.⁵⁵³

The upshot of this discussion is that the phenomenon of pain, as it is represented in Guibert’s text, cannot be ascribed solely to Guibert’s or his mother’s mind or body, or the socio-cultural niceties that held between the young Guibert and his mother. In spite of Guibert’s silence on the matter, it seems fair to say that the immediate causes of pain in this episode were Guibert’s bodily injuries. Pain is felt most clearly and intensely by Guibert’s mother, on to whom Guibert’s pain had in some sense been *transferred*, presumably via the sense of sight [*attendo*].⁵⁵⁴ And there is a strong socio-cultural dimension to this all in that Guibert’s lack of expressivity in response to his pain, at least before his mother, was clearly a form of expression in itself: namely, a means of asserting in his text his resolve from a young age to enter into the vocation to which he had been vowed by his father at birth.⁵⁵⁵ Additionally, Guibert’s mother gives her own performance in response to the pain she felt for her son, specifically by weeping and vocally challenging the wisdom of the vow made during her labour that, should Guibert be delivered safely, he would be given over as a youth to religious service (the significance of Guibert’s and his

⁵⁵¹ “Fruit of the womb” is given by Lewis and Short as a secondary sense of *viscus*: see Lewis and Short, *s.n. viscus* (accessed 30 / 09 / 09)

⁵⁵² Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, p. 113.

⁵⁵³ The notion of sympathy was discussed in the previous chapter: see sec. 4.4.2, n. 121. Cohen discusses empathy in *The Modulated Scream*, particularly in regard to mystics suffering *in imitatione Christi*: see pp. 124-5 and 130.

⁵⁵⁴ The translation of the *attendo* in the text is problematic. Benton makes the inference, “saw”, which seems reasonable enough. However, it should at least be noted that Guibert is silent as to exactly how his mother sensed his pain: *attendo* does not necessarily imply sight.

⁵⁵⁵ Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, i: 3.

mother's weeping as a form of pain expression will be explored further in the next subsection).⁵⁵⁶

5.1.2: Weeping and tears

A further aspect of item 1 from the previous section which can be explored here is the importance of weeping and tears. Guibert's mother is clearly represented as weeping in item 1: '[E]t oculos moerore suffusa [And her eyes welled-up with sorrow].' In addition to this, Guibert uses the adverb *paeter* [*paetus* / *-tulus*] in a manner which suggests that the severity of his beating could be seen from the appearance of his eyes (or in different terms, his eyes were an expressive outlet for his pain): '[A]d materna genua graviter etiam paeter meritum caesus accesseram [I went to my mother's knee with the undeserved violence of the beating cast in my eyes].'⁵⁵⁷ *Paetulus* could also be taken to mean "squinting" hence this sentence may well have been intended to imply that Guibert was close to tears when he approached his mother. Thus, this sentence seems to have the sense, firstly, that the appearance of Guibert's eyes reflected the injustice and violence of his punishment, and secondly, that their appearance at that moment was modified by the effusion of tears from them.

Weeping is clearly a physiological phenomenon, yet it is strongly linked to the mind (as with the rest of the face).⁵⁵⁸ Moreover, as was highlighted in regard to Guibert's mother in the previous section, weeping may be a calculated performance as much as a raw expression of pain or emotions. Weeping may be an uncontrolled outburst in response to whatever stimuli, but it may also be feigned or suppressed as in Guibert's case (see previous paragraph). It may be hidden, but also advertised in numerous ways in response to different kinds of social space and often with knowledge of who is watching. Perhaps most important of all, it is another way in which the face may act as an expressive medium, which is to say it may serve a

⁵⁵⁶ That is, he would be made a child oblate: on this practice, which was becoming rare by Guibert's time see M. de Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden, 1996).

⁵⁵⁷ My translation: also see Archambault, *A Monk's Confession*, p. 20: 'I had come to sit at my mother's feet. I had just received a worse beating than I had deserved.' And on *paeter* see Lewis and Short, *s.n. paetulus* (accessed 1 / 09 / 09)

⁵⁵⁸ See the earlier discussion of the face in Chapter Four, sec. 4.4.

variety of expressive and communicative purposes.⁵⁵⁹ In short, the significance of weeping is confined neither to physiology nor internal mental states nor the effects that it achieve in the social world, intended or not: it reflects complex interactions of all three spheres of human life.⁵⁶⁰

Weeping is used fairly widely in the sampled source texts to express or represent pain, suffering, distress, sorrow, or discomfort. For instance, consider the following excerpt taken from Orderic's *Epilogue*:

2. So weeping, he [Orderic's father] gave me, a weeping child, into the care of the monk Reginald, and sent me away into exile for love of Thee and never saw me again.

*Rainaldo igitur monacho plorans plorantem me tradidit, et pro amore tuo in exilium destinavit, nec me unquam postea vidit.*⁵⁶¹

Orderic describes here how he and his father wept in response to his departure to the Norman abbey of Saint-Évroul as a child oblate at the age of ten [*decennis*] (this practice was fairly common in western Europe until the twelfth century).⁵⁶² Orderic clearly intended weeping to signal something important about his and his father's mental states at this moment and presumably also about the nature of their relationship as father and son.

As Orderic continues it becomes clear that he viewed the distress caused by severance from his homeland [*patria*] and kin [*parentes*] as the chief cause of his weeping, and likewise, anticipation of his permanent departure to Normandy as the cause of the weeping [*ploro*] or tears shed [*lacrimans*] by his father and kin:

3. So this pact made freely between me and Thee, for whom my father spoke, I abandoned my country and my kinsfolk, my friends and all of whom I was

⁵⁵⁹ For a wide-ranging discussion of the socio-cultural importance of weeping see G. L. Ebersole, 'The function of ritual weeping revisited: affective expression and moral discourse' in *History of Religions*, 39: 3 (2000), pp. 211-46.

⁵⁶⁰ Note I do not include in this weeping caused by physiological reflexs, such as when the eyes water in response to dirt. This is not relevant to my discussion, but should be noted as sometimes physiology overrides conscious action.

⁵⁶¹ Orderic, *Epilogue*.

⁵⁶² Again, on the practice of child oblation see de Jong, *In Samuel's Image*.

acquainted, and they, watching me well, with tears commended me in their kind prayers to Thee, O almighty God.

*Grantanter facta inter me et te genitore meo proloquente conventionone huiuscemodi, patriam et parentes omnemque cognationem notos et amicos reliqui, qui lacrimantes et salutantes benignis precibus commendaverunt me tibi O summe Deus Adonai.*⁵⁶³

Furthermore, it is significant here that Orderic describes his residence in Normandy as his “exile” [*exilium*]. This point is strongly reinforced by his use of the term, *patria*, to describe England, which in turn suggests that he had a strong sense of ethnic or perhaps even “national” identity.⁵⁶⁴ It is particularly clear from *ploro* that Orderic associated sadness or distress with both his and his father’s weeping in items 2-3. *Ploro* primarily indicates a noisy display of grief or sorrow (*i.e.* “lament” or “bewail”), of which weeping may also be a part.⁵⁶⁵ Thus the emphasis in item 2 is on weeping as a conspicuous display of sadness.

As with the episode from Guibert’s *De Vita Sua* discussed in the previous section, Orderic’s account of his departure from England involves a grieving parent. Hence in this case Orderic’s father may be seen as weeping in grief over the loss of a child. To be sure, this is complicated by the fact that Orderic, like Guibert, was made an oblate at his father’s will and also, again like Guibert, that the events in question were already in the remote past at the time of writing.⁵⁶⁶ Accordingly, we may wonder over the intensity of Orderic’s father’s grief and also whether Orderic’s memory of his father at the time of his departure from England had become modified by his later development as a monk in a Norman abbey. There is also the matter of Orderic’s weeping, which contrasts sharply with Guibert’s suppressed tears discussed at the beginning of this section.⁵⁶⁷ Perhaps above all else, this point of comparison

⁵⁶³ Orderic, *Epilogue*.

⁵⁶⁴ For an account of Orderic’s life and times see Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, pp. 3-41. Chibnall discusses Orderic’s “English” identity at pp. 10-11. On the connotations of the term, *patria*, within the context of twelfth-century England, see J. Gillingham, ‘Henry of Huntingdon and the twelfth-century revival of the English nation’ in *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values*, by John Gillingham (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 123-44.

⁵⁶⁵ Lewis and Short, *s.n. ploro* (accessed 02 / 10 / 09)

⁵⁶⁶ By Orderic’s own calculations (as noted in the epilogue) he was sixty-six at the time of writing, putting the events discussed here fifty-six years in the past: see Orderic, *Epilogue*.

⁵⁶⁷ See pp. 198 above.

underlines a significant difference between Guibert's and Orderic's personalities: that is, on the one hand, Orderic seems to have been more comfortable in recording his youthful anxieties at the prospect of becoming an oblate whereas, on the other, Guibert clearly preferred to draw attention to his resolve to become a cleric, even as a young boy.

It is also important to consider whether, to use Esther's Cohen's phrase, the way in which Orderic represented himself and his father in items 2 and 3 was *genre scripted* as well as determined by his memory of the events and whatever socio-cultural and personal pressures influenced the relevant actors behaviour at the time: that is, more specifically, whether Orderic's ascription of tears to himself, his father, and other unnamed family members, was a literary invention, or more likely, exaggerated to accord with the highly emotional style of the *Epilogue*.⁵⁶⁸ Orderic's liberal use of verbs for crying or weeping in the *Epilogue* may in fact reflect his rhetorical needs at the time of writing rather than the realities of his departure from England at the age of ten. Orderic's use of verbs like *ploro* and *lacrimo*, or *exilium* for his residence in Normandy and *patria* for England, and also, as Majorie Chibnall has pointed out, the unusual verb, *abdico* [to resign] to describe his father's decision to commit him as a child oblate to Saint-Évroul suggest that Orderic was aiming for a dramatic style as much as an accurate rendering of that moment in his life.⁵⁶⁹ As a well-educated individual and competent Latinist, Orderic would have had a good understanding of the literary and dramatic connotations of these words.

Latin provides a good range of verbs to describe weeping, all with slightly different, but largely negative connotations. *Lacrimo* and *fleo* primarily mean *to form* or *shed tears*, although they may also carry connotations of pain, sadness, or suffering.⁵⁷⁰ *Ploro* has the stronger sense of *crying out loud*, *bewailing*, or *mourning*, while *defleo* and *deploro* (cf. "deplore") have still stronger senses: *defleo* is typically *to weep in mourning for someone*, and *deploro*, *to weep bitterly*, *moan*, or *complain*.⁵⁷¹ Bearing this in mind, it may thus have been the case that Orderic

⁵⁶⁸ Cohen uses this phrase in *The Modulated Scream*, p. 129. Cohen has much to say about male and female pain behaviour that is relevant here in chapter four of the aforementioned book: however, she stresses the difficulty of uncovering the extent to which gendered codes of pain behaviour existed and were observed in medieval European societies: see *ibid.*, pp. 128-9.

⁵⁶⁹ See Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, pp. 9-10.

⁵⁷⁰ Lewis and Short, *s.n. lacrimo* (it is noted that *lacrimo* can be used to mean *bewail* or *lament*, but very rarely) and *fleo* (accessed 02 / 10 / 09)

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, *s.n. ploro*, *defleo*, and *deploro* (accessed 02 / 10 / 09)

selected *ploro* to represent himself and his father weeping because it carries a moderately strong sense of pain, distress, sadness, or mourning (as opposed to the stronger senses of *defleo* or *deploro* and the weaker *lacrimo* and *fleo*). This fits with the text, firstly, in the respect that Orderic’s departure was planned by his father, and secondly, in that Orderic viewed his entry into monastic life as a bar to the sins of the secular world.⁵⁷² Hence the rationale for *ploro* in this passage may have been to indicate moderate feelings of pain or sadness rather than outright grief: by contrast Guibert uses the far more emotive phrase, *et oculos moerore suffusa* [and her eyes welled-up with sorrow], to describe his mother’s weeping.⁵⁷³

The association between weeping and pain, suffering, and sadness can be explored further with the following excerpts, taken from *The Life of Christina* and Peter’s letters respectively:

4. Then, heaving **deep** [lit. “high”] **sighs**, **she broke into floods of tears** and, **with sobs punctuating her laments**, she **bewailed** her lot over and over again as the most wretched and abandoned of all.

*Post hec trahens **alta suspiria** in profusionem lacrimarum erupit, et singultu querimonias **interrumpente**: se miserrimam, sese orphanum sepius **conclamavit**.*⁵⁷⁴

5. Now the matter in hand, which is the transfer to you of our dearest son, urges me to remain ever silent, or **to weep** more **vehemently**, rather than to write, but holy and proper reverence demands it.

*Et materia quidem que est karissimi filii nostri translatio ad vos potius semper silere vel **instantius flere** quam scribere admonet, sanctitatis autem vestre reverentia sancta et digna exigit.*⁵⁷⁵

There are significant differences between the representation and sense of weeping in these excerpts which can be seen to fit the circumstances to which they relate: item 4

⁵⁷² Orderic, *Epilogue*.

⁵⁷³ This was discussed above in the first paragraph of the present section: pp. 198.

⁵⁷⁴ *The Life of Christina*, ¶ 13.

⁵⁷⁵ Peter, *Letters*, 58.

describes Christina's reaction to her family's persistent efforts to obstruct her desire to remain a virgin; item 5 concerns the transfer of a monk from the Benedictine community at Celle to the recently established Carthusian priory of Mont-Dieu. Thus item 4 relates to a very personal set of circumstances whereas item 5 deals with the ostensibly business-like transfer of a monk between foundations and orders (*i.e.* from the Benedictine abbey at Celle to the Carthusian priory at Mont-Dieu). Incidentally, it is known that Peter maintained a strong relationship between Celle and Mont-Dieu during his abbacy and also that he took an unusually positive view for a twelfth-century Benedictine abbot of transfer from one monastic order to another: hence we may reasonably wonder to what extent Peter's weeping in item 5 reflects a literary formality rather than a genuine sense sorrow over the transfer of the said monk.⁵⁷⁶

There is a strong contrast between the expressive purposes of weeping in these two excerpts. Christina's tears [*lacrimae*] are part of a much broader response towards the injustice of her circumstances. Her tears are accompanied by sighs [*suspiria*], sobs [*singulti*], laments [*querimoniae*], and bewailing [*conclamo*], all of which she seems to have released in a violent or uncontrolled fashion. Again, it should be stressed that Christina's biography was written by a male monk whose views on Christina's spirituality are likely to have been influenced by gender stereotypes. Cohen notes the tendency of male biographers of female saints and mystics to rationalise the spirituality of their subjects in terms of bodily suffering, even when writings by the women themselves survive in which no mention of bodily suffering is made. However, surviving sources suggest that intense displays of emotions were not uncommon among either men or women in the later middle ages.⁵⁷⁷ Therefore, Christina's forceful display of grief should not be seen strictly through a lense of gender stereotypes: more is at stake.

By contrast, even though Peter claims to be aggrieved by the loss of one of his brethren to another monastic community, he is known to have encouraged the transfer of monks to Mont-Dieu.⁵⁷⁸ Given this context, Peter's supposedly vehement weeping [*instantius fleo*] could reasonably be read as lacking any strong sense of pain or

⁵⁷⁶ Haseldine discusses Peter's attitude towards the new monastic orders of the twelfth century in his edition of his Peer's letters, pp. xxv-xxvii. A number of Peter's surviving letters are addressed to the community at Mont-Dieu and / or its prior, Simon: see Peter, *Letters*, 52-60.

⁵⁷⁷ For a discussion of relevant issues see Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, p. 128.-9

⁵⁷⁸ This is discussed by Haseldine in the introductory matter to Peter, *Letters*, pp. xxv-xxvii.

sorrow. Yet the letter from which it is taken is written in a highly emotive style. In several places, Peter casts himself as the father of the monk in question:

Certainly I have offered in this trade not gold but a man after my own heart, certainly not silver but him whom I was regarding as my only **begotten**, certainly not precious stones but a stone which I had set up myself for a title of particular love.

*Certe non aurum sed virum secundum cor meum, certe non argentums sed quem habebam quasi **unigenitum**, certe non lapides pretiosos sed lapidem quem michi erexeram in specialis amoris titulum in hoc proposui commercio.*⁵⁷⁹

[I]n the midst of my discourse, I have unfolded by miseries at such length before the eyes of the most merciful God, assuredly so that you may see, that you may understand what pain it is to lose the **son** of the right hand...so that you may pray on my behalf more kindly and more resolutely to ‘the God of all comfort,’ feeling for my sorrows.

