Being Moved: Louis XIV's Triumphant Tenderness and the Protestant Object

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This essay examines the place of affect in *Le Triomphe de la Religion*, a text from 1687 that praises Louis XIV for the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the forced conversion of French Protestants. It explores the role of the material object in this text and contrasts it with seventeenth-century Protestant fears about the seductive power of Catholic objects. Drawing on the work of affect theory, it suggest how attention to the strange relation between emotion and the material object might better illuminate our sense of what it meant to be religiously different in absolutist France.

KEYWORDS Protestant, Revocation, Louis XIV, object, coral, diamond, affect, *Triomphe de la Religion*

I begin with an oyster, a seventeenth-century French oyster, fresh from the sea but somewhat resistant to pearl-fishers' advances (Figure 1):

> En vain dans cette Nacre on tente une ouverture
> Par les plus violens efforts;
> On ne pénètre point dans la prison obscure
> Où se renferment ses tresors.
>
> In vain we try an opening in this oyster
> yet through the most violent efforts
> we can't get into the obscure prison
> where its treasures are hidden.[1]

But as our story goes on, it turns out that our oyster is resistant only because she hasn't met the right oyster-shucker. Finally, along he comes, and all changes:

> Mais si sur elle il tombe une rosée
> Qu'échauffent du Soleil les rayons bienfaisans,
> Cette Nacre au Soleil ouvre une voye aisée
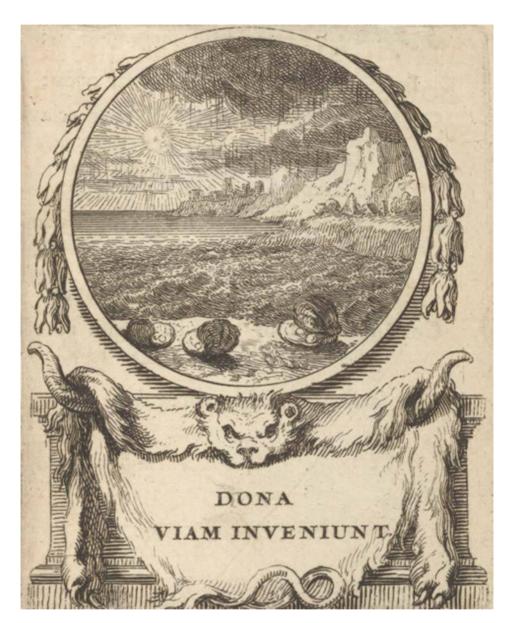> Et céde à de si doux présens. (87)

FIGURE 1   Oyster. *Le Triomphe de la Religion sous Louis le Grand: représenté par des inscriptions et des devises: avec une explication en vers latins et François. 1687. p.85 Engraving.* General Research Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

> But if down falls a dew upon her
> Heated by the beneficial rays of the sun
> This oyster will open up easily to the Sun
> and give way to such sweet gifts.

This strangely emotionalized and sexualized account of pearl-plucking comes from *Le Triomphe de la Religion sous Louis le Grand*, a 1687 text in praise of the Sun King

Louis XIV's forced conversion of the Protestants, and the sun who opens the oyster easily by beaming upon her is of course none other than that king whose sweet gifts are imagined to make possible all kinds of treasure-snatching. The miniaturized narrative of the oyster makes two forceful switches: first, it pitches conversion as sexual encounter, and second, it asks us to believe that our formerly chaste oyster was happy to give up her inner treasure — to *change* — for the king. It figures Protestants as creatures at the core of whom we can find a treasure if we only know how to look for it. It casts the political value of the Protestant conversion as a private and sentimental value instead of a strategic decision, both for the kindly king and for his subjects who admire his sweetness. And it suggests that objects — things — are central to early modern discourses about the emotions, even when those emotions purport to be the emotions of human subjects. In the *Triomphe* the king appears not just as a collector of precious objects, but also of his subjects' properly trained affects and behaviors. In my reading of the *Triomphe*, I explore the relation between emotion and material objects and consider why it might be of particular significance in a text about the conversion of the Protestants.