*[E]t sic in mediis sermonibus cum tanta mora meas miserias misericordissimi Dei conspectibus explicui certe ut videatis, certe ut intelligatis quis sit dolor **filium** dextere amiterre...ut ‘Deum totius consolationis’, meis compatiendo meroribus dulcius et obnixius pro me exoretis.*⁵⁸⁰

Peter casts himself as a father to the unnamed monk three times in the letter, thereby suggesting that the bond between them was especially strong. Although the father-son metaphor echoes the institutional hierarchy of a monastic community, for a father has authority over his sons as an abbot has authority over his monks, it also makes the relationship more intimate, for a father’s authority over his son(s) is grounded in a more unique set of circumstances, biological and socio-cultural, pertaining between fathers and sons, than may ostensibly exist between abbots and monks. So even though Peter’s letter relates to a business-like transfer of a monk from Celle to Mont-

⁵⁷⁹ Peter, *Letters*, 58.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Dieu, it is composed in such a highly emotive rhetorical style that it is hard not to extrapolate a sense of genuine pain or sorrow on Peter's part.

The interpretations given in this subsection on weeping and tears are dependent on four key factors. First, the emotional tone or content of each excerpt must be considered. As explained above, the common theme linking the excerpts discussed above is pain, suffering, or, to add some additional labels, sadness and distress. Second, it is necessary to take account of socio-cultural pressures which, as far as surviving evidence shows, influenced how, why, and when people wept in response to pain in twelfth-century Europe as well as how this act was interpreted by observers. Third, some consideration must be given to people's personal or individual reasons for weeping as a form of pain expression. And finally, it must be kept in mind throughout these considerations that weeping is at root a physiological function of the body: that is, weeping is an inherently embodied act which, even when represented in abstract media, cannot be separated from the biological realities which underpin, at some basic level, everybody's understanding of weeping.

By taking account of these four aspects of weeping, as it occurs in the excerpts examined above, it is again possible to discern the interaction of mind, body, and culture in the sample of source texts. The tearful people in each excerpt cannot be reduced to any of these factors, but rather must be understood in terms of how they interact. For each case, personal and broader socio-cultural pressures may be posited as causes for the shedding of tears. For instance, Christina's tearful response to being temporarily thwarted in her aim to become a nun, related in item 4 above, may be understood both in terms of her personal desire to achieve this goal and the values instilled in her by the sections of twelfth-century English society which viewed being a nun as a praiseworthy occupation. Alternatively, the tears shed by Orderic and his father may be seen as personal responses to the severance of a bond between a father and son as well as a reflection of linguistic and literary conventions tied to the composition of Latin literature in twelfth-century Europe.

Finally, all of this pivots around the biological body, without which there would be no weeping in the first place. The authors of the relevant source texts without doubt had experienced tears and weeping in their lives coming from their own or other people's bodies. Furthermore, as can be seen from the excerpts discussed above, they all very clearly recognised causal relationships between weeping and

certain emotional states: that is, they understood that certain emotional states were sufficient to cause the *body* to weep. It is noteworthy that the only person discussed above who suffered from bodily injuries, namely Guibert, is also the only person to have not wept, or at least to have held back his tears. By contrast, everybody who wept did so in response to emotional rather than physical states: Guibert's mother in sympathy for her son's injuries; Orderic and his father in response to physical separation from each other; Christina because she had been hindered in achieving her aim of becoming a nun; and Peter for the loss of one of his brethren to another monastic community.

Above all else, this serves to highlight the crucial importance of the body in colouring people's experiences of the world. The examples of pain discussed cannot be merely mental because in each case they find expression through an aspect of human physiology: namely weeping. Guibert is somewhat exceptional, but only in the respect that he needed to exert especial control over his body in order to stop it from overtly expressing his pain. On the other hand, the subjective content of his pain states was related to the condition of his body following a beating. In any case, it can be seen from the above discussion that the body has an active role in colouring and facilitating the expression of emotional states such as pain.

5.1.3: *Self-imposed pain and suffering*

Self-imposed suffering is a common theme in the religious literature of medieval Europe (particularly biographies). This has attracted a good amount of interest among modern scholars perhaps not least because modern western attitudes to bodily suffering and health are in many, if not most respects, at odds with those enshrined in the religious literature and culture of Western Christianity during the middle ages.⁵⁸¹ Self-imposed suffering is a recurring theme in *The Life of Christina*.⁵⁸² In this

⁵⁸¹ For example, see G. Constable, *Attitudes Towards Self-Inflicted Suffering in the Middle Ages* (Brookline Mass., 1982), Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, especially pp. 189-218 and *Fragmentation and Redemption*, especially pp. 181-238, C. Marshall, 'The politics of self-mutilation: forms of female devotion in the late Middle Ages' in *The Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. D. Grantley (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 11-21, Kroll and Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*, especially pp. 66-104, and Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, pp. 120-31.

⁵⁸² Elsewhere in the chosen source texts, Guibert describes his mother's relatively modest asceticism following the death of his father in *De Vita Sua*, i: 12-14 (especially 14). In addition to this, Peter warns against excessive asceticism in a number of his letters. For instance see his letters to Abbot

respect, Christina, or at least her *vita*, can be identified with the so-called culture of “heroic asceticism” which became increasingly widespread among laymen and the clergy in Western Europe from the twelfth-century onwards.⁵⁸³ Additionally, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed the inception and growth of a series of new monastic orders in which greater value was placed on the personal piety of individual monks than in the Benedictine monasticism of the time.⁵⁸⁴ Christina’s behaviour, as it is related in her *vita*, needs to be viewed in this context.

The following excerpt relates to Christina’s confinement in a cell at the hermitage of the Roger named in the text, shortly after she had fled from her family:

1. What trials she had to bear of cold and heat, hunger and thirst, daily fasting! The confined space would not allow her to wear even the necessary clothing when she was cold. The airless little enclosure became stifling when she was hot. Through long fasting, her bowels became contracted and dried up. There was a time when her burning thirst caused little clots of blood to bubble up from her nostrils. But what was more unbearable than all this was that she could not go out until the evening to satisfy the demands of nature. Even when she was in dire need she could not open the door for herself, and Roger did not come till late. So it was necessary for her to sit quite still in the place, to suffer torments, and keep quiet...

O quantas sustinuit illic incommoditates frigoris et estis, famis et sitis, cotidiani ieiunii. Loci angustia non admittebat necessarium tegumentum argenti. Integerrima clausula nullum indulgebat refrigerium estuanti. Longa inedia, contracta sunt et aruerunt sibi intestina. Erat quando pre ardore sitis

Bernerredus of Saint-Crépin numbered 130-1 in Haseldine’s edition. Otherwise, self-injurious behaviour and asceticism are relatively uncommon topics in the source texts chosen for this study.

⁵⁸³ The term, “heroic asceticism”, has used by various scholars to describe the forms of self-injurious asceticism which became popular in late medieval Europe. For example, see Constable, *Attitudes Towards Self-Inflicted Suffering* and Kroll and Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*. While self-injurious behaviour was certainly practiced by Christian ascetics in antiquity and the earlier medieval period, such behaviour appears to have been less tolerated by the institutional Church than was the case in the later medieval period. For a brief overview of this area see Kroll and Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*, pp. 17-36. This should also be viewed within the context of the development of new monastic orders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Bynum and Bell have argued that self-injurious asceticism was most commonly practiced by women in the later middle ages: see Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* and R. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago, 1985).

⁵⁸⁴ Good overviews of the development of Western Monasticism in this period include C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, second ed. (London, 1989), and H. Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism: a study of religious communities in Western Europe* (London, 1984).

*naribus ebullirent frustra coagulati sanguinis. Hiis omnibus illi erat intollerabilius, quod exire foras non nisi sero licebat, ad alia quedam necessaria que natura postulabat. Nimirum instante necessitate nequibat ipsa sibi aperire et Rogerus de more tardabat, ad illam venire. Itaque necesse fuit immobiliter eam in loco sedere, torqueri et tacere.*⁵⁸⁵

It is noteworthy that the author of this passage shows a relatively sophisticated understanding of the anatomy of the human digestive system and the effects of malnutrition upon it: ‘Through long fasting, her bowels became contracted and dried up [*Longa inedia, contracta sunt et aruerunt sibi intestina*].’ It does not seem controversial to assert that Christina’s biographer did not need to be learned, either in medicine or Latin, to understand the basic reasons for and causes of ingestion, excretion, malnutrition, and possibly also digestion. However, it is clear that the biographer was well-educated by the standards of twelfth-century England in that he could read and write Latin competently and, furthermore, several passages in the life of Christina, including item 1, suggest that he had some knowledge of classical medicine.

His assertions that Christina’s bowels [*intestina*] contracted [*contracta sum*] and dried up [*areo*] suggest that he had some understanding of humoral theory. The heat produced by the human body was thought in humoral medicine to be a major cause of aging and illness in as far as it dried out the body. The moisture provided by food and drink was believed to counterbalance the natural tendency of the body towards being hot and dry, to which extent eating and drinking were viewed as important ways of maintaining the balance of humours in the body and thus health.⁵⁸⁶ It is possible that Christina’s biographer viewed the drying out of Christina’s bowels in these terms: that is, the heat of her body caused her bowels to dry out due to a lack of moisture from food and drink. This may also be significant in the respect that he ascribes the quality of fieriness or burning to Christina’s thirst (*i.e.* “burning thirst” [*ardore sitis*]), which, he goes further, caused blood to “bubble” or “boil up” [*ebullio*] through her nose. Hence at the very least, heat, fire, and dryness are all clearly associated with ill-health in this passage.

⁵⁸⁵ *The Life of Christina*, ¶ 39.

⁵⁸⁶ See McVaugh, ‘The *‘humidum radicale’*’, especially p. 71.

It should be noted that between the ninth and twelfth centuries, medical learning in the Western Europe was dominated by a handful of institutions (particularly Salerno in Italy). These centres exerted a significant influence on the development and dissemination of medical learning and training in the Christian west as they could provide exceptionally good access to relevant texts and expertise (including people who understood Greek and Arabic).⁵⁸⁷ Medical training was available elsewhere in the twelfth century. Monastic foundations often held collections of medical texts which were used to provide in-house training for the monks.⁵⁸⁸ However, this would have been considerably more basic than what was on offer at, say, Salerno or Montpellier. It is possible that Christina's biographer received some such in-house training, either at the school in St Albans or some other centre of learning (although so little is known about him that it is impossible to make any confident assertions on the matter).⁵⁸⁹

At any rate, the statements highlighted from item 1 strongly suggest that he had at least a perfunctory understanding of humoral theory. And this impression is strengthened by a later passage in which he describes Christina's symptoms while she was suffering from an apparently life-threatening fever, alleviated only by divine intervention:

2. The malady, which they call paralysis, attacked one half of her body, spreading from her lower limbs to the top of her head. As a result of a recent illness the cheeks of the patient were already swollen and inflamed. Her eyelids were contracted, her eyeball bloodshot, and underneath the eye you could see the skin flickering without stopping, as if there were a little bird inside it striking it with its wings. For this reason experienced physicians were sent to her and to the best of their power they practised their craft with medicines, blood-letting, and other kinds of treatment.

Igitur passio quam paralyisin vocant: illam invasit que ab imis partibus usque supremum capud repens totius corporis alteram medietatem sibi vendicavit. Ex morbo adhuc recenti tumbant iam atque rubebant gene patientis.

⁵⁸⁷ On these institutions see Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, pp. 55-65.

⁵⁸⁸ Siraisi has noted that medical texts were collected at monastic libraries largely for the purposes of providing in-house medical training: see *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, pp. 50-5.

⁵⁸⁹ On Christina's biographer see the introduction to Talbot's edition of the *Life of Christina*, pp. 5-10

*Contrahebantur palpebre, turbabatur oculus, sub ipso oculo videres cutem ita sine intervallo moveri: ac si eam intus lateens avicula iugi volatu percuteret. Quamobrem probati medici ei missi sunt, et stadium suum antidotis, diminucione sanguinis, aliisque medicandi generibus in eam solerter exercuerunt.*⁵⁹⁰

It is significant here that Christina's biographer describes the symptoms of her illness (*i.e.* swollen cheeks and bloodshot eyes) and also provides a diagnosis [*paralysin*]. Moreover, he shows some understanding of the treatments given to Christina by the physicians [*medici*]. It seems reasonably clear from this that Christina's biographer had some knowledge of contemporary medicine. It is not possible to say whether this extended to any kind of formal training in either classical medicine or something more colloquial (or a mixture of both). However, it is certainly possible that he had undergone some basic training as part of his education as a monk, and even if not, nuggets of information about classical medicine were freely available in texts like Isidore's *Etymologiae*.

For instance, Christina's biographer could have extracted the following definition of paralysis from the *Etymologiae*:

Paralysis is so called from damage to the body caused by excessive chilling [*facta ex multa in frigidatione*], occurring either in the entire body, or in one part.⁵⁹¹

In regard to items 1 and 2, it is also worth considering Isidore's entries on fever [*febris*] and phlegm [*phleumon*]:

Fever is named from heat, being an abundance of heat [*Febris a fervore dicta est, est enim abundantia caloris*].⁵⁹²

Phleumon is a heat in the stomach [*fervor stomachi*] accompanied by swelling and pain [*cum extensione et dolore*], (or φλεγμονή [*phlegmonē*] is feverishness

⁵⁹⁰ *The Life of Christina*, ¶ 48.

⁵⁹¹ Isidore, *Etymologiae*, iv: 7 (25).

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, iv: 4 (2).

accompanied by flushed skin, pain, spasms, hardness and wasting away). Fever [*febris*] follows the onset of *phleumon* whence it is called φλεγμονή, from φλέγειν, that is “causing inflammation [*inflammare*].⁵⁹³

What this shows is the extent to which basic information about humoural theory and classical medicine were available in Western Europe prior to the thirteenth century (*i.e.* before Galenic and Arabic medical texts became widely available in translation across Western Europe). Taken together, these extracts provide consistent information about the effects that excessive cold or heat were believed to have on different parts of the body. An excess of cold [*frigidatio*], we learn, causes paralysis while an excess of heat [*calor* or *fervor*] can cause things such as swelling and pain [*extensio et dolor*].

Although there is no direct correspondence between these extracts and items 1 and 2, it is at least clear that Isidore and Christina’s biographer thought about illness [*morbis*] and health [*sanitas*] in similar terms. Heat is a key aspect of the accounts of Christina’s health given in items 1 and 2 in the respect that it is construed both as a cause or symptom of her ailments: it is the cause of her bowels drying up in item 1 and seems to be a symptom of paralysis in item 2 in as much as her cheeks were swollen [*tumescere*] and reddened or “inflamed” [*rubeo*] (this is assuming that heat is implied by these verbs). Thus, there is a clear correspondence between this and Isidore’s entries on *febris* and *phleumon* [φλεγμονή] in the limited sense that both viewed temperature and more specifically heat as a cause and symptom of illness. On the other hand, coldness is not noted in item 2 as either a cause or symptom of paralysis (indeed, the symptoms seem to be caused by heat). Nevertheless, the key point here is that the understanding of illness and health given by Christina’s biographer in items 1 and 2 reflects relatively common wisdom about the relationship between these phenomena and temperature, moisture, and so forth (*i.e.* humoural theory). Therefore, while it is an open question as to whether Christina’s biographer underwent any medical training, it is at least clear that his understanding of illness and health was rooted in the basics of humoural theory.

It should be stressed that items 1 and 2 give more detail on Christina’s bodily health and the causes of her suffering than is typically the case in her *vita*.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, iv: 4 (7).

Christina's sanctity is the key theme of *The Life of Christina*, and it is to this end that her biographer worked his accounts of her pain and suffering. The representation of Christina's experiences of pain and suffering in her *vita* serve the purposes of highlighting her faith and piety in as much as the focus is squarely on her tolerance of them as opposed to their qualities *qua* sensations and experiences. This aspect of the text is especially clear in item 2, in which her life-long tolerance and faith are appropriately rewarded with a miraculous cure (the miraculousness of which is underscored by the futile efforts of the—one presumes—*secular* physicians, who are unable to restore her to a state of good health).⁵⁹⁵

The attitudes towards health and bodily suffering ascribed to Christina in her *vita* can be viewed in the broader context of Christian asceticism and spirituality from late antiquity onwards. Avoidance of worldly pleasures is an important aspect of Christina's life as it is related in the *vita*, particularly in the respect that her pain and ill-health are often brought about as a result of this:

3. She violently resisted the desires of her flesh, lest her own members should become agents of wickedness against her. Long fastings, little food, and that only a few raw herbs, a measure of water to drink, nights spent without sleep, harsh scourgings. And what was more effective than all these...[sic] trials which tore and tamed her lascivious body. She called upon God without ceasing not to allow her, who had taken a vow of virginity and had refused the marriage bed, to perish forever.