The *Triomphe* is a text about conversion, but it is also a text that performs conversions: it pictures the journey of Protestants towards a triumphant Catholicism and imagines that journey to be a happy one. In order to make that move, it draws on all the textual and rhetorical tools of movement and metamorphosis, figuring forth an extraordinary display of conversion aesthetics. James R. Averill reminds us that the term "emotion" "stems from the Latin, *e + movere*, which originally meant 'to move out,' 'to migrate,' or 'to transport an object'" (107).[2] In the *Triomphe* the movement of conversion must bring about a figurative journey from one status to another, even as the movement of conversion also compelled its subject to stay in one place since the forced conversion of the Protestants forbade their departure from France. This is a text about *being moved* in two particularly unsettling ways: it is about being made to do something so that one loses all agency and then being made to sentimentalize that change. The *Triomphe* underscores the interpersonal force explored by affect theory, for the emotional language it deploys points to ways in which early modern subjects were compelled to feel.[3] In what follows I will look at three of the objects emblematized in the *Triomphe* and ask how they shed light on the complicated relations between objects and emotions, Protestants and Catholics, subjects and the king.

Before we move into the text itself, let us first journey through the historical particularity of the French Protestants or Huguenots. In 1598, decades of brutal religious wars between Protestants and Catholics had been brought to a close by the Edict of Nantes, which granted some degree of freedom of worship for Protestants in France. However, tensions had continued throughout the seventeenth century. The Cardinal minister Richelieu saw his efforts to centralize the state and to quash noble rebellion threatened by the continuing resistance of the Protestant communities, and he ushered in a new series of attacks culminating in the 1629 siege of La Rochelle, formerly designated a Protestant safe city. Thus an initial apparent toleration turned to resentment and to persecution. Later in the century, outright attacks known as

"dragonnades" were launched on Protestant communities, and eventually in the edict of Fontainebleau (1685), popularly known as the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Louis XIV revoked the earlier policy of toleration and made Protestant worship illegal in France. The Revocation also forbade the emigration of Protestants, many of whom subsequently left as illegal emigrants in the period known as the Refuge from which name we take the term "refugee." France's period of toleration, so brightly announced at the dawn of the seventeenth century, had broken down, and Protestants found themselves more fiercely persecuted than ever before.[4]

The historian Peter Burke has described the Revocation as a high point of representational fervor in what he calls the "fabrication" (102) of Louis XIV, a frenzy of inscriptions, statues, and speeches in praise of the Catholic king's action against the Protestants. The *Triomphe de la Religion* is just such a text: a little booklet dedicated to the king, stemming from an event held at the Collège de Louis le Grand. The Collège was a Jesuit school that had recently been renamed in honor of the king, and to open the school year in 1686 it hosted an event praising the king for the acts of the Revocation and featuring a Latin panegyric pronounced by the Jesuit Philippe Quartier, which was published separately. Quartier spoke in front of a series of complicated decorations featuring figures and emblems, whose correct reading order was revealed throughout the performance, and those emblems were published as *Le Triomphe de la Religion*.[5] The images, made by M. Corneille le jeune, are "explained" first in Latin by the Jesuit classicist Gabriel-François Le Jay (1657–1734) and then translated once more into French, by the philosopher Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757), here described as the author of the *Dialogue des Morts*, his 1683 work which had, to much acclaim, set the dead to speak.[6]

The text announces the triumph of religion, but as the emblems suggest that triumph is brought about by a particular and proprietary blend of emotions ushered in by the king, Louis le Grand. For the seventeenth-century French, "triomphe" does not yet explicitly suggest an emotion in itself; where the OED gives sixteenth-century usages of "triumph" signifying joy or elation, French dictionaries of the period cling to the Triumph as Roman processional, what Randall Cotgrave calls in his 1611 English-French dictionary "A pompous, and publike shew" (s.v. "triomphe"). But that public display of victory is made possible by a particular emotional exchange in which public necessity compels a rearrangement of private feeling. The *Triomphe* sets out the terms of the new Catholic emotional economy. As the prefatory text of the *Triomphe* puts it, and as the story of our Protestant oyster has already suggested, Louis was able to "exterminer de la France un Party dangereux" just "par la seule force de [ses] Edits et par les douceurs d'une bonté paternelle," (Aiiii; "exterminate a dangerous Party from France, through the sole force of his Edits and through the sweetness of a paternal goodness"). In this force and sweetness, the conjunction "and" contains the very location of the King's sovereignty.[7] The emblems of the *Triomphe* vehicle two very distinct kinds of emotion. On the one hand, we see the supposed tenderness of the Catholic forces which sought to convert the Protestants, here embodied in the King; on the other, the grateful recipients of such a tenderness. This

counterpointing of tenderness and gratitude — the emotional pas de deux of absolutism — animates the whole text.