Violenter respuebat desideria sue carnis ne propria membra exhiberet adversum se arma iniquitatis. Protracta ieiunia, modicus cibus isque crudarum herbarum, potus aque ad mensuram, noctes insomnes, severa verbera. Et quod prestat his omnibus...[sic] contribulaciones que lacivientem carnem lacerabant et edomabant. Deum in vocabat assidue qui non sinat

⁵⁹⁴ For instance compare ¶ 39 and 48 with ¶ 23 and 44.

⁵⁹⁵ Kealey notes the popularity of stories about inept physicians and miraculous cures in eleventh and twelfth century England in *Medieval Medicus*, pp. 21-4.

*illam post virginitatis votum et thori contemptum tam interminabiliter interire.*⁵⁹⁶

This is analogous to the reported behaviour of early Christians living in the urban environments of late antiquity. Peter Brown has noted the impact of individual or small groups of Christians who practiced various kinds of world-renouncing asceticism (especially sexual abstinence) on the development of the Western and Eastern Churches. The behaviour of these people towards themselves, each other, and the non-Christian or secular Christian communities gradually led to the development of two distinct traditions of Christian asceticism: eremitic (or “hermetic”) and coenobitic (*i.e.* monasticism).⁵⁹⁷

It is significant that Christina’s life falls into both of these traditions at least as it is represented in *The Life of Christina*. Over the course of the *vita*, Christina goes from being a notionally isolated ascetic (firstly in the secular community and secondly at a hermitage outside of Huntingdon) to a founder and prioress of a female religious community at Markyate, as well as the *confidante* of Geoffrey de Gorham, abbot of St Albans. Viewed from a slightly different angle, her life also represents a rejection of the secular community, its values, and pleasures in favour of a form of voluntary exile in a religious community.⁵⁹⁸ It is also important to read this in relation to the rapid growth in participation in religious life in Western Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This period witnessed the foundation of a series of new monastic orders, all of which in some sense claimed to represent a return to the monasticism of the early Church, as well as a dramatic growth in lay piety.⁵⁹⁹ Christina’s life, or at any rate, her *vita* can be seen as an expression of these trends both in the sense that she enters

⁵⁹⁶ *The Life of Christina*, ¶ 44.

⁵⁹⁷ See Brown, *The Body and Society*. Brown makes his case throughout in great detail: the conclusion provides a helpful summary (see pp. 428-47). On the development of monastic *regula* see the first two chapters of Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism* (pp. 1-40) which gives a brief account of the development and foundation of regularised forms of monasticism in late antiquity.

⁵⁹⁸ These circumstances are related in detail throughout *The Life of Christina*. Talbot gives a summary in his edition of *The Life of Christina* at pp. 10-20. For a brief and more recent summary see *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, s.n. Christina of Markyate <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com> accessed (06 / 09 / 09)

⁵⁹⁹ For a broad summary of the development of monasticism over this period see Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, chapters 8 and 9. Although mostly concerned with late medieval England, Edden, ‘The devotional life of the laity’ touches on the development of lay piety in twelfth-century England. Also noteworthy is Cohen’s discussion of pain expression among laypeople seeking miraculous cures at religious sites in late medieval Europe: *The Modulated Scream*, pp. 133-8.

into coenobitic religious life and in that she began her religious life as a pious laywomen.

This environment exerted a strong influence on the ways in which Christina and her biographer understood pain and suffering and particularly their consequences for personal health and well-being. The pain and general discomfort experienced by Christina are running themes throughout her *vita*. In the earlier part of her life, these are mostly caused by the circumstances surrounding the attempts of her family to marry her off to a wealthy nobleman. However, after she achieves her goal of entering a religious life, they are more often self-inflicted (see item 3) and result in long-term health problems:

4. After suffering these and many other discomforts for a long time, she became subject to a variety of ailments, which gathered such strength from day to day, that they became incurable. Yet she to whom no human medicine could bring relief was, as we saw many years later, cured by an unheard of grace from God.

*Talia et alia tanto tempore patientem: dura corripuit morborum varietas que de die in diem tantum inualescebat: ut fieret eciam immedicabilis. At tamen cui nulla medicina subvenire poterat humanitas impensa: vidimus post multos annos divinitus inaudita gracia cura tam.*⁶⁰⁰

It should be stressed that Christina's pain and ill-health are not represented in her biography as though they were trivial or unimportant to her general well-being. However, there is a clear conceptual disjunction in the work between the concepts of health and well-being. For most of the work, Christina is not healthy [*sanitas*] in the ordinary sense of the word.⁶⁰¹ But she is "well" in the sense that she has attracted significant divine patronage to herself by her ostensibly self-destructive behaviour. This is most clear from items 2 and 4, in which faith in God is elevated above secular medicine as the most efficacious means of pain-relief, discomfort, and disease (the truth of which is demonstrated in item 2: see ¶ 48-50). Accordingly, Christina's

⁶⁰⁰ *The Life of Christina*, ¶ 40 (cf. ¶ 48).

⁶⁰¹ The notion of *sanitas* is discussed further in the next paragraph.

tolerance and even her active pursuit of her pain and ill-health can be viewed as expressions of faith in God and his healing power.

It is noteworthy that medieval Europeans inherited a secular notion of health and well-being from Greek medicine, $\sigma\acute{o}\varsigma$ [*sôs*], literally meaning *safe* or *whole*, from which the Latin words, *sanus* and *sanitas* are derived.⁶⁰² Isidore defines *sanitas* and its relationship with illness [*morbus*] thus:

Health is the integrity of the body [*Sanitas est integritas corpori*] and a balance of its nature with respect to it heat and moisture [*calidus et humidus*], which is its blood—hence health is so called, as if it were the condition of the blood [*quasi sanguinis status*].

All the sufferings of the body [*corpus*] are covered by the general term illness [*morbus*], because the ancients used the term illness in order to point with this word to the power of death, which is born from illness. The mean between health and illness is treatment, and unless it fits the disease it fails to bring health [*Inter sanitatem autem et morbum media est curatio, quae nisi morbo congruat, perducit ad sanitatem*].⁶⁰³

This is a strongly secular notion of health and well-being, based on the state of the body. As far as this explanation goes, individual morality and faith do not have any obvious consequences for bodily health or well-being. This notion of health is certainly present in *The Life of Christina*, although it should not necessarily be viewed as commensurate with Christina's personal well-being.

For instance, consider the following passage in which the biographer shows an understanding of the relationship between health and illness that fits nicely with Isidore's view that '[t]he mean between health and sickness is treatment'⁶⁰⁴:

5. Indeed the malady, which they [the physicians noted in item 2] ought to have cured, became on the contrary so irritated and inflamed that she suffered from it for five whole days without ceasing, so that what her health had been in

⁶⁰² See Liddell and Short, *s.n. sws* and Lewis and Short, *s.n. sanus* and *sanitas* (accessed 07 / 10 / 09)

⁶⁰³ Isidore, *Etymologiae*, iv: 5 (2-1).

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, iv: 5 (2).

comparison with her sickness before treatment, now her sickness became in comparison with the maladies that followed.

*Quippe morbus ille quem perimere debuerant econverso hiis irritatus et exacerbatus in tantum illam absque remissione quinque continuis diebus afflixit, ut quod fuerat ei sanitas respectu egritudinis ante medicamenta: hoc eidem fuerint ipse egritudines respectu passioneis que post est subsecta.*⁶⁰⁵

Note that sickness [*egritudo* and *passio*] is construed here as the opposite state to health [*sanitas*]. It is highly significant that *passio* is used to describe Christina's maladies (or suffering) as a result of her illness [*egritudo*]. This gives Christina's suffering a strong religious and theological dimension, not least in that the word *passio* is commonly used in Western Christianity since the second century to describe the suffering of Christ between his betrayal and death on the cross as a discrete event in his life.⁶⁰⁶ The faith-based aspects of her illness and suffering are also made clear by the impotence of the physicians to cure or even alleviate her suffering, which becomes worse in spite of their efforts. It takes the ministrations of the Virgin Mary, acting in this instance as a physician, to cure Christina's illness.⁶⁰⁷

It should be acknowledged here that the ultimate goal of Christina's self-injurious behaviour and tolerance of her pain and ill-health was to secure for herself (and also for her close friend, Abbot Geoffrey⁶⁰⁸) a favourable afterlife. Her biographer makes this very clear:

6. For no matter at what hour she was released from the prison-house of her flesh, who could doubt that her spouse would come and lead her with Him to the nuptials?

⁶⁰⁵ *The Life of Christina*, ¶ 48.

⁶⁰⁶ *Passio* is used to describe Jesus' suffering twice in the New Testament: Acts 1: 3, Hebrews 2: 10. It was commonly used in the writings of the Church Fathers to describe Jesus' betrayal, suffering, and crucifixion as a discrete event. Although *passio* is not used in the Gospels, the Greek πάσχω [see Liddell and Scott, *s.n. pasxw*] is generally translated as *patior* [to suffer]. For a brief overview of the use of this word and the perception of the passion in early Christian theology see www.newadvent.org, *s.n. Devotion to the Passion of Christ* (accessed 07 / 10 / 09). For an important discussion of the significance of changing attitudes towards the life of Christ for how medieval people understood and expressed pain see Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, chapters seven and eight.

⁶⁰⁷ *The Life of Christina*, ¶ 49.

⁶⁰⁸ See *Ibid.*, ¶ 69 (also see ¶ 65).

*Nam quacumque hora desereret carnis sue angustias carcerales cui dubium erat quod veniente sponso non statim introiret cum eo ad nupcias?*⁶⁰⁹

The sentiment expressed here is strongly analogous to that of item 1 in chapter three, sec. 3.1, in which Theobald construed the departure of the spirit [*spiritus*] from the body as a cause or consequence of death.⁶¹⁰ The sense here seems stronger in that Christina's body is said to be "the narrow prison of her flesh" [*carnis sue angustias carcerales*]: or put differently, *she is trapped by her own body*. In any case, the point is that Christina's life was in effect a prelude to her afterlife and hence that the sufferings she imposed on herself were intended to set her on the path to Heaven rather than Hell.

Esther Cohen has recently drawn attention to debates among scholastic theologians regarding whether the body was present or needed for suffering in Hell.⁶¹¹ What she shows is a strong trend towards viewing *post mortem* pain in Hell as disembodied: that is, felt by the soul in the absence of the body.⁶¹² Given the view of death offered by the latter excerpt, it seems fairly likely that the author of Christina's biography understood *post mortem* suffering to be disembodied. He may thus also have held the Augustinian view that pain was felt by the living in the soul rather than the body.⁶¹³ Yet as can be seen from the excerpts examined above, he was hardly able to ignore the bodily causes of Christina's suffering during her life. Christina's life, as narrated in her *vita*, is not a story of disembodied suffering. Her mental turmoil and the sensuality of pain, as she experienced it in her mind, are both important aspects of it. Nevertheless, they are clearly coupled with her body, which at the very least can be viewed as acting as a medium for aspects of her pain and suffering in the respect that it qualified them. For instance, harsh scourgings (see item 3 above) presumably caused Christina pain because, even if it was her soul rather than her body that was ultimately subject to the sensation of pain, its causes were nevertheless locatable on her body. Even if her biographer ultimately located the sensuality of pain in the soul, he still clearly viewed the body as a medium through which certain kinds of pain and suffering were felt.

⁶⁰⁹ *The Life of Christina*, ¶ 48 / pp. 122-5.

⁶¹⁰ See chapter three, sec. 3.1, pp. 91 above.

⁶¹¹ Plato's portrayal of Socrates' in the *Phaedo* was noted previously in Chapter Three, sec. 3.1.1, pp. 78-9.

⁶¹² Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, pp. 180-6.

⁶¹³ Augustine, *City of God*, xxi: 3: discussed by Cohen in *The Modulated Scream*, p. 183.

Finally, this must all be viewed in relation to socio-cultural attitudes towards pain and suffering in twelfth-century Europe, particularly among religious ascetics and mystics. As noted above, Christina's life and behaviour correspond with broader trends in religious life and behaviour in the later medieval period, both among the clergy and laity (bearing in mind that Christina's transition from laity to clergy is covered by her life). This has all been discussed widely by historians over the past few decades.⁶¹⁴ For present purposes, what needs to be stressed is the extent to which mental and bodily suffering can be situated within this cultural context. Although it might reasonably be thought that pain and suffering exist independently of culture, they are nevertheless experienced within it. Furthermore, as can be seen from the case of Christina, cultural context influences not only how pain and suffering are experienced, but also people's propensity towards them. As a case in point, Christina evidently found pain and suffering to be sufficiently beneficial to her spiritual well-being to be worth inflicting on herself. Certainly, she was not alone in this respect. As Cohen has recently pointed out, pain was consistently viewed in Western Christian theological discourse, from late antiquity up to the late medieval period, as a means towards salvation.⁶¹⁵

5.1.4: Conclusion

Pain and suffering must be understood not merely as sensations, locatable in the body or mind, or as socio-cultural constructs, but rather as composite phenomena brought about by the ways in which three facets of human existence interact with one another: namely mind, body, and culture. Although pain and suffering exist, in the most immediate sense of the word, in the mind and body, the influence of socio-cultural pressures on people's conscious experiences of and behavioural responses to them can hardly be in doubt. The pain-seeking behaviour of Christina and other medieval ascetics and mystics cannot be accounted for without some understanding of the socio-religious culture of Christian Western Europe during the medieval period. Likewise, this culture cannot be properly understood if we ignore the significance of the body as a medium onto which pain and suffering can be voluntarily inflicted and

⁶¹⁴ See above n. 65.

⁶¹⁵ See Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, p. 4: it is a running theme through chapters one, four, and six-eight.

the mind as the facet of human life in which the sensuality of pain and suffering become conscious.

Similar patterns follow for the other topics discussed in this section. For example, we cannot fully appreciate the significance of Guibert's lack of expressivity towards his bodily injuries without some knowledge of the clerical culture into which he had been initiated as a boy, his relationship with his mother, or his literary intentions in describing the event long after it had occurred. But neither does it make much sense to discuss all of this without acknowledging Guibert's embodiment and thereby his capacity to consciously feel pain and suffering via injuries to his body. In short, mind, body, and culture must all be taken into account in order to account for the wide range of instantiations of the phenomena of pain and suffering as they may potentially exist in the human world.

5.2: *Aging and "old age"*

Old age is an important theme in several of the texts considered here, in which it tends to be associated with sensations and experiences of pain, suffering, and general discomfort. Accordingly, this section expands on some of the themes explored in the previous section of this chapter.

There are two distinct aspects to the phenomenon of age as it relates to humanity. Firstly, there is the biological process of *aging*, whereby bodies mature and eventually decay over time at variable rates and in response to innumerable embodied and environmental factors. Humans share this in common with all other living beings. The second covers the broad sweep of specifically human responses to the first: that is, the ways in which people experience and conceptualise biological aging and the socio-cultural constructs that form in response to it and influence how people experience and conceptualise it.

Recent literature on old age and "the aging-process" in medieval Europe has drawn attention to socially-constructed attitudes towards these phenomena.⁶¹⁶ Joel Rosenthal is remarkable for making an issue of their roots in a biological process:

⁶¹⁶ For example see S. Shahar, 'The old body in medieval culture' in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. S. Kay *et al* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 160-87 and G. R. Overing, 'A body in question: aging, community, and gender in medieval Iceland' in *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 29: 2 (1999), pp. 211-25.

Like gender and race and colour, it [old age] seems a part of the “natural world” around which society has been constructed as a gloss, a reading. And, as we are now apt to say, old age is in some part a social construct, a web of behavioural patterns woven around a biological phenomenon.⁶¹⁷

Biological aging clearly affects society and culture. Perhaps most obviously, it leads people to view the general course of human life as a progression, which is often conceptualised, at least in western cultures, as a series of discrete stages: *e.g.* infancy, adulthood, and old age. In turn, socio-cultural constructs like these, not to mention living and working conditions in any given society, affect how people experience the biological aging process. For example, depending on when the body is viewed as “old” in a given socio-cultural context, people may experience themselves as “old” by the age of 40, 50, or 60 (and conversely, they may experience adulthood at 14, 16, 18, 21, *etc.*). Therefore, it can be said that while biological aging is a universal and ultimately inexorable process, most concepts about age or aging are arbitrary, including conventions for measuring “age” (by the solar year in western cultures) and notions like youth, adulthood, old age, and so forth.