Many of the emblems point to a necessary reordering of nature instigated by the Revocation or its textual figure, the sun (King) as generator of all. The frontispiece, explained at length in the preface, shows a great neoclassical arch and, behind, a wild landscape, suggesting the "désert" or wild country in which Protestants gathered to worship illegally. We understand that our desert Huguenots are encouraged to come through the arch, under the triumphant statue of the Church, brandishing the Eucharist and attended by a loyal Louis XIV, and to move into the new and uniformly Catholic France; where usually an arch with a landscape beyond seems to invite us the viewer through and beyond, here it summons the outlaws to come and join us, presumably the Catholic viewers massed in the Collège. To join Catholic France the Protestants will have to pass under an image of the destruction of Charenton, their most important place of worship just outside Paris. The arch figures the painful change of conversion: the new national community is founded on violence.

The text and its emblems insist on the necessity of violence for the salvation of the state, drawing on the familiar tropes of *raison d'état*. An early emblem, for example, tells the tale of a boat tossed about by the storm, throwing overboard some of its goods so that it should not be sunk. The text goes on to spell it out:

> Les flots vont engloutir ce Vaisseau malheureux,
> Que les perils, la crainte, et l'horreur environnent:
> Les Pilotes vaincus desormais l'abandonnent,
> Et n'ont plus d'espoir qu'en leurs voeux,
> Malgré la mort de toutes parts offerte;
> A le sauver encore une voie est ouverte:
> Qu'on jette au fond des eaux les dangereux tresors,
> Dont le poids charge trop ses bords,
> Et son salut naîtra de cette perte. (37)

> The waves will engulf this unhappy Ship,
> Surrounded by danger, fear and horror:
> The vanquished pilots are abandoning ship,
> And cling only to their prayers
> Despite the death proffered all around.
> To save the ship, one way is still open
> throw the dangerous treasures to the deep
> they weigh the ship down
> and salvation will come from this loss.

This is seventeenth-century security theater, menacing the country with the horrors of the deep if the Protestants are not jettisoned from the ship of state. The image of the ship is central to the end-inflected rationality common to discourses of reason of state. Le Jay explains that his method is based on "natural symbols," but the ship suggests how in fact the "natural" is in this text something to be feared and policed.

Uncontrolled, it threatens to engulf us; we must police ourselves and the natural in order to sail to safety. As we have seen in the story of the Protestant oyster and her pearl, the language of the "dangerous treasure," high in value but also in risk, is central to this tricky governmental navigation. The *Triomphe* will prove to be particularly invested in the status of Protestants as objects, and, as we will see, such investment in the object carries a particularly affective charge.

The *Triomphe* is drawn to scenarios of salvation in the face of disaster. It presents a distinctly interventionist portrait of the monarchy, praising in particular Louis's efforts on behalf of that most touching of subjects: the child in need of rescue. The representational fervor that responded to the revocation of the edict of Nantes paid particular attention to the figure of the child; Benjamin Kaplan has shown how, given that the Revocation sought to determine a solely Catholic future for France, Catholic discourse insisted on the potential of Protestant children to be recast as Catholic (273). A paired set of emblems in the *Triomphe* acclaim the king "pour avoir tiré [les enfants] d'entre les bras de l'hérésie, et leur avoir procuré une éducation plus heureuse dans le sein de la veritable religion" (63; "for having plucked the children from the arms of heresy, and procured them a happier education in the bosom of the true religion"). The bosom of the Church figures the new Catholic family of France as a version of nature, converted.

How was this new family brought into being, and what was the nature of Louis's intervention? Education had been a point of contention between Protestant and Catholic communities throughout the century. The independence of Protestant schools was eroded through a series of attacks in an effort to lessen the influence of Protestant parents. As the century went on, Protestant children, considered as easy targets, were the focus of conversion attempts. Such targeting caused great alarm in Protestant communities. Kaplan describes how the 1650 conversion of a Nîmes thirteen-year-old caused a riot (269). By 1681 a royal declaration had reduced the age of religious independence from fourteen for boys and twelve for girls, allowing Protestant children over seven to convert without the permission of their parents. The stipulations of the 1685 Edict also allowed for children of Protestant ministers (if over seven) to be removed from their families in order to be brought up in proper Catholic order. It is unclear how many Protestant children fell subject to these terms, but it is certain that in the years around the Revocation the figure of child removal-as-conversion loomed large in the cultural imaginary.

Protestant accounts of these persecutions establish a surprising relation between emotion and the material object. The Huguenot historian Elie Benoist's extraordinary work of 1695 describes how the Declaration of 1681 caused a great emotional upheaval in Protestant families: "Tous les pères qui avoient un peu de pieté, et toutes les meres, encore plus tendres et plus sensibles, se sentirent frappez au Coeur" (446; "All the fathers who had a little piety, and all the mothers, even more tender and more sensitive, were struck in the heart"). Benoist's account shows that, before the revocation, coexistence was still possible but that it was becoming harder as Protestants felt unable to trust the friendly overtures of their neighboring Catholics towards their children:

> Les visites de leurs amis Catholiques leur étoient suspectes. Les caresses, les petits presens dont on amuse l'enfance, les louanges qu'on donne aux aimables traits d'esprit et de gentillesse, qui se remarqent quelque fois dans cet âge tendre, et qui donnoient autrefois tant de plaisir aux peres et aux meres, étoient regardées comme des pieges tendus à leur innocence. (446)
>
> The visits of their Catholic friends made them suspicious. The caresses, the little presents with which one amuses children, the praise of their pleasant wit and kindness, which can sometimes be seen at this tender age and which had formerly given so much pleasure to fathers and mothers, were regarded as traps held out to catch their innocence.

Benoist's text pulls together a suspicion of Catholic affect and of the Catholic gift as representative of that affect: the "little presents" proffered represent terrifying traps for Protestants. We might think of the *Triomphe*'s opening oyster, whose pearl was plucked as soon as she opened to the "sweet presents" of the kingly sun. For Protestants, the king's gifts were occasions for fear.

Protestant anxiety about Catholic attempts to convert children hinges on the status of the material object, both in Catholic worship and more broadly in everyday life. Elie Benoist explains sorrowfully of the 1680s conversion panic that "tous les enfans étant aisez à éblouir par l'éclat; les ornemens des Eglises Catholiques, la lumiere des cierges, les riches habits dont on paroit les images, étoient des moyens de les surprendre" (447; "all children being easy to dazzle by brilliance, the ornaments of Catholic Churches, the light of the votives, the rich stuff with which the images are hung, were ways of taking them by surprise"). In Benoist's account, the conversion of the Protestant child is ushered in by the seductive power of the object: "ils suffiroit qu'ils eussent temoigné de l'ardeur à s'approcher de ces objets magnifiques . . . pour donner sujet de dire que ces mouvemens étoient surnaturels" (447; "as soon as they showed ardour in approaching these magnificent objects . . . they said that these movements were supernatural"). In Catholic eyes, the Protestant child's pleasure in the liturgical object was a sign of grace; in Protestant eyes, of corruption. Benoist jumps from the Protestant child's marvel at Catholic images to accounts of children taken by Catholics because they were promised "une image enluminée, ou . . . une poupée habillée à la mode . . . quelques fruits et . . . quelques confitures" (447–48; "an illuminated image, or a fashionably-dressed doll, some fruit or some jam"). These formulations seem to draw on the dark fears deployed in the fairy-tale, a popular contemporary genre; the Protestant parents are up against an all pervasive power against which they cannot hold. In a passage that surely recalls the temptation of Eve and mankind's subsequent fall, Benoist describes how a child's affective relation to objects was seized upon by the Catholic authorities as a sign of essential and divinely-moved identity: "[S]ouvent la promesse d'une pomme, d'un ruban, ou d'une poupée, étoit ce que les *Convertisseurs* d'enfans faisoient passer pour ces *attraits* d'une grace toute puissante et victorieuse" (157; "Often the promise of an apple, of a ribbon, or of a doll, was what these child converters passed off as the attractions of an all-powerful and victorious grace"). Benoist's articulation of Protestant affect, which was to become the chief Huguenot narrative of the Revocation and its context for generations, positions the Catholic material object as a key threat to Protestant communities.[8]