Medieval Christians received a relatively coherent notion of old age [*senex* and *senectus*] from antiquity. The transmission of this into the intellectual and literary cultures of medieval Europe is particularly apparent through popular tropes involving old age: particularly the *puer senex* (*i.e.* boy with the wisdom of an elderly man), and the Millenarian notion of *senectus mundi* (“old age of the world”), most notably developed by Augustine from the Old Testament prophecies of Daniel and Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 10: 11).⁶¹⁸ *Senex* and *senectus* appear in the Latin Vulgate, albeit, sparingly⁶¹⁹:

- Now Abraham was old, and advanced in age: and the Lord had blessed him in all things.

⁶¹⁷ J. T. Rosenthal, *Old Age in late Medieval England* (Philadelphia Penn., 1996), p. 1.

⁶¹⁸ On the *puer senex* see Curtius, *European Literature*, pp. 98-101. For Augustine’s Millenarianism see *City of God*, book xx (especially chapter 23). For some examples of the use made of the *senectus mundi topos* by medieval authors see Constable, ‘Medieval Latin Metaphors’, pp. 10-11.

⁶¹⁹ *Senex* occurs 28 times throughout the Vulgate, and *senectus*, 5 times: see <http://www.drbo.org/vb/> (accessed 02 / 04 / 09)

Erat autem Abraham senex dierumque multorum et Dominus in cunctis benedixerat ei. [Gen. 24: 1]

And if they live long, they shall be nothing regarded, and their last old age

- shall be without honour.

Et si quidem longae vitae erunt in nihilum computabuntur et sine honore erit novissima senectus illorum. [Wis. 3: 17]

- For venerable age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years: but the understanding of years is grey hairs. And a spotless life is old age.

Senectus enim venerabilis est non diuturna neque numero annorum computata cani sunt autem sensus hominibus. Et aetas senectutis vita immaculata. [Wis. 4: 8-9]⁶²⁰

Nevertheless, precisely what counted as *senex* in medieval Europe varied widely. Shulamith Shahar has shown that old age, as defined by a range of medieval texts, could fall anywhere between around 35 and 70 years.⁶²¹ She has also drawn attention to the variety of stereotypes about old age and old people in the late medieval west and how these coloured people's experiences of oldness and old people.⁶²² Furthermore, Gillian Overing has pointed out that old age was defined in some socio-cultural contexts (specifically in medieval Iceland) according to the capacity of the individual to perform certain social functions or manual tasks, in which case the harshness of the local environment and individual wealth and status can be counted as significant determinants of the notion of old age.⁶²³ Therefore, it should be stressed that even in spite of common terms like *senex* or *senectus*, the concept of old age varied widely within and between medieval societies, influenced by a mixture of lived conditions and inherited wisdom.

⁶²⁰ All translations taken from <http://www.latinvulgate.com/> (accessed 09 / 10 / 09)

⁶²¹ S. Shahar, 'Who were old in the middle ages?' in *Social History of Medicine*, 6: 3 (1993), pp. 313-41.

⁶²² Shahar, 'The old body in medieval culture'.

⁶²³ Overing discusses how these issues were related to aging and the old body in medieval Iceland in 'A Body in Question'.

5.2.1: Experiences of aging and Stereotypes of old age

The following two excerpts have already been discussed in Chapter Four (sec. 4.1) in regard to Theobald's understanding of the components of his body. Here the focus is on the representation of old age:

1. [F]or by reason of my age and infirmity, I shall not be able to wait for your coming that I yearn for, "for my flesh is wasted and my bone cleaves to my skin"; my spirit threatens its departure, yet still cleaves to my limbs in the desire and hope of your coming.

*[Q]ui prae aetate et aegritudine desideratum adventum vestrum diu non potero expectare. "Pelli meae consumptis carnibus adhaesit os meum" [cf. Job, 19: 20]; recessum minatur spiritus, haeret tamen membris in desiderio et spe adventus vestri.*⁶²⁴

2. My flesh is worn away and my limbs are exhausted by age and toil, while long and grievous sickness tells me that my end is very near.

*Attrita est caro ea et tam aetate quam laboribus prefatigati sunt artus, et aegritudo gravis et diuturna dierum meorum finem in brevi adesse denuntiat.*⁶²⁵

In items 1 and 2 age [*aetas*] is construed as a cause of exhaustion [*prefatigus sum*] and probably also death to the extent that the departure of the spirit [*recessum minatur spiritus*] can be taken to mean the death of the body.⁶²⁶ Moreover, it is equated with sickness or disease [*aegritudo*] in item 1 and hard work [*labor*] in item 2. It is important to note that *aetas* does not necessarily mean old age in either of these excerpts. It certainly implies *being older* to the extent that people's bodies necessarily

⁶²⁴ John, *Letters*, i: 121.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*, i: 135.

⁶²⁶ This aspect of item 1 was discussed previously in chapter three, sec. 4.1, pp. 139-40 above.

mature and decay with the passing of time, but this is not quite the same thing as old age.

Importantly, Theobald need not necessarily have viewed the consequences of aging [*aetas*] for his body in a strictly negative light. As Shahar has noted, old or aged bodies could be viewed in negative and positive ways by medieval Europeans:

Aging was considered conducive to increased wisdom, and spiritual growth, as well as liberation from passions and earthly ambitions. But it was also a time of development of negative traits of character, and even vices, as well as of mental deterioration. In other words there are two stereotypes of the old person—positive and negative.⁶²⁷

The English historian, poet, and near-contemporary of Theobald, Henry of Huntingdon (c. 1080-1160) offers a more positive view of the aged body in his short book, *De Contemptu Mundi* [*On Contempt of the World*], written c. 1135:

3. From boyhood almost all the vices—except concupiscence—put forth their shoots. The hardest one, that rears itself up the highest and dominates the rest, is excessive love of the present world. When, however, the natural improvement of maturity clears away the many evils of boyhood, such as ignorance, levity, changeableness, and so on, this one evil, which is more pleasing than the rest and is seasoned with poisoned sweetness, remains and develops. But with advancing age, what was once soothing becomes abrasive, what tasted sweet becomes bitter. Minds almost inextricably caught in bad habits, as if trapped by a hook, are held fast by riches and fleeting delights. This I have learned from my own experience.

Igitur a puericia omnia fere preter luxuriam pullulant. Inter que cacumen erigit rigidissimum et principatur nimius amor presentium. Cum autem etatis naturali bono mala multa puericie vacuentur, velut inscientia, levitas, mutabilitas, et alia, hoc predictum, quod iocundius est ceteris, et melle venenato conditur, remanet et crescit. Etatis tamen magno processu, pungere

⁶²⁷ Shahar, 'The old body in medieval culture', p. 160 and 169-70.

*videntur que mulcebant, et amaricare que indulcabant. Vsu tamen mali, velut hamo fere inextricabili, capte mentes divitiis et deliciis fugientibus retinentur. Quod a me ipso didici.*⁶²⁸

Contemptus mundi was an established literary genre and trope in the scholastic culture of late antique and medieval Europe. Other notable works by twelfth-century authors, also entitled *De Contemptu Mundi*, include those of Anselm of Canterbury (who wrote two works with that name) and Bernard of Cluny (these are included among the eight works in J. P. Migne's *Patrologia Latina* entitled *De Contemptu Mundi*).⁶²⁹ Henry's characterisation of the relative merits of the aged body in item 3 must be viewed in this context.⁶³⁰ As he saw it, the passing of time could bestow positive qualities on the individual that had been lacking in their younger selves unless, perhaps, they were the proverbial *puer senex*. And likewise, the vices of youth [*puericie*] (*i.e.* ignorance [*inscientia*], fickleness [*levitas*], and inconstancy [*mutabilis*]) wane with the passing of time.⁶³¹ Therefore, it should be noted that Henry's positive view of old age is informed as much by negative stereotypes of youth as by positive stereotypes of old age.

Age-related stereotypes clearly contributed to the ways in which the old body is represented in the excerpts considered so far. It is also important to consider how these stereotypes corresponded to Theobald's and Henry's direct experiences of age on their own and other people's bodies, for as Henry himself points out in item 3: 'This I have learnt by myself [*Quod a me ipso didici*]'.⁶³² At the very least, it is difficult to account for stereotypes if they do not in some sense *fit* how people experience the world. Consider, for instance, the age-related stereotype, *being old is being physically weak* [*i.e.* "*prefatigus sum*"], which appears in items 1 and 2. It seems reasonable to hazard that this has a fairly sound basis in Theobald's immediate experiences of the effects of age on his body. This is not to say that all stereotypes fit

⁶²⁸ *De Contemptu Mundi* is included in Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, trans. D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996), pp. 584-7.

⁶²⁹ The authors of two of those works are unknown. The other, identifiable, authors are Eucharius of Lyon, Odo of Cluny, Roger of Bec, and Innocent III. Also see Shahar, 'The old body in medieval culture', pp. 164-5.

⁶³⁰ Moreover, Henry's fondness for *Contemptu Mundi* is apparent throughout his best known surviving work, the *Historia Anglorum*: Nancy Partner discusses this in *Serious Entertainments: the writing of history in twelfth-century England* (Chicago, 1977), pp. 11-48.

⁶³¹ The *puer senex* trope was noted above at pp. 220.

⁶³² My translation. Haseldine gives: 'This I have learned from my own experience.'

the world in quite such a direct manner, or even reflect reality.⁶³³ However, for present purposes Theobald's negative stereotype of the old body has a credible basis in the realities of aging in medieval Europe as suggested by recent studies on living and working conditions and life expectancy in medieval Europe.⁶³⁴

This highlights the necessity of maintaining a balanced approach in this study towards the contributions made by society and culture, on the one hand, and the natural world (including the biological body) on the other, to how people experienced and understood human existence in twelfth-century Europe.⁶³⁵ In regard to this, the historian, Mary Garrison, has made some helpful comments:

[L]iterary conventions and ritual gestures alike can be construed as the meeting point of emotional experience and cultural constraints, *shaping and enabling the externalisation of emotional experience in culturally familiar patterns*, effective for communication even when not "authentic"...If Christianity can be seen as providing conditions capable of fostering self-awareness and narratives of self-disclosure, *it also provided theological perspectives which gave medieval people their own framework for articulating and evaluating emotional states*.⁶³⁶ [My italics]

Garrison points out that people express themselves and communicate with each other in terms of received socio-cultural *constraints* and their immediate *emotional* responses to the world (this fits nicely with Lakoff's and Johnson's experiential view of metaphor).⁶³⁷ Elsewhere in the same article, she also draws attention to the importance of Ernst Robert Curtius' argument in his now classic work, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, that throughout the middle ages, well-educated Western Europeans shared a common literary and intellectual heritage, grounded in

⁶³³ It is worth noting Pinker's discussion of stereotypes in *How the Mind Works*, pp. 12-13. This is related more broadly to his discussion of categorisation in the same work, pp. 306-13.

⁶³⁴ In regard to this, it is worth noting R. Fleming, 'Bones for Historians: Putting the Body back into Biography' in *Writing Medieval Biography*, ed. D. Bates *et al* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 29-48. Fleming discusses the impact of working and living conditions, among other things, on health and life-expectancy in Anglo-Saxon England.

⁶³⁵ Scholars involved in the so-called "history of emotions" debate have acknowledged similar obstacles to understanding the emotions of medieval people: see the contributions by B. Rosenwein, S. Airlie, M. Garrison, and C. Larrington in *Early Medieval Europe*, 10: 2 (2001). Garrison's article is quoted and discussed shortly.

⁶³⁶ M. Garrison, 'The study of emotions in early medieval history' in *Early Medieval Europe*, 10: 2 (2001), p. 244.

⁶³⁷ See Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.4.

the Greek, Roman, and Jewish past. She goes on to argue that this afforded them a degree of “privileged access” into each other’s emotional (or mental) lives in that it provided them with common ways of understanding their experiences of the world and expressing them.⁶³⁸

This can be related back to a point made previously in sec. 4.1 regarding Theobald’s paraphrase of Job 19: 20 (see item 1 in the present section): ‘For my flesh is wasted and my bone cleaves to my skin [*Pelli meae consumptis carnibus adhaesit os meum*].’ Garrison’s suggestions are highly relevant here: ‘[Christianity] provided theological perspectives which gave medieval people their own framework for articulating and evaluating emotional states.’⁶³⁹ This applies to Theobald’s use of Job, by which he can be seen to be tapping into the language and tropes of Old Testament theology, as received through Western Christianity, to express an emotional response to the effects of the passing of time on his body. Similarly, the *contemptus mundi* genre provided Henry with a literary model, rooted in Judaeo-Christian eschatology and moral values, by which he could *articulate* and *evaluate* (to use Garrison’s terms) his experiences of the effects of aging on the body.

These points can be explored further with reference to the following extract from Orderic’s *Epilogue*:

4. Now indeed, worn out with old age and infirmity, I hope to bring this book to an end, and it is plain that many good reasons urge me to do so. For I am now in the sixty-seventh year of my life and service to the Lord Jesus Christ, and while I see the princes of this world overwhelmed by misfortunes and disastrous setbacks I myself, strengthened by the grace of God, enjoy the security of obedience and poverty.

*Ecce senio et infirmitate fatigatus librum hunc finire cupio, et hoc ut fiat pluribus ex causis manifesta exposcit ratio. Nam sexagesimum septimum aetatis meae annum in cultu Domini mei Iesu Christi perago, et dum optimates huius seculi gravibus infortuniis sibique valde contrariis comprimi video, gratia Dei corroboratus securitate subiectionis et paupertatis tripudio.*⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁸ Garrison, ‘The study of emotions’, pp. 245-7.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁶⁴⁰ Orderic, *Epilogue*.

Orderic's impression of the effects of age [*aetas*] on his body is similar to that given by Theobald in items 1 and 2. The passing of sixty-seven years has left him weak or sick [*infirmitas*] and tired [*fatigatus*].⁶⁴¹ It is also significant that Orderic describes himself as "old" in this excerpt [*senium*] and states his age as 67 [*sexagesimus septimus*]. This gives the fairly clear impression that he viewed the mid-sixties, at least, as being firmly within a period of "old age" or *senex* in the progression of his life and presumably also in other people's lives.⁶⁴²

There are a number of issues which should be raised in regard to the influence of literary and religious *exempla* or *topoi* on this passage. Again, it should be noted that Orderic's *Epilogue* clearly apes the epilogue to the model for his *Historia Ecclesiastica*: namely Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Bede closed his *historia* with a brief account of the course of his life and his devotion to the Christian faith. Although Orderic's *Epilogue* is much longer and more detailed, it is clearly based on the model supplied by Bede.⁶⁴³ Secondly, Orderic's *Epilogue* is as devotional as it is autobiographical. Thus, note how by giving his age, Orderic makes it very clear that he had spent each year of his life in the service of Jesus Christ: 'For I am now in the sixty-seventh year of my life and service to the Lord Jesus Christ [*Nam sexagesimum septimum aetatis meae annum in cultu Domini mei Iesu Christi perago*].'⁶⁴⁴ And to strengthen this point, he goes on to draw a contrast between the good fortune and happiness that befell him through his obedience and poverty, and the misfortunes suffered by the secular princes [*optimates*] of his time, presumably in spite of their power and wealth.

In item 4, Orderic can be seen to be evaluating the course and outcomes of his life in strongly theological terms. This is particularly clear from the virtues he ascribes to a life lived in poverty and obedience to God and the contrast he draws between the outcomes of this kind of life and the life of a secular prince. This can be

⁶⁴¹ Cf. Theobald acribes sickness [*aegritudo*] and exhaustion [*prefatigus sum*] to his old body in items 1-2 above (p. 222).

⁶⁴² On quantitative definitions of old age in medieval medical texts see Shahar, 'Who were old in the middle ages?'

⁶⁴³ The influence of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* on Orderic's *Historia* has already been noted in the Introduction to Part II (pp. 67). It is discussed by Chibnall in *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, pp. 177-80 and p. 216. Although Bede's epilogue is much briefer than Orderic's, some clear parallels can be drawn between the two: cf. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, xxiv / Colgrave *et al*, pp. 566-7 and Orderic, *Epilogue*.