Reading the *Triomphe*, one might well understand this fear of Catholic child converters brandishing tempting goods, for the oyster and her potential pearl are not the sole luxury objects to be figured in this text. In what follows I will look at three emblems of *things* — an exotic seedling, a diamond, and a coral — that suggest how the *Triomphe* deployed and celebrated the material object as part of its praise of the Revocation.

The seedling

The Revocation's biopolitical anxieties can be seen at work in the *Triomphe*'s emblem of a sprouting plant, uprooted from its native soil in order to be grafted somewhere else, and resolutely looking forward to its Catholic future (Figure 2):

> Ces Rameaux verdoyans, dont bien-tost on espere
> Recueillir d'agréables fruits,
> Par un arbre sterile avoient été produits
> A peine ils promettoient quelque recolte amere.
> A leur terre natale ils furent enlevez;
> Rejettons adoptifs d'une Tige étrangere,
> Ils ne regrettent point celle qui fut leur mere;
> Ils seront en ce lieu beaucoup mieux élevez. (67)

> These greening branches, from which soon we hope
> to gather pleasant fruit
> from a sterile tree they had been produced,
> and they promised a bare and bitter harvest
> but were taken from their birthplace
> adoptive rejects from a foreign twig
> They will not miss she who was their mother.
> In this place they will be better brought up.

Note the efforts to graft familial imagery into this emblem: this emblem bristles with what Lee Edelman has called "reproductive futurism," the ideology which makes the figure of the child "the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention" (2–3). Louis's intervention will bring France from the sterility of Protestantism into a more fruitful Catholicism, with warm feelings all round. On the one hand, the passage offers the agreeable hopes of the Catholic audience styled here as "we"; on the other, it reveals the lack of regret of those Protestant sprouts, who turn their back on both mother and native land in order to flourish in the garden of Louis's paternal goodness. Absent is the emotion of the original family, erased and distanced by the curious formulation of the "terre natale," as though France were not also the birthplace of Protestants. The language of the "rejettons" seems especially significant. A botanical term to describe new shoots, it seems to have come into use only in the 1680s, but it would still have carried with it a hint of the verb "rejeter," suggesting that the Protestants had abandoned their own children.

FIGURE 2   Seedling. *Le Triomphe de la Religion sous Louis le Grand: représenté par des inscriptions et des devises: avec une explication en vers latins et François. 1687. p.65 Engraving.*
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The poem's language of fertility and grafting would also have had particular political significance during these years, as new botanical and horticultural techniques were developed at Versailles. Grafted seedlings represented a new order of luxury object for the court at Versailles. As Chandra Mukherji has shown, the horticultural practices nurtured by Louis XIV were central to the absolutist political project both as it related to overseas territories and as it managed differences internal to France.[9] The vocabulary of horticulture deployed in the *Triomphe* astutely allows the Catholic state to naturalize its conversion of Protestant children and at the same time to celebrate the king's bling, the "objets magnifiques" that made Protestants like Benoist suspicious.

The *Triomphe*'s language of the "tige étrangere" also seems to echo the language of Jean Racine's tragedy *Phèdre* of 1677, some ten years earlier. Usually regarded as the summit of Racine's tragic drama and by extension of the neoclassical aesthetic, *Phèdre* is deeply invested in the question of adoption, exploring new starts for politically dangerous children. A captive princess, Aricie, is feared by the ruler Thésée lest she revive her birth family's political animosity to the ruling regime by giving birth to a new generation of enemies; Thésée's son Hippolyte, who is in love with her, says early on of his father's fear of Aricie that "D'une tige coupable il craint un rejeton," (242; "He dreads an offshoot from a guilty stem"). Yet by the end of the play, after Hippolyte's death, Thésèe is brought to embrace and adopt Aricie as a figure for "ce qui reste" ("what remains"), precisely in the hope that she will represent a new beginning. Where Aricie's "reproductive futurism," to use Edelman's term, had initially seemed a terrifying political prospect, her adoption regrafts her into the correct political lineage and converts her from threat to beloved child. In the *Triomphe* Louis XIV, hoping for pleasant fruit from his religious grafting, is represented as a Thésée figure, graciously allowing that foreign sprout the Protestant child to take root in his national family.[10]