⁶⁴⁴ Orderic, *Epilogue*.

related to Augustine's famous exegesis of the story of Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve (Gen. 4: 1-16), in his *City of God*:

When those two cities started on their course through the succession of birth and death, the first to be born was *a citizen of this world* [*civis huius saeculi*], and later appeared one who was *a pilgrim and stranger in the world* [*peregrinus in saeculo*], belonging as he did to the City of God. He was predestined by grace, and chosen by grace, by grace a pilgrim [*peregrinus*] below, and by grace a citizen [*civis*] above.⁶⁴⁵ [My italics]

Augustine's reading of the lives of Cain and Abel was largely intended for Christian readers living in the religiously-mixed cities of late antiquity.⁶⁴⁶ This aspect of the text was lost to Augustine's medieval readership. However, the distinction he makes between the citizens of the world [*saeculum*] and of heaven or the "City of God" [*Civitas Dei*] would have been more pertinent to them, not least in that it reflected the distinction observed in the societies of medieval Europe between the clergy and laity, and the Church and state. But perhaps most importantly, Augustine's reading of Cain and Abel highlights what for him, and medieval Christians, would have seemed a fundamental and necessary life-choice faced by everybody between living either for the immediate pleasures of the world or in anticipation of those *promised* by God.

The point here is not necessarily that Orderic specifically had Augustine's reading of the story of Cain and Abel in mind when he was composing the epilogue to his *Historia* (although it is certainly possible). Rather, it is that Orderic was using similar language and ideas about life and morality as those employed by Augustine to understand the consequences of his life, as he had lived it, for his posthumous existence. In this way, Orderic can be seen to be casting a positive spin on his old age [*senium*], in spite of his feelings of sickness and fatigue, through a specifically Christian understanding of the nature of individual human well-being. More to the point, given his devotion to God throughout his life, Orderic was able to equate nearness to death with nearness to Heaven and thus God.

⁶⁴⁵ Augustine, *City of God*, xv: 1.

⁶⁴⁶ For an outline of the historical circumstances in which Augustine wrote *City of God*, see Evans' introduction to Bettenson's translation, pp. xxxiii-xl.

Peter of Celle also made use of religious language and biblical *exempla* to structure and express his views on old age. Consider the following extract from a letter to Pope Alexander III, in which he cites old age [*aetas annosa*] as the main reason for why he could not attend the then forthcoming Third Lateran Council (March 1179):

5. I proffer an excuse—not a frivolous one, like one of the perfunctory excuses in the Gospels with which those invited to the last supper accuse themselves of making excuses, but one which is, by clear proofs, demonstrable and true. There is in me indeed a willing devotion to every kind of obedience, but my weak performance sinks down on account of my infirmity. The will is present but weakness hampers it; “the spirit is indeed willing but the flesh weak” [Matt. 6: 30]. Therefore let old age, a long journey, the brief span of life, and tired limbs be the demonstrable and necessary grounds of our excuse before the fatherly clemency and most equitable judgement of the apostolic wisdom, which would rather have an absent son alive than one present who is half dead, or expired for sure.

[E]xcusationem prefero, non frivolum de perfunctoriis evangelicis aliquam quibus ad cenam invitati se excusando accusant, sed manifestis documentis probabilem et veram. Prompta siquidem est in me ad omnem obedientiam devotio sed succumbit propter invaletudinem languida executio. Inest voluntas sed impedit infirmitas; “spiritus quidem promptus est, caro autem infirma”.⁶⁴⁷ Apud igitur paternam clementiam et equissimam apostolice discretionis censuram etas annosa, longa via, brevis vita, fessa membra sint nostre excusationis probabilia et necessaria argumenta. Mauult habere filium absentem vivum quam secum semimortuum, vel certe extinctum.⁶⁴⁸

The extent to which Peter employs the language of the Bible in his letters to express himself should be noted. As Julian Haseldine observes:

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. Matt. 26: 41: *Spiritus quidem promptus est caro autem infirma*. Mark 14: 38: *Spiritus quidem promptus caro vero infirma*.

⁶⁴⁸ Peter, *Letters*, 80.

No amount of footing can capture the extent to which the Vulgate moulds and informs Peter's thoughts and expression; to attempt to disentangle it would risk reducing to a string of references what is a complex and subtle response to the central text of the Latin West.⁶⁴⁹

It is in this manner that Peter uses the language and contents of the Bible to excuse himself from attending the Lateran council. Incidentally, Haseldine's translation of *cenam* as the Last Supper seems inappropriate here as Peter is surely referring to the parable of The Unwilling Guests (Matt. 22: 1-10; Luke 14: 15-24) rather than the Last Supper.⁶⁵⁰ Also noteworthy is the use Peter makes of Matthew's famous dictum, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak", to express his predicament: namely, that although he wished to go, the state of his body prevented him from doing as much.⁶⁵¹

Peter continues this letter in a similar vein, employing a further series of biblical images to express his experiences of old age:

6. I am smitten as grass which now has withered [cf. Ps. 101 (102): 5, 128 (129): 6], 'which is today, and tomorrow' shall not be cast 'into the oven' but into the bier [cf. Matt. 6: 30, Luke 12: 28], and how, like 'a wain that is laden with hay' [Amos 2: 13] shall I be able to follow those travelling on horses or flying on the wings of health and of sturdy age?

Percussus sum ut fenum quod iam exarvit, 'quod hodie est, et cras' non 'in clibanum' sed in feretrum mittetur, et quomodo tanquam 'plaustrum onustum feno' prosequi potero ambulantes in equis et volantes in pennis sanitatis et robuste etatis?

The compound metaphor that Peter creates in the first two clauses of item 6, whereby he likens himself to withered grass and a wain laden with hay, is clearly intended to

⁶⁴⁹ See introduction to Haseldine's edition of Peter's letters, p. xxiii.

⁶⁵⁰ Haseldine's translation of *cenam* as "Last Supper" seems doubtful given that none of the gospels report anybody making excuses for non-attendance at the event. By contrast, guests making excuses for non-attendance at a banquet are the explicit topic of both Matthew's and Luke's so-called parables of The Unwilling Guests.

⁶⁵¹ Significantly, Cohen highlights other letters in which pain is used as an excuse for various things: *The Modulated Scream*, pp. 116-118.

highlight a correlation between age and proximity to death. Furthermore, it is a strongly seasonal metaphor as the common element bridging its two parts is the agricultural practice of haymaking (typically carried out in late summer in Northern Europe). In regard of this, the first point to make is that Peter is presenting himself as being *past his best* (so to speak): that is, he is too withered (*i.e.* it is too late in the season) to be harvested for good hay and so he is thus destined for the bier rather than the oven. Hence considered in this light, he is suggesting not only that he is nearing the end of his life (*i.e.* as though nearing the end of the seasonal cycle of the solar year), but also that he is past the point of being useful (*i.e.* withered grass is no good for making hay): a message that fits the purpose of his letter.⁶⁵²

The second point relates to the hay wain. Firstly, the image of the wain can be related back to the qualities that Peter ascribed to his aged body earlier in the letter (see item 5): *infirma*, *infirmetas* and *languida*. These terms can be seen to fit Peter's image of a heavily-loaded wain, which we might reasonably expect to move slowly and inelegantly (from which we might also infer weakness [*infirma*]). Furthermore, Peter places this image in contrast to that of younger men, mounted and unmounted, whose movements will be swifter and more elegant because they are young and healthy: 'flying on the wings of health and of robust age [*volantes in pennis sanitatis et robuste etatis*].' This may reflect an intended social contrast between the low status wain (with accompanying draught horses) and the horses of the young men, which, we may surmise, are supposed to be more valuable, and thus of higher-status by the standards of twelfth-century French society.

There is a degree of inconsistency between the images of the wain and withered grass as they are used in item 6, for on the one hand Peter construes himself as a bulky, load-bearing, vehicle, intended to carry hay, while on the other he claims to be like withered grass, which is to say characterised by loss of mass and unsuitable for haymaking. Moreover, considered in light of the draught horses needed to pull it or its load-bearing capacity, the wain could be viewed as a symbol of power or fortitude rather than age-induced exhaustion. Nevertheless, taken together for Peter's

⁶⁵² Cf. Matthew 6: 30: 'And if the grass of the field, which is to day, and to morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? [*si autem faenum agri quod hodie est et cras in clibanum mittitur Deus sic vestit quanto magis vos minimae fidei*]'; Luke 12: 28: 'Now, if God clothe in this manner the grass that is to-day in the field and to-morrow is cast into the oven: how much more you, O ye of little faith? [*si autem faenum quod hodie in agro est et cras in clibanum mittitur Deus sic vestit quanto magis vos pusillae fidei*].' Translations from www.latinvulgate.com (accessed 22 / 10 / 09)

purposes in this letter, they provide a reasonably coherent image of old age, characterised by proximity to death, slowness, and weakness.⁶⁵³

Again, this can be related to Garrison's point about the influence of Christianity on the ways in which medieval people expressed and understood their experiences of the world.⁶⁵⁴ Here and elsewhere we can see that the Vulgate Bible provided Peter with an extensive repertoire of terms, concepts, phrases, metaphors, and stories to which he could relate, *inter alia*, his experiences of his aged body. In this way, the language and content of the Vulgate provided Peter with understanding of this aspect of himself and a means of expressing it that would have been familiar to other well-educated people in Western Christian Europe during the twelfth century. Importantly, however, this does not mean that the realities of Peter's experiences and understanding of the effects of age on his body were hopelessly veiled in biblical language and metaphor. The use made of the Bible by Peter in his writings was a creative process, on his part involving active evaluation and restructuring its contents to fit his literary purposes.

5.2.2: Conclusion

The excerpts examined in this section go some way towards exploring the mutual interplay between the realities of the biological aging process to which everybody is subject and the personal and socio-cultural significances that may be drawn from this. As with the earlier discussion of pain, the immediate realities of bodily aging and mental and socio-cultural responses to this phenomenon are not easily distinguishable. Although at the beginning of this section I made the observation that the "natural" aging process is a discrete phenomenon in itself, I would now add that as it relates to the human world the aging process is hardly distinguishable, if at all, from how people experience and interpret it and wider socio-cultural responses to it. Regardless of the universality and inexorability of this phenomenon, it is invariably experienced by everyone from their own personal perspectives and in relation to whatever socio-cultural contexts.

⁶⁵³ On the partial coherence of metaphors see Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.2: for direct reference see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, chapters 9-11.

⁶⁵⁴ See p. 225 above.

In the above discussion, it has been seen that the relevant authors experienced the aging process through a range of socio-culturally transmitted positive and negative stereotypes, as well as in regard to their immediate experiences of their own, and presumably also other people's, decaying bodies. While old age could be lamented for the pain and discomfort it eventually brings, it might also be welcomed as a less sinful state of the body, as indeed Henry of Huntingdon saw it, or as an apt moment for self-reflection, both on the rights and wrongs of one's past life and the coming afterlife, as I would argue Orderic was mainly thinking of it when composing the epilogue to his *Historia*. Moreover, the Vulgate Bible provided the authors relevant here with a catalogue of terms and ideas with which to interpret their experiences of aging and other streams of inherited wisdom on it. As highlighted above, this can be seen most clearly in the writings of Peter whose ability to weave multiple biblical citations and allusions into his Latin prose was nothing short of virtuous.

5.3: Sex and excretion; disgust and humour

This section is intended to explore how mind, body, and culture interact via two kinds of emotional response to the human anatomy and physiology of sex and excretion in Guibert's *De Vita Sua* and Walter's *De Nugis*: namely disgust and humour. As with the subject matter of the previous section the anatomy and physiology of sex and excretion are necessary parts of human life. Everybody excretes waste and everybody has sexual organs, be they male, female, or transex, although their experiences of them may vary considerably as they can be used, or not used, for a variety of sexual and non-sexual practices. By contrast, people have less control over how their bodies excrete waste, although even so, as has been seen in the case of Christina's self-imposed suffering, they may alter this by modifying their diet or refusing to eat and drink at all.⁶⁵⁵ Furthermore, several body parts function both as sexual organs and excretory orifices hence people's embodied experiences of sex and excretion are notably close.⁶⁵⁶ At any rate, the upshot of all this is that everybody has some experience and understanding of sex and excretion, even if they abstain from the former and try to control the latter through diet and regimen. As above, what is of

⁶⁵⁵ This was discussed above in sec. 5.1.3.

⁶⁵⁶ This is noted in by the anthropologist, J. B. Loudon, in 'On body products', in *The Anthropology of the Body*, ed. J. Blacking (London, 1977), p. 164.

interest about this here is the variety of possible responses to sex and excretion, among individuals and societies and cultures, and, most importantly, what this suggests about the interplay between mind, body, and culture in human life.

The contents of *De Vita Sua* and *De Nugis* which are relevant in this section may be studied under the rubric of “obscenity” hence some thought is given below to the value of this concept for understanding Guibert’s and Walter’s specific responses to sex and excretion. Guibert’s and Walter’s are the only texts from the sample used in this study which are relevant in this respect. The anatomy and physiology of sex and excretion are not mentioned at all in John’s and Peter’s letters or in Orderic’s *Epilogue*. Excretion is suggested once in *The Life of Christina* (see sec. 5.1.3, item 1 above), while sex, which is to say the carnal realities of sex, is not mentioned at all (which is appropriate as Christina remained a virgin throughout her life).⁶⁵⁷ Thus, *De Vita Sua* and *De Nugis* are best suited to the purposes of this section.

There is an extensive discourse on the notion of obscenity in medieval studies and elsewhere in the humanities.⁶⁵⁸ The term itself covers a wide range of responses to potentially anything, although the link between obscenity and sex and excretion is especially strong in western cultures. The medievalist, Leslie Dunton-Downer, has summarised the breadth and difficulties inherent in controlling the coverage of this concept nicely:

[T]he obscene is an oddly plastic category of discrimination, uniquely predicated on complicated variables of aesthetic reception. The obscene not only describes the qualities of cultural materials and behaviours, but also captures what we understand to be the effects produced by virtually anything: cultural objects, gestures, historic events, even natural phenomena.⁶⁵⁹

In different words, obscenity varies according to what is being experienced by whom as obscene. Thus, obscenity is best understood as a category of experiences, or

⁶⁵⁷ Excretion is suggested in *The Life of Christina* at ¶ 39 (this is cited as item 1 in sec. 5.1.3 above).

⁶⁵⁸ For major discussions of obscenity in medieval studies see the edited collections *Obscenity, Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages*, ed. J. M. Ziolkowski (Boston, 1998) and *Medieval Obscenity*, ed. N. MacDonald (Woodbridge, 2006). Taken together, these collections cover a huge amount of ground and thus give some sense of how widespread notions of obscenity were in the medieval west.

⁶⁵⁹ L. Dunton-Downer, ‘Poetic language and the obscene’ in *Obscenity, Social Control and Artistic Creation in the Europe Middle Ages*, ed. J. M. Ziolkowski (Boston, 1998), p. 19.

maybe better, emotional states, which varies according to the interplay between people's sensory perceptions of the world and the ways in which their upbringing and currently prevailing socio-cultural norms influence how they interpret those perceptions (keeping in mind that socio-cultural norms change over time and that personal tastes or standards of morality may transgress any such norms): it cannot be reduced either to rigid socio-cultural norms, purely subjective experiences, or hard-wired sensory access to the world. It is well-documented that attitudes towards sex, excretion, and obscenity (or offensiveness) vary among different societies, cultures, or communities. It can be seen from this discourse that there is nothing necessarily obscene, disgusting, humorous, or offensive about sex and excretion.⁶⁶⁰ As just stated, if people experience aspects of the world as obscene, disgusting, funny, offensive, or whatever else, then this must be accounted for in terms of the interacting influences of the mind, body, and culture.

One way in which the obscenity of sex and excretion is interpreted in western societies involves the relationship between the body and built environment. This relationship has been explored extensively in academic literature.⁶⁶¹ There have long been designated spaces in western societies in which the bodily acts of sex and excretion are supposed to be performed and the excreta resulting from either activity deposited out of sight (or any of the other senses). In this way, boundaries and barriers, physical and conceptual, have gradually been erected in the west, *inter alia*, between people performing these activities and society in general. In modern western societies, sex and excretion are not normally accepted in public, but when people do so (*i.e.* in the "public gaze") they tellingly risk being perceived as acting in obscene

⁶⁶⁰ One of the most important contributors in this regard has been Mary Douglas, particularly in her now classic work, *Purity and Danger* (discussed below at pp. 242-3). For an anthropological perspective on varying attitudes towards human excreta see Loudon, 'On Body Products'. Pinker has recently discussed the psychology of obscenity, especially sexual and scatological obscenity, and swearing in *The Stuff of Thought*, chapter seven. Again, it is also worth consulting the articles collected in *Obscenity, Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages* and *Medieval Obscenity* (full references given in n. 124 above), which taken together show that attitudes towards sex and excretion in the medieval west were highly variable across time and geography. Also see the references in the following note.

⁶⁶¹ Mikhail Bakhtin famously posited the carnival as a social space in which conventional socio-political *mores* break down allowing for public displays of normally illicit (or "obscene") behaviour and language: see M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (orig. Moscow, 1965: Bloomington Ind., 1984). Bakhtin's thesis has been rethought by P. Stallybrass and A. White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London, 1986). Stallybrass and White have also discussed the relationship between filth and the built environment in Britain between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries: see *ibid.*, chapter three. The place of waste (especially faeces) in medieval life has recently been discussed by Susan Signe Morrison under the rubric "waste studies" in *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages* (Basingstoke, 2008): see chapters five, eleven and twelve.

ways by their peers and thereby inviting public opprobrium and even prosecution under secular obscenity laws. Similar circumstances apply in Guibert's and Walter's texts, in which sex and excretion are construed as disgusting, or even obscene, by virtue of being placed or performed within the public gaze. It will be seen in the next subsection (5.3.1) that one way of understanding this is in terms of self- and social control: and in the subsection which follows (5.3.2) as a focus of defamatory humour.

Another matter which needs to be dealt with here is transgression of socio-cultural norms and personal moral standards relating to sexual and excretory behaviour. As just noted, sex and defecation within the public gaze are forms of transgression according to Guibert's and Walter's moral standards. A number of other ways in which sex and excretion transgressed Guibert's and Walter's moral standards will also be highlighted and discussed in this section. A particular point of interest will be how, by drawing attention to specific acts of sexual and excretory transgression, Guibert and Walter aimed in their texts to cast more broadly significant aspersions on groups of people.

5.3.1: Digusting sex and excretion

Book iii of Guibert's *De Vita Sua* contains two very similar anecdotes in which men attacking the interests of the local church in Laon are suddenly afflicted, evidently by God, with a complete loss of bowel control:

1. At Compiègne a royal prévôt opposed the church of Notre-Dame and Saints Cornelius and Cyprian. When the clergy met in the middle of the market place and in the names of such a great Lady and such great patrons ordered him to cease, he showed no respect for the names and distressed his petitioners with his foul curses. *In the midst of his speech, he fell from his horse and in a moment found his breeches badly fouled beneath him by loosening of the bowels.* [My italics]

Apud Compendium quidam praepositus regius adversabatur ecclesiae beatae Mariae, et beatorum Cornelii et Cypriani. Quem cum foro medio clerici convenirent, et ex nomine tantae Dominae, tantorumque patronorum, ne id

*faceret denuntiarent, ille sacris in nullo deferens nominibus, foede rogantium ora exprobrando confudit; sed inter ipsa verba, cum equo insideret, ruit, et sordidissimas bracas, quibus cingebatur, ventris profluvio mox sub se respexit.*⁶⁶²

And shortly thereafter:

2. When an insurrection was stirred up in this town [Saint-Just] and the dregs of the populace were running riot with the townsmen in outrageous insolence, the clergy of the boy martyr St Just brought out the relics in the feretory to quiet the people. Some servant, more ready than the rest, stood in their way and irreverently and wickedly aimed a blow with his sword at the most holy feretory. *Sooner than one could say it, he fell to the ground and, like the man just mentioned [i.e. the royal prévôt], became putrid with the stinking efflux of his excrement.* [My italics]

*Et quia de reverentia sanctis exhibenda dicere coepimus, municipium est in eodem pago Belvacensis episcopii, quod Sancti Justi vocatur. In quo, cum seditio mota fuisset, et enormi insolentia viles quique clientuli cum burgensibus baccharentur, clerici sancti pueri ac martyris Justi reliquias ad sedendum populum in loculo detulerunt. Cui quidam opportunior caeteris revera parasitus cum se retulisset obvium, gladium irreverens et nequam sacratissimo loculo intulit. Qui dicto citius in terram ruens, fetida, ut ille superius, alvi manatione computruit.*⁶⁶³

Guibert draws a clear link in both excerpts between the anti-clerical sentiments and behaviour of the relevant individuals and loss of bowel control.⁶⁶⁴ His descriptions of the respective acts of defecation are similarly graphic in items 1 and 2: Guibert uses

⁶⁶² Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, iii: 18. Archambault's alternative translation of the underlined sentence is: 'Sitting on his horse as he screamed, he suddenly fell to the ground, and his bowels gave way beneath him, so that at once he found his breeches as messy as can be'; Archambault, *A Monk's Confession*, p. 201.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, iii: 18. Again, for the underlined sentence, Archambault gives: 'Faster than it takes to say the words, he fell to the ground and, like the man just mentioned, there issued from him the stink of his own excrement'; Archambault, *A Monk's Confession*, p. 201.

⁶⁶⁴ Benton notes this in *Self and Society*, p. 14.

vocabulary suggestive of liquidity, flow, and uncleanness in both cases. Thus, in item 1, after falling from his horse, the royal prévôt's underwear is seen to be "unclean" or "filthy" [*sordida*] on account of an "outpouring of the bowels" [*ventris profluvius*]. And likewise, in item 2 the "parasite" [*parasitus*: Benton interprets this, perhaps correctly, as "servant"] who attempts to strike the relics of St Just falls to the ground, stinking [*fetida*], because "he was made putrid by an outpouring of his stomach" [*alvi manatione computruit*].⁶⁶⁵

One might imagine that easier options were open to Guibert in both cases to describe the act of defecation. He could, for instance, have given more straightforward descriptions of the relevant events by using the verb, *caco* [to defecate]. It is thus of some interest that he used broadly the same notion of an "outflow of the bowels" to describe the act of defecation. There is surely a high level of word-to-world fit in Guibert's phrases, *ventris profluvius* and *alvi manatio*, which I take to reflect Guibert's embodied experiences of excretion (they also show a certain amount of biological knowledge and understanding in that Guibert is able to connect the external act of excretion with internal bodily organs).⁶⁶⁶ That is, these phrases clearly express an understanding of excretion as a process involving the flow of a substance(s) (*i.e. excreta*) from a source (*e.g.* the stomach) or along a channel (*e.g.* the bowels) to an exit point (in this case, the *anus*). I suggest that this may be viewed, to adapt Lakoff's and Johnson's expression, as a *metaphor by which Guibert lived*: or put differently, these phrases need to be viewed as metaphors conditioned by Guibert's everyday experiences of the world.⁶⁶⁷

It seems possible that Guibert intended these anecdotes to raise laughs among whoever he thought might read his work (presumably literate monks and clerics). Considered in a certain light, there is perhaps something comical, not to mention ironic, about public displays of impiety or anti-clerical feelings resulting in public humiliation through loss of bowel control. This would certainly fit with the theme of book iii of *De Vita Sua*, in which Guibert criticises the formation of the Laon commune in 1115 amidst an outburst of popular anti-clericalism among the secular

⁶⁶⁵ *Computro* may be a compound of *com-* and *putreo* [to decay / rot / putrify] or alternatively, a corruption of *computresco* [approx. *putreo*]: see Lewis and Short, *s.n. putreo* and *computresco* (accessed 1 / 11 / 09).

⁶⁶⁶ Cf. with the previous discussion of Christina's bowels in sec. 5.1.3, pp. 207-8 above.

⁶⁶⁷ For relevant discussion and notes see Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.4.

community and the failure of the corrupt local bishop to prevent it from happening.⁶⁶⁸ Granting this possibility, it may thus have been that Guibert intended his phrases (*ventris profluvius* and *alvi manatio*) to carry a weight of humour or irony that he did not associate with more direct forms of expression (e.g. using *caco*).

In any case, both excerpts are clearly intended to invite the reader to feel a sense of disgust towards the men in question, firstly, because they showed themselves to be impious in public by attacking the Church and clergy, and secondly, because they had been defiled, by Divine *fiat*, with their own excrement. Excrement and the act of excretion are not in themselves the immediate objects of disgust in these passages: it is rather the impiety of the relevant men as well as, presumably, impiety in general. Nevertheless, Guibert clearly intended excrement and excretion to be symbolic of the moral deficiencies of both men. This is best understood in terms of the places in which the events described occurred. Both men exhibited their impiety by attempting to defile sacred places and relics in public and so their ritualesque defilement also occurred in public. Given that everybody is subject to the realities of excretion, it seems reasonable to assume that Guibert was not thinking of excretion in general as being symbolic of moral deficiency, but rather excretion in inappropriate places. In short, excretion is symbolic of moral deficiency in both excerpts in so far as it occurs when and where it shouldn't (according to contemporary attitudes towards when and where excretion should take place and how excreta should be disposed).

Furthermore, neither man was in control of his bowels at the moments in question. In this respect, it is important to acknowledge that the sense of disgust carried by both excerpts rests not just on place but also control or rather lack of control.⁶⁶⁹ That is, it is bad enough that the men had soiled themselves in public, but even worse that they had failed to exercise control over their bodies. The fact that this misfortune befell two mature and apparently healthy men while in public was evidently reason for disgust and, in a sense, ill-omened of those men, for, as Guibert interpreted the events they had received not merely an immediate form of Divine punishment but also a socially- and religiously-stigmatising one. By way of contrast,

⁶⁶⁸ In fact, Guibert draws up a historical case in which he links the causes of the formation of the commune to the behaviour of a number of the bishops of Laon since the eleventh century (*De Vita Sua*, iii: 1). He later goes on to give a damning verdict of the commune at iii: 7. Again, for a recent analysis of the contents and purposes of book iii of *De Vita Sua* see Blurton, 'Guibert of Nogent and the Subject of History'.

⁶⁶⁹ Bodily discipline is an important topic in the relevant literature: for a brief digest of the most important literature see Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages*, p. 5-7.

there is some evidence in *De Vita Sua* to suggest that Guibert found uncontrolled emissions of bodily fluids more acceptable among the sick and dying. For instance, he relates the case of an impious monk, Otmund, whose death was brought on by his lack of dress when visiting the privy late during a cold winter night. Otmund later vomited the contents of his stomach, but miraculously not the Eucharistic wafer that he received, and so soon after died. Guibert clearly disapproved of much about this monk but, nevertheless, it is not clear that Guibert intended any moral connotations to be drawn from the connection between his death, the privy, and vomiting. Indeed, Guibert's concluding statement to the anecdote is notably ambiguous on Otmund's *post mortem* fate:

Now, I have related this not because I believed that he departed to the abode of the wicked but to remind all men to reflect with me that the prince of this world once came to the Son of God, against whom he had no claim.⁶⁷⁰

Thus, the key point of contrast in all this is between, on the one hand, the immorality connoted by two healthy men soiling themselves in public after having committed equally public acts of impiety and, on the other, the seemingly more neutral moral connotations of a sick man evacuating his bowels and stomach in a relatively private setting shortly before his death.

Similarly negative attitudes towards sex and excretion in more private settings can be found in Walter's reports of a supposed sect of English heretics, which he identifies as the *Paterini*, in *De Nugis*:

3. Men and women live together, but no sons or daughters issue [from] the union...each family sits waiting in silence in each of their synagogues, and there descends by a rope which hangs in the midst a black cat of wonderful size. On sight of it they put out the lights, and do not sing or distinctly repeat hymns, but hum them with closed teeth, and draw near the place where they saw their master, feeling after him, and when they have found him they kiss him. The hotter their feelings, the lower their aim: some go for his feet, but most for his tail and **privy parts**. Then, as though this noisome contact

⁶⁷⁰ Guibert, *De Vita Sua*, i: 25.

unleashed their appetites, each lays hold of his neighbour and takes his fill of him or her for all his worth.

*Viri et femine cohabitant, nec apparent inde filii vel filie...expectantes in singulis sinagogis suis singule in silencio familie, descenditque per funem appensum in medio mire magnitudinis murelegus niger, quem cum viderint, luminibus extinctis ymnos non decantant, non distincte dicunt, sed ruminant assertis dentibus, acceduntque ubi dominum suum viderint palpantes, inuentumque deosculantur quisque secundum quod ampliore feruet insania humiliter, quidam pedes, plurimi sub cauda, plerique **pudenda**; et quasi a loco fetoris accepta licencia pruriginis, quisque sibi proximum aut proximam arripit, commiscenturque quantum quisque ludibrium extendere prevalet.*⁶⁷¹

Perhaps as might be expected, Walter does not dwell on the abstract theology of this group. Rather, he focuses attention on the esoteric sexual rites that they practised (reportedly or in Walter's imagination) among each other and with the demon. The willingness among the members of the sect to make direct contact with each other's and the demon's genitalia are important indicators of their depravity. Indeed, the greatest cause for anxiety about this group, as Walter saw them, was that they subverted the prescribed sexual norms of Western Christianity. In particular, they violated marital norms in two ways: firstly, by copulating freely among one another (*i.e.* not strictly between husband and wife); and secondly, by not bringing forth any children from their unions. In this respect, the moral message of this story is conventional: people should not physically engage with each other's genitalia, at least for the purposes of pleasure, unless they are married and open to having children (it seems reasonable here to allow for exceptions such as between mother and child or physician and patient), and that to behave otherwise is intrinsically immoral, bad, and worthy of our disgust.

Continuing further on the Paterini, Walter notes the effect that some consecrated salt has on food served by an unnamed member of the sect to his uncle. Incidentally, Walter tells us that the latter was not an initiate of the sect, but rather suspected his nephew of being so and thus wished to expose him as such:

⁶⁷¹ Walter, *De nugis*, i: 30

4. They duly supped together. The nephew, ignorant of what was afoot, had served his uncle a whole mullet in a dish, pleasant to the eyes and good for food, as it seemed. The knight sprinkled the salt on it; the fish vanished in a moment and left in the dish what looked like little pellets of hare's dung.

*Cenantibus illis rite simul, ignorante nepote quid ageretur, fecit avunculo suo mullum integrum in disco apponi, pulcrum visu et ad vescendum suauem, ut videbatur. Apposuit ergo miles sal, et disparuit subito piscis, et reliquid in disco quasi pilulas fimi leporini.*⁶⁷²

In this case, the focus of anxiety has shifted somewhat from contact with genitalia to contact with animal excreta. Walter does not say whether the substance that the nephew served his uncle was in fact excreta. However, its resemblance to hare's dung was clear enough to be damning of the nephew's intentions towards his uncle. Again, the dung is not in itself reason for disgust or symbolic of depravity. It is mainly the nephew whose behaviour is intended to invite disgust. By contrast, the dung is only disgusting in so far as the nephew put it somewhere where it shouldn't be: *i.e.* on a serving dish.

Mary Douglas' definition of dirt as matter out of place is highly relevant here. As she pointed out in her now classic work, *Purity and Danger* (1966), people define different substances as "dirt" or "dirty" in relation to how they conceptualise the order of the world: hence the same substance can be both dirty and, if not clean, then at least not dirty depending on its place in the world.⁶⁷³ This can also be related to Lakoff's and Johnson's contention that conceptual systems and metaphors reflect how people see the structure of the world.⁶⁷⁴ In short, dirt is dirt in so far as it is experienced and understood as such in response to people's structured experiences of the world. The key point to be made here in relation to item 4 is that the hare's dung is disgusting because it was out of place on a serving dish and, worse still, deceitfully disguised as the opposite of what it was: food rather than disguised food waste. This clearly raises anxieties about pollution, both of vessels intended to contain food and

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, i: 30.

⁶⁷³ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, pp. 44-40.

⁶⁷⁴ See Chapter Two, sec. 2.2.1 and also n. 44 in which the parallel between Lakoff's and Johnson's and Douglas' respective views on human perception of the world is noted.

the body which is supposed to ingest food and excrete waste: by ingesting waste, the apparent “natural” order of human consumption seems to be violated.⁶⁷⁵

5.3.2: *Sex, excretion, and humour in Walter Map’s De Nugis Curialium*

Among the miscellany of the first distinction of Walter’s *De Nugis* can be found a lengthy critique of the Cistercians, or “white monks”, subtitled, *Incidencia magistri Gauteri Mahap de monachia* (translated as “A Digression on Monkery” by James *et al*).⁶⁷⁶ Walter reports a number of scurrilous stories or rumours about the English Cistercians of his day, among which the following is particularly arresting:

1. Now in this regulation about clothing I find cause for surprise in regard of the breeches, in that they are obliged to wear them at the service of the altar, and they are taken off when they go thence. This is the privilege of the sacred vestments; but this garment is not sacred, it is not reckoned among those of the priests or Levites, and it is not blessed. It has, however, its meanings: **it hides that which is better hid**: ‘tis Venus’ privy seal, her barrier against publicity. A reason why the Cistercians wear it was given me by someone, namely, to preserve coolness in that part of the body, lest sudden heats provoke unchastity. But I say, No. It would be better to shorten the inner tunic from the belt downwards, keeping the upper part, and not discarding the breeches, which are a respectable garment and approved by every other order, from the privy regions.