The transfer of the Protestant child into the national family is also enabled by a particular kind of textual grafting. The grafted trees stand under a banner emblazoned "Illic venient felicius" ("there they grow more happily"), a tag lifted from Virgil's *Georgics* I.54, in which grapes rather than children grow. There is an early modern connection between this movement of children and the movement of words. In early modern French, "plagie" still meant "Stealth, or subornation of men's children, and servants, with an intent to sell them," as Cotgrave has it in 1611 (s.v. "plagie"). Antoine Furetière explains in his 1690 dictionary that the term comes from the Roman name for those who sold a free man as if he were a slave and were thus condemned to the whip, *ad plagas* (s.v. "plagiaire"). We might say that these textual migrations point toward a long history of violent appropriation. But it is the appropriation or re-orientation of affect that is of particular interest here. The re-planting of the seedling involves a grafting of emotion, so it will grow *more happily* in Catholic soil. Sara Ahmed's work on happiness as "an affective form of orientation" suggests that happiness is often imagined as the end result of a reeducation (54). Our Protestant seedling is effectively told by the Virgilian tag that under religious

absolutism even (or perhaps especially) emotions can no longer be considered to be the property of an individual.

The *Triomphe* does not appropriate textual fragments alone. In its most significant deployment of emotional rhetorics, it also appropriates the voice of the Protestant as victim of the Revocation and makes that voice speak in the Revocation's praise. This grafting can be seen at work in two cases of speaking stones: a diamond and a coral.[11] Our opening oyster and the Protestant seedling were assumed and described in the third person by the explanatory mottoes. The *Triomphe*'s twist on panegyric then makes the figured Protestant speak up in the first person to thank Louis XIV for the policies that targeted them and to describe the Revocation as a form of kindness.

This paradiastole (which softens the blow of naming vice by rewriting it as a virtue) is a rhetorical trope often used in early modern writing to flatter another or oneself. It is central to the discourse of political emotion in the period.[12] We have already seen how the *Triomphe* converts violence to compassion and transmutes fear into gratitude. But the two instances I will describe here take that movement one step further into strangeness by asking the material object to speak. In speaking in the first person, these objects draft a sentimental autobiography suggesting that the real triumph of religion is a change in emotions. The *Triomphe* turns subjects — understood as those whose emotional lives are untrammelled productions of their own interior life — into affective *objects*, imagined chiefly as units whose affective lives can be manipulated in order to better display the king's might.

Using the commonly understood figure of religious conversion to illuminate aspects of contemporary culture, affect theorist Ahmed describes the move from negative to positive feelings as "affective conversion" (45). Yet Ahmed's figure can also be usefully turned back on the early modern, for affect was central to early modern understandings of sectarian difference. French Protestantism insisted that, as Calvin had put it, "The inward affection is in deed the chiefest thing" (492). Very broadly speaking, Protestant faith was often imagined to be built on deep emotionality where Catholicism observed exterior rituals. The metamorphoses of the *Triomphe* wrench matters in the opposite direction by making affective conversion key to the conversion from Protestant to Catholic, from birth family to national unit. Far from just pointing to the conversion of individuals, the text also works an affective conversion on Catholicism itself, suggesting that affect is chiefly nourished by the Catholic rather than the Protestant faith.