Et in hac districtione vestium de femoralibus admirandum duco, quod eis uti oportet in altaris obsequio, et cum inde recesserint deponuntur. Sacrarum vestium hec est dignitas; hec autem sacra non est, nec inter sacerdotalia vel levitica computatur, aut benedicatur; typica vero est et pudenda contegit, venerisque secreta signare videtur et castigare ne prodeant. Cur ab illis

⁶⁷⁵ Pinker discusses the views of the psychologist Paul Rozin on the fear of polluting the body in *How the Mind Works*, pp. 379-83. For discussion of the fear of contagion through touch and gaze in nineteenth-century Britain see Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, pp. 134-6.

⁶⁷⁶ On Walter’s satire on monasticism in England see E. Coleman, ‘Nasty habits—satire and the medieval monk’ in *History Today*, 43: 6 (1993), pp. 36-42.

*abstinendum sit quidam michi rationem dedit, ut scilicet circa loca illa frigeant, ne prosiliat ardor vel fiat impetus incestum. Absit hoc! et decurtentur interiores a zona tunice, manente suprema, et non decaluentur a veste venerabili et ab omni alias approbata religione loca celandi.*⁶⁷⁷

All of which is shortly followed by an anecdote in which the inadequancies of the Cistercians' unorthodox dress code, at least as Walter saw it, becomes plain to see:

2. The lord king, Henry the Second, of late was riding as usual at the head of all the great concourse of his knights and clerks, and talking with Dom Reric, a distinguished monk and an honourable man. There was a high wind; and lo! A white monk [*i.e.* a Cistercian] was making his way on foot along the street and looked round, and made haste to get out of the way. He dashed his foot against a stone and was not being borne up by angels at that moment [cf. Ps. 90 (91): 11-12], and fell in front of the feet of the king's horse, and the wind blew his habit right over his neck, so that the poor man was candidly exposed to the unwilling eyes of the lord king and Reric. The king, that treasure-house of politeness, feigned to see nothing, looked away and kept silence; but Reric said, *sotto voce*, "A curse on this bare-bottom piety!" I heard the remark and was pained that a holy thing was laughed at, though the wind had only intruded where it was rightfully home. However, if spare diet and rough clothing and hard work (and all these they claim) cannot tame them, and if they must have ventilation too to keep Venus at bay, let them go without their breeches and feel the draught. I know that our flesh—and not heavenly though it be—does not need such defences: with us, Venus, apart from Ceres and Bacchus, is cold [Terence, *Eun.*, 732]: but perhaps the enemy attacks those more fiercely whom he knows to be more stoutly fenced in. Still, the monk who tumbled down would have got up again with more dignity had he had his breeches on.'

Dominus rex Henricus secundus nuper, ut ei mos est, totam illam infinitatem militum et clericorum suorum precedens, cum domino Rerico monacho mango

⁶⁷⁷ Walter, i: 25: cf. with Guibert's explanation for the need to cover genitalia in his *De Incarnatione*, *PL* vol. 156, cols 496-7.

*et honesto viro verbum faciebat, eratque eis ventus nimis, et ecce monachus albus in vico pedes negociabatur, respiciensque divertere properabat. Offendit ad lapidem, nec portabatur ab angelis tunc, et coram pedibus equi regii corruit; ventus autem vestes eius in collum propulit, ut Domini Regis et Rerici oculis invitis manifesta fieret misera veritas pudendorum. Rex, ut omnis facecie thesaurus, dissimulans vultum avertit, et tacuit; Rericus autem intulit secreto “Maledicta religio que develat anum!” Ego verbum audivi, et dolui, quod derisa est sanctitas, licet ventus non iniuste in loca sibi concessa impeerit. Verumptamen si cibi parcitas et vestis aspera gravisque labor, qualia describunt hec singular, modum carni sue ponere non possunt, desideratque ventus pro freno Veneri, bonum est ut braccis careant et insufflentur. Scio quod caro nostra, mundane scilicet non celestis, tantis non eget ad hec bella clipeis, quia sine Cerere et Baco nostra friget Venus; sed forsitan forcior in eos insurgit hostis, quo firmiter novit clausos. Monachus tamen qui cecidit honestius surrexisset, si corporaliter clausus fuisset.*⁶⁷⁸

There are sexual and scatological aspects to the monk’s humiliation in item 2. Firstly, in item 1 Walter notes that his chief concern with regard to the Cistercians’ dress code is that their sexual organs [*pudenda*] are more vulnerable to exposure. The breeches are, as he says, Venus’ privy seal [*veneris secreta signare*]. He strengthens this connection between the body parts covered by the breeches and Venus further towards the end of item 2 where he essentially argues that the Cistercians’ motivation for not wearing breeches should be obsolete given a modest intake of food (*i.e.* Ceres) and wine or alcohol (*i.e.* Bacchus). This all has several implications: firstly, good diet and alcohol encourage sexual virility; secondly and thirdly, the Cistercians are hypocrites because they preach austerity while living in luxury and thus need to take unnecessary measures to quell their sexuality which would be unnecessary in the first place if they were as austere as they claimed.⁶⁷⁹ In any case, it is clear that Walter had the sexual organs in mind when complaining of the Cistercians’ dress code, and perhaps more specifically, the penis.

⁶⁷⁸ Walter, i: 25.

⁶⁷⁹ The second implication comes out more clearly elsewhere in Walter’s critique of the Cistercians. In particular, he regularly refers to them as the biblical Egyptians: see Walter, *De Nugis*, i: 25.

Accordingly, it seems somewhat anomalous that Walter reports that *only* the monk's anus [*anus*] received exposure as a consequence of not wearing breeches. Given the general tone and content of *De Nugis*, it seems reasonable to assume that Walter was prepared to exaggerate, misreport, or invent stories in order to illustrate a point, moral, humorous, or otherwise: that is to say, even if the episode in question happened as Walter related it, there are good reasons to believe that he would have added additional details to illustrate the moral that he drew from it more clearly.⁶⁸⁰ Walter could have illustrated the points he makes in item 1 and repeats towards the end of item 2 more consistently in the latter if he reported that the monk's penis had been exposed. Considered in a certain light, the anus may of course be viewed as erotic and a sexual organ. Nonetheless, Walter was apparently more interested here its scatological functions, quite possibly because he felt that he could construct a better joke out of the anecdote if he cast the monk's anus as its focal point. This would certainly accord with the ironic tone Walter sets by drawing a contrast between the monk's fall and the content of Psalm 90 (91), which states: 'he who dwells in the shelter of the most High [*qui habitat in abscondito Excelsi*]' (1) will be lifted up by angels so that he does not strike his foot against a stone (11-12).⁶⁸¹ Bearing this in mind, it also seems that Walter intended to suggest that the Cistercians did not dwell in the shelter of God: this is consistent with the rest of his diatribe against them.

It is also worth pointing out that the monk's anus is significant because it is exposed to the public gaze: particularly the gaze of the monk's superior, the king. The humour of the episode revolves at least in part around the inappropriate circumstances in which the anus came to be exposed. It is not the anus in itself, or exposed anuses *per se*, that is humorous. It is rather the socio-cultural connotations of a lowly monk, by an infortuitous mistep, having his backside exposed to the public view of, among others, the head of the kingdom. This is comparable to the previous discussion of the significance of defecation in public gaze in Guibert's *De Vita Sua*.⁶⁸²

Walter uses the human anatomy of sex and excretion in a number of other anecdotes in *De Nugis*, ostensibly for the purposes of making jokes as well as casting

⁶⁸⁰ For a discussion of Walter's reasons for writing *De Nugis*, see Watkins, *History and the Supernatural*, pp. 203-8.

⁶⁸¹ The Latin in Ps. 90 (91): 11-12 is: [Q]uia angelis suis mandabit de te ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis; in manibus portabunt te ne forte offendat ad lapidem pes tuus [For he hath given his angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up: lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.]. Translation taken from www.latinvulgate.com (accessed 25 / 07 / 2010)

⁶⁸² See sec. 5.3.1.

aspersions on people or institutions that he viewed as disreputable. For instance, consider the following excerpt in which Walter uses *cunnus* [vagina] and anus as pejoratives in reference to a fictitious Roman emperor:

3. They therefore suggested to their lord the emperor Cunnanus (of whom a nun seeing his ugliness once said “*Dominus Cunnanus nichil est nisi cunnus et anus*”) [*sic.*] that Rome was of right the head of the world and mistress of all lands.

*Suggerunt ergo domino suo imperatori Cunnano (de quo monialis videns eum deformem dixerat “Dominus Cunnanus nichil est nisi cunnus et anus”) quod Roma merito caput orbis est et domina terrarum omnium.*⁶⁸³

Item 3 is taken from Walter’s pseudohistorical report of the invasion of England by a Roman emperor named only as Cunnanus [“Cunt-arse”], supposedly during the reign of Offa (king of Mercia *c.*757-796). The offending sentence has been left untranslated in the amended Oxford edition of *De Nugis*: thus ‘[*d*]ominus Cunnanus nichil est nisi cunnus et anus’ can be translated as ‘[I]ord Cunt-arse is nothing but a cunt and an arse.’ This seems a straight-forward case of labels for sexual and excretory organs being used as pejoratives.⁶⁸⁴

Importantly, Walter probably intended *Cunnanus* as a cipher for the people of Rome in his own day, and perhaps more specifically, the papacy. This is made fairly clear in the sentences immediately preceding item 3:

4. Romans had often come there [England] as ambassadors from the Emperor to Offa, and had gone back enriched by him and full of praises of the king and kingdom, and when Rome beheld them glittering in raiment and gold, its native covetousness was straightway rekindled. No wonder, for this very

⁶⁸³ Walter, ii: 17: Note that the Latin remains untranslated in James’ English translation.

⁶⁸⁴ Not much seems to have been written on swearing or the use of pejoratives in medieval language and literature (perhaps as the focus tends to be on obscenity rather than swearing *per se*): Ziolkowski’s articles, ‘Obscenity in the Latin grammatical and rhetorical tradition’ in *Obscenity, Social Control and Artistic Creation in the Europe Middle Ages*, ed. J. M. Ziolkowski (Boston, 1998), pp. 41-59 and ‘The obscenities of old women: vetularity and vernacularity’ in *Obscenity, Social Control and Artistic Creation in the Europe Middle Ages*, ed. J. M. Ziolkowski (Boston, 1998), pp. 73-89 are helpful regarding the use of Latin (although they do not directly address pejoratives).

name of *Rome* [original italics] is made up out of the letters of avarice and the definition goes with it: *Radix Omnium Malorum Avaricia* [*sic.*: The root of all evils and greed].

*Venerant Romani frequenter ad Offam ab imperatore missi, ditatique ab ipso recesserant cum multa laude regis et regni; quos ut Roma vidit vestibus et auro lucidos, innata statim exarsit avaricia. Nec mirum; hoc enim nomen Roma ex avaricia sueque diffinitionis formatur principiis, fit enim ex R et O et M et A et diffinico cum ipsa, radix omnium malorum avaricia.*⁶⁸⁵

Assuming that *Cunanus* was thus intended as a cipher for the people of Rome or the papacy, Walter's use of *cunus* and *anus* as pejorative labels for people whom he viewed as innately [*innatus*] evil [*malus*] and greedy [*avaricia*] is possibly telling of his broader attitudes towards the vagina, anus, and perhaps the human *pudenda* in general. In this case at least, Walter seems to have viewed the vagina and anus as sufficiently "bad" or "not good" for them to be used as straightforward pejoratives or insults. The relevant statement in item 3 is hardly nuanced in this respect. Walter clearly means to say that it is a *bad* thing to be compared to, or like, a vagina or anus. Moreover, *cunus* and *anus* are explicitly linked with ugliness [*deformus*] in item 3. Furthermore, there may be some underlying misogyny in this, firstly, in that Walter uses the specifically female genital, *cunus* (which is, albeit, a masculine noun in Latin), as a label for, and attribute of, *Cunanus*, and secondly, in that *cunus* can also be used as a misogynous label for an "old women".⁶⁸⁶

It cannot be said for certain whether Walter consistently looked on the vagina and anus as intrinsically bad or ugly things. He may well have exaggerated his strength of feeling towards them in the satirical literary context of *De Nugis*. As a celibate clerk Walter may have had very little, if any, direct experience of the human vagina during his life, although this cannot be taken for granted. In any case, his

⁶⁸⁵ Walter, *De Nugis*, ii: 17.

⁶⁸⁶ Jan Ziolkowski discusses prejudicial attitudes towards old women in medieval Latin literature in 'The obscenities of old women', pp. 74-5. Walter's misogyny has been widely commented on. His tract against marriage in *De Nugis*, subtitled *Dissuasio Valerii*, was circulated separately from *De Nugis*. James describes it as 'one of the most brilliant anti-feminine satires produced in the Middle Ages,' noting also that it was often wrongly or spuriously ascribed to Jerome and as such, circulated with his writings: see introduction to *De Nugis*, p. xxi and for the tract, iv-3-5. On Walter's misogyny see N. Cartlidge, 'Misogyny in a medieval university? The "*Hoc contra malos*" commentary on Walter Map's *Dissuasio Valerii*' in *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 8 (1998), pp. 156-91.

understanding of the vagina can be linked to his entry from a young age into a clerical culture which, among other things, is known for its misogyny. Walter himself has gone down in literary history as an exponent *par excellence* of the misogyny of the Western Christian clergy during the middle ages.⁶⁸⁷ Taking account of this, Walter's negative attitudes towards the vagina may be understood as the outcome of whatever experiences he had of the vagina in the flesh, if any, as well as the expectations of it that a clerical education had instilled in him. Considered in this light, his attitudes towards the vagina quite possibly had little, if anything, to do with the biological realities of the organ and everything to do with his clerical upbringing.

By contrast, Walter undoubtedly had direct experiences of the anus hence his negative attitudes towards it must be understood partly as responses to how he experienced it. Furthermore, as discussed above Walter viewed excrement as a potential pollutant, when out of place, and thus an appropriate object of disgust.⁶⁸⁸ Therefore, it is important to note that Walter's attitudes towards the anus, as expressed in items 3-4 and elsewhere, must be understood in terms of his embodied experiences of the anus and excretion and contemporary so-called fecal discourse (*i.e.* the body of socio-culturally constructed and transmitted wisdom on the nature of excretion and excrement: their uses, benefits, dangers, and so forth). Walter clearly found the anus to be offensive in certain respects and contexts, but not so offensive that it couldn't be a source of humour as in the case of the Cistercian related in item 2. Depending on context, the anus could be potentially offensive or funny or both (the latter option probably being the case in item 2). In addition to this, it seems reasonable to assume that Walter would have granted circumstances in which there was nothing offensive, and perhaps funny, about the anus and excrement: *i.e.* when being used or deposited properly and out of the public gaze. Once again, Walter's attitudes towards the anus and excretion, *inter alia*, need to be understood in terms of the complex interplay between his immediate embodied experiences of these things and his exposure to contemporary conventional attitudes towards them.

* * *

⁶⁸⁷ As stated in the previous note, Walter's tract against marriage, *Dissuasio Valerii*, which survives separately from *De Nugis* in more than fifty manuscripts, has ensured that Walter is now remembered as a famous misogynist. Also see the entry for "Walter Map" by C. N. L. Brooke in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/> (accessed 25 / 07 / 2010)

⁶⁸⁸ See sec. 5.3.1, pp. 242-3 above.

5.3.3: Conclusion

The key finding of this section is that Guibert's and Walter's attitudes towards sex and excretion, as they represented them in their respective texts, should be understood as net products of the interplay between the biological realities of the human body, both men's personal experiences of those realities, and the socio-cultural norms and wisdom which affected how they interpreted the aforesaid experiences. By taking this approach to Guibert's and Walter's texts it is possible to develop an understanding of the importance of sex and excretion to both men in which the biological body is a central concern. This in no way reduces their experiences and ideas about sex and excretion to hard-wired biological drives. As this chapter has shown, there is no need to be biased in favour of either biologically or culturally-informed analytical perspectives. To the contrary, it is greatly preferable to allow for a balance between both perspectives, specifically, as has been shown above, by being sensitive to the interplay between mind, body, and culture.

5.4: Final conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have argued that mind, body, and culture interact and that appreciating this is crucial to understanding how the authors relevant to this study represented human life and existence. In order to demonstrate this, I have focused on several aspects of human life which are described in enough detail in the sample of source texts to be worth examining in light of the insights provided by neuro- and cognitive science into the relationship between mind, body, and culture. It is possible, in each case, to identify distinctly mental, bodily, and cultural aspects of these phenomena as they apply to the human world. For example, pain involves a mental response to a bodily stimulus, some form of conscious appreciation that the stimulus *is* painful, and socio-culturally constructed pressures and biases affecting how people experience and respond to painful sensations and to what extent they seek or avoid pain. These three facets of human existence, namely mind, body, and culture, do not exist in isolation from each other. They share the same conditions of

existence (*i.e.* the basic fact of human existence) and, as such, interact and affect the development and outcomes of each other.

By taking this approach throughout this section I have been able to highlight the significance of the biological body in the clerical culture of twelfth-century Western Europe. Far from being otherworldly or excessively abstract, as has often been thought by modern scholars about medieval churchmen and women, the mental lives of the men discussed here and in previous chapters can be seen to have been heavily influenced by the realities of their embodied existences. The body was central to how these people experienced, conceptualised, and behaved in the world and also, as was seen in Chapter Three, influenced the beliefs and ideas they entertained about the nature of reality beyond the material world.⁶⁸⁹ Importantly, as has been shown throughout Part II of this study, by taking account of the interplay between mind, body, and culture it is possible to account for the influence of the body on how people such as the authors relevant to this study experienced, conceptualised, and behaved in the world without reducing these phenomena to crude biologically-determined drives.

Finally, there has been a heavy focus in this chapter on negative perceptions of human existence: pain, suffering, the discomfort of old age, and the potential of sex and excretion to elicit disgust and derogatory humour. This should not be read as symptomatic of the general content of the source texts. Happiness and pleasure often also feature in the texts, although, significantly, they tend to be described in more disembodied terms. Indeed, as has been seen elsewhere in the previous two chapters, there is a marked tendency among the authors relevant to this study to describe happiness and pleasure in strongly metaphysical terms: especially proximity to God. This is not problematic for the argument made in this chapter because, as was seen earlier (especially in Chapter Three), conceptualisation and understanding of metaphysical existence is inextricably anchored to the physical realities of human embodiment and the world.⁶⁹⁰ This again serves to illustrate the influence of the interplay between mind, body, and culture on people's experiences of the world and the abstract ideas they derive from them.

⁶⁸⁹ In particular see Chapter Three, sec. 3.2.

⁶⁹⁰ For example, in Chapter Three see sec. 3.2.3, items 1-3, and sec. 3.3.1, item 10.

Conclusion

There are five main points which need to be dealt with in this conclusion. Four correspond to the aims of this study as they were outlined in Chapter One, which, to recap, were:

1. To make use of theories and methods from the modern discourses of neuro- and cognitive science to shed light on how the authors relevant to this study experienced and conceptualised themselves and the world around them.
2. To problematise the existing discourses on “individuality”, “the self”, and “subjectivity” in medieval studies by focusing on new methods for exploring the ways in which, as just stated, *medieval people experienced and conceptualised themselves, their bodies, other people, and the world around them*.
3. To explore the issues raised by neuro- and cognitive science for how we relate the phenomena of society and culture to the embodied existence of medieval people.
4. To show that Latin was an adequate language of self-expression for those twelfth-century writers who were able to use it.⁶⁹¹

As noted in Chapter One, the first three points are related and have been of utmost concern throughout the analysis of the sample of source texts in Part II of this study. Accordingly, I shall address them together in sec. 6.1 below. The fourth point will be dealt with as a discrete issue in sec. 6.2. Finally, the fifth point which needs to be addressed here corresponds to the questions I raised in Chapter Two, sec. 2.3.6, regarding the possibility that the body or parts of it are frequently conceptualised in the sample of source texts in gender-neutral terms. I will deal with this matter lastly in sec. 6.3.

⁶⁹¹ These points were listed thus in Chapter One, sec. 1.1.

6.1: Revisiting the individual through neuro- and cognitive science

This study has shown that theories and ideas from neuro- and cognitive science have valid applications within studies of medieval languages and literatures. Specifically in the case of this study, neuro- and cognitive science have helped to shed fresh light on a sample of twelfth-century Latin texts by showing how their content and style are likely to have been influenced by the embodied and environmental conditions of their respective authors' existences. This, in turn, has served the purpose of problematising the existing discourses in medieval studies on the individual, self, and subjectivity in two key ways. First, whereas in the aforesaid discourses the individual, self, or subject have been frequently conceived as abstract or mainly mental objects of introspection or self-awareness, neuro- and cognitive science shift focus towards a more broadly situated understanding of human mental life in which the biological body and its effects in the world (especially culture) play key roles. Second, the view that the twelfth-century witnessed the development of advanced forms of self-awareness or appreciation for individual being as distinct from group being, as expressed in various forms since the nineteen-fifties by, among others, Southern, Dronke, Morris, and Spence, needs to be rethought in light of neuroscientific research which strongly suggests that self-awareness is an ordinary, albeit highly variable, feature of human consciousness.⁶⁹²

As has been seen throughout Part II of this study, it is possible to shed light on the sample of source texts by exploring their content and style in terms of reciprocal relationships between the mind, body, and culture. Instead of examining in isolation the individual impacts of mental, bodily, and cultural factors on the relevant texts, this study has examined the relationship between these three aspects of human existence through the aforesaid texts. The major innovation of this approach as it relates to the existing literature is to incorporate some understanding of the biological body into the account given of the mental lives and socio-cultural backgrounds of the authors discussed throughout Part II of this study.⁶⁹³ To be sure, the body is identified as an explicit topic of discussion in so-called body history, but more often than not what is

⁶⁹² For instance, see the discussions of "the self" in Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, pp. 412-30, Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, pp. 236-44 (also see pp. 226-35 for relevant background information), and Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, pp. 267-89. These three works were all discussed previously in regard to the embodied view of the mind in Chapter Two, sec. 2.1.

⁶⁹³ The relevant literature was noted and discussed in Chapter One, secs. 1.2-3.

meant by the body in this context is discourse relating to it rather than its biological realities. In contrast, by adopting ideas and methods from neuro- and cognitive science, as explained in Chapter Two, this study has been able to address the importance of the embodied biological conditions of human existence experienced and lived by a group of medieval people without reducing the discussion to crude distinctions between nature and nurture or biology and culture. By following this approach it has been possible to gather an understanding of how the embodied conditions, within which this group of medieval people lived and experienced the world, influenced how they thought and acted and thus why they wrote the kinds of texts that are now available to be studied in the present.

The importance afforded to the biological body in this study draws into question the view that the twelfth-century witnessed an awakening of some kind of specifically Western European form of self-awareness or appreciation for individual being, at least among well-educated churchmen. As stated above, recent research in neuroscience suggests that conscious self-perception, at least in some basic form, is an ordinary part of human consciousness which develops from the ways in which the human organism (*i.e.* mind and body) interacts with the environment (which contains, *inter alia*, the cultural products of human thought and behaviour).⁶⁹⁴ Given this knowledge as well as the findings of this study, it is best to rethink the rapid developments in the expressive range of European literatures during the twelfth century, not in terms of a sudden discovery of something new, but rather of different ways of appreciating and exploiting something which was always part of conscious human phenomenology.

Put bluntly, self-awareness was probably always present in the minds of Western Europeans throughout the early medieval period as an ordinary feature of their conscious phenomenology: what changed in the twelfth century was how they perceived the importance and possibilities of this facet of their minds and wrote about it. It is these changes which led to the development, through positive reinforcement, of an identifiably Western European culture of making self-awareness a central object of artistic representation, academic endeavour, identity-making, and self-promotion or “-fashioning”.⁶⁹⁵ It is not that Western Europeans, since the twelfth century or at any

⁶⁹⁴ See n. 2 above.

⁶⁹⁵ The term self-fashioning was coined by the early modernist, Stephen Greenblatt, the significance of whose work was discussed in Chapter One, sec. 1.2, p. 20.

other time, have enjoyed a unique sense of their own being: it is that they have interpreted their sensory access to themselves and the world around them differently from other people and also felt more inclined to write about it. Furthermore, the debate between Morris and Bynum, documented in Chapter One, regarding the relative importance of the group and individual in the twelfth century west is ultimately a source of confusion because it clouds-over the fact, even though both scholars would surely acknowledge it, that group-membership and individuality are not mutually exclusive states of being: it is perfectly possible to be concurrently an individual and member of a group.⁶⁹⁶ The significant question to ask about individuality in the twelfth century is not whether such a state of being existed but instead how it was valued in itself and relative to group membership.

Finally, instead of focusing on the sample of source texts as examples of high-end literary production, this study has mainly focused on what their more banal contents suggest about the mental lives of their respective authors. This is perhaps the most compelling reason for making use of neuro- and cognitive science in studies of medieval texts and languages. It has been shown throughout Part II of this study that by applying relevant theory from neuro- and cognitive science to small portions of text it is possible to tease out more information about the everyday experiences and thought processes of authors than would usually be attempted by medievalists. In short, by following this method it is possible to gather some sense of how medieval people experienced and reasoned about themselves and the world around them.

6.2: Latin as a mode of self-expression in twelfth-century Europe

The analysis of the source texts in Part II of this study has shown that Latin was a perfectly adequate medium of self-expression for the relevant authors. As argued in Chapter One, the view held by some historians and literary critics that by the medieval period Latin was ill-suited for the purposes of self-expression is based on a teleological view of the development of Western European languages, literatures, and cultures from antiquity up to the twentieth century.⁶⁹⁷ There can be little doubt from the discussion of the sample of source texts in this study that for their respective authors Latin was a perfectly adequate medium of self-expression. As may be seen

⁶⁹⁶ On this debate see Chapter One, sec. 1.3, pp. 29-30.

⁶⁹⁷ See Chapter One, sec. 1.1.

from the various extracts discussed in Part II, all of the relevant authors were able to use Latin sufficiently well to describe and represent various aspects of themselves and other people including their mental lives and physical experiences. The views that by the early medieval period Latin was either a throw-back to classical Roman civilisation or an exclusive language of ritual, administration, and power simply do not stand up to scrutiny when considered in light of the highly complex and emotionally sophisticated Latin texts written during the twelfth century (only a sample of which have been studied here).⁶⁹⁸

Furthermore, taking stock of the conclusions in the previous section, I would argue that during the twelfth century Latin, alongside vernacular languages, was harnessed for the purposes of expressing and interpreting changing attitudes towards self-awareness. Latin was emphatically part of this much wider cultural shift which began to take root in Western Europe around the beginning of the twelfth century. To be sure, by the end of the century vernacular languages had overtaken Latin as the most popular media of literary expression, but this in no way detracts from the content and quality of sophisticated Latin texts such as those examined in this study. In so far as medieval writers were able to make competent use of Latin to express whatever views they had on themselves and other people, as has been shown to be the case in Part II of this study, Latin must be considered a perfectly adequate medium for the expression of those ideas.

6.3: Working without gender in body history

The final conclusion which I will draw for this thesis relates to how the body has often been conceptualised and studied over the past three decades in body history. Due to the influence of feminist critiques of gender on the development of body history during the nineteen-eighties and nineties, sex and gender have often been crucial conceptual tools among historians of the body in medieval studies. As can be seen from a wide range of studies published over the past three decades, issues relating to sex and gender have consistently driven the discipline.⁶⁹⁹ In the argument

⁶⁹⁸ For authors who have expressed these views in one form or another see Auerbach, *Mimesis*, pp. 88-90, Baswell, 'Latinitas', Spence, *Texts and the Self*, p. 2, and Haidu, *The Subject*, p. 11.

⁶⁹⁹ Much of the relevant literature was noted in Chapter One of this study: see sec. 1.2. For direct reference see Bynum, *Jesus as Mother, Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, and *Fragmentation and Redemption*, Partner, 'No Sex, No Gender', 'The family romance of Guibert of Nogent', and 'The

which follows I do not wish to challenge the importance of sex and gender as conceptual tools in body history. Instead, I aim to highlight a different set of possibilities about how people conceptualise and reason about the human body which, at present, is not clearly appreciated or acknowledged in body history.

In Chapter Two of this study (see sec. 2.2.6) I drew attention to the possibility that many of the ideas or concepts that the authors relevant to this study have about human existence are not sexed or gendered even though sex and gender impinged in some way on all their lives. I based this view on the concept of prototypes, as described by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*.⁷⁰⁰ In light of the analysis of the source texts in Part II of this study, it seems reasonable to conclude that there may have been many aspects of how the relevant authors reasoned about and understood the human body which were, on some level, independent of ideas relating to sex and gender: for example, the authors examined here were able to use labels relating to the body, such as “hand” or “face”, free of any connotations about sex or gender.⁷⁰¹ The notion of prototypes adds to this view in as far as it hints at how this may be possible in human cognition.

To recap briefly, prototypes are strictly conceptual mental representations of typical members of categories whereby things in the world may be judged to be members of those categories or not. So, for example, a prototypical seat, at least in western societies, would be something like the concept of a raised solid platform, capable of supporting the weight of somebody reclining on it in a particular way (*i.e.* according to conventional understandings of a “sitting posture”). In this way, a potentially enormous range of objects could be categorised as seats providing they conform to some such prototypical concept of a seat. In principle this kind of conceptual reasoning could apply to how people understand certain aspects of the human body and existence in general. To pick a fairly strong example, people could conceivably come to understand human hands by referring their experiences of hands in the world to a prototypical concept of a hand in their minds. This prototype does

hidden self”, Rubin, ‘The person in the form’, ‘The body, whole and vulnerable’ and ‘A decade of studying medieval women, 1987-97’, van Houts, *Memory and Gender*, and the three articles collected under the title, ‘Historicizing Sex and Gender’ in *Writing History*, ed. N. Partner (London, 2005). Also outside of medieval studies, but highly relevant, see Brown, *Body and Society*.

⁷⁰⁰ See Chapter Two, sec. 2.3.6 and for direct reference see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, pp. 122-4.

⁷⁰¹ For relevant examples on the hands see item 1 in sec. 3.2.2, p.108 and on the face, Chapter Four, sec. 4.4 and subsections.

not need to be intrinsically sexed or reliant on peripheral gender concepts. It could just be a general concept of a hand by which anybody's hands, be they male, female, or transsex could be defined as hands. In fact, it is difficult to imagine how this could not be the case. The concept, *hand*, covers all instances of hands in modern English language and discourse. The concepts, *male* hand, *female* hand, or *transsex* hand are surely extensions of the basic gender-neutral concept, *hand*, rather than prerequisites for it. Given the material discussed in Part II of this study, it seems reasonably clear that this argument also works for Latin: e.g. the feminine noun, *facies*, can be used to refer to anyone's face, whatever their sexual and gender characteristics.⁷⁰²

This argument may also be extended to cover the body as a whole. The discussion of John of Salisbury's body politic metaphors in Chapter Four is instructive on this point. In these, John compares aspects of the English state and Church to the head [*caput*], heart [*cor*], and limbs [*membra*].⁷⁰³ Gender concepts do not play any obvious role in these metaphors. There is no clear reason for us to think that John specifically had a male, female, or mixed-gender head in mind, or heart, and so forth: hence these metaphors suggest that John was able to entertain a reasonably gender-neutral concept of the human body. There is nothing to stop sexual or gender characteristics being applied to the concept of the body that John develops in these metaphors. However, the metaphors would need to be extended somehow in order to accommodate these additions in any meaningful way (e.g. a male body is like one kind of state and a female body like another). As John's metaphors stand, the idea of prototypes offers us a way of understanding what gender-neutral concepts of the body and human existence might be and thus how and why he was able to construct what are evidently gender-neutral representations of the body in language.

The broad significance of this argument is that people often conceptualise the body, or parts of it, in abstraction as a gender-neutral or asexual object. If this is the case then the relationship between the concepts of *the* body, sex, and gender needs to be rethought to take account of the possibility that it may be a perfectly normal part of human reason to develop gender-neutral or asexual concepts of the body in response to everyday experiences of it in the world. This is even in spite of the fact that "real-life" bodies are invariably sexed and perceived through socio-culturally constructed gender concepts and stereotypes. Put bluntly, it seems that the ideas of sex and

⁷⁰² The face was discussed in Chapter Four, sec. 4.4.

⁷⁰³ John's body politic metaphors were discussed in Chapter Four, sec. 4.3.

gender may often function in human reason as embellishments to gender-neutral or asexual body concepts. This argument may be seen to lend support to established feminist critiques of sex and gender since it further highlights the fluidity of these concepts as aspects of how people experience and understand the nature of the body and its significance for human life. In any case, the possibility that a large portion of human thought about the body may not involve concepts of sex or gender needs further investigation in body history.

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