The *Triomphe*'s showcasing of the Protestant as precious object asks us to imagine the nation as collection and the king as collector-in-chief. Susan Stewart writes of collections that their purpose "is not the restoration of context of origin but rather the creation of a new context, a context standing in a metaphorical, rather than a contiguous, relation to the world of everyday life" (152). Where antiquarianism betrays "a nostalgia of origin and presence" (153), the collector focuses on "forgetting — starting again" (152). A similar understanding of the collector or *curieux* was already voiced in the seventeenth century. The moralist Jean de La Bruyère critiqued the fetishistic capability of the collector, whose habits took objects away from their originary use.[13] The post-Revocation departure of the Protestants did just that. The

withdrawal of Protestant fortunes and skills from their place in the French economy would famously cause the country to falter and stagnate, enabling other neighboring countries like Britain and Holland to flourish. And yet the collectionist rhetoric of the *Triomphe* allows Catholic France to embellish this loss and to imagine Protestant value as merely affective.

The diamond

Under the title "Adamas," the *Triomphe* offers us "[U]n Diamant, que l'on taille et que l'on polit," ("A diamond that is cut and polished") with a tag first in Italian and then in French, both voiced in the first person: "ben mi fa, chi mi ferisce," "qui me frappe, me fait du bien" (98; "he who hits me does me good") (Figure 3). This declaration is followed by a longer account of the diamond's preferences:

> Je ne tiens pas de moy cét éclat que je jette,
> Par qui des feux du ciel l'éclat est imité;
> Je n'éstois né qu'une pierre imparfaite,
> Et jamais l'oeil sur moy ne se fust arresté.
> Ce brillant vif et pur dont on est enchanté,
> Combien faut-il que je l'achete?
> De ce que j'ay souffert, vient toute ma beauté. (101)

> This dazzle I give off doesn't come from me
> This dazzle that imitates the flames of the sky;
> I was born an imperfect stone
> And nobody gave me a second look.
> This lively and pure sparkle which charms the world
> How much do I have to pay for it?
> All my beauty comes from my suffering.

The fact that it speaks is certainly surprising, but the presence of the diamond in a collection for Louis XIV is more expected. By the late 1680s diamonds from India were a major feature of the king's collections, where they were enchanting the court at Versailles.[14] The Greek *adamas* signifies fortitude. Since Pliny, diamonds had been praised for an extraordinary strength that was not just material but also somehow morally significant.[15] Yet here our diamond's tale speaks of its weakness and imperfection, and the strength and value of the diamond is bestowed on it only by the figure of the king. The diamond's embrace of violence makes him a very particular sort of diamond: a *French* diamond. The 1680s French diamond signaled the work of human skill and artifice in perfecting nature.[16] The stones that dazzled the court were all Indian, brought back chiefly from the Golconda mines by the Huguenot traveler and merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, but they had been radically recut in France to show off "ce brillant vif et pur." Louis employed two official stonecutters to facet the stones to display them in the new French style. Tavernier disapproved, preferring the uncut stones.[17] Likewise our Protestant raw original requires an intervention, shrugging off its own sparkle paradoxically at just the moment that it speaks up

FIGURE 3   Diamond. *Le Triomphe de la Religion sous Louis le Grand: représenté par des inscriptions et des devises: avec une explication en vers latins et François. 1687. p.99 Engraving.*
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in the first person. In the *Triomphe*, subjectivity is always dependent on another's action.

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen has described how stones in medieval lapidaries are "embedded within networks of agency in which what they can and cannot do — where they may and may not move, what they desire and what they can achieve — is simultaneously constrained and enabled by other actors within that reticulation" (60). Cohen's broader work on stone draws on both actor-network theory and an object-oriented ontology, attending to the rich presences and possibilities of the non-human or non-animate which displace the singularity of the human. The *thingness* of the *Triomphe*'s stones, of course, remains above all a rhetorical sleight-of-hand, a textual trickery designed to prop up the power of that most singular of humans, the king. Yet their constrained existence illustrates perfectly the complicated networks of agency within which early modern subjects and objects take form and within which we can glean their traces.

The coral

Significantly, the other valuable speaking object in this text is another stone that was not native to France but celebrated at its court. Often in seventeenth-century France the coral was found in settings with diamonds, as the coral itself will explain (Figure 4). Like the grafted plants seen earlier, the coral is imagined to illustrate the happy situation of those Protestant children removed from their parents to be brought up Catholic. The coral's *devise* gives us a third person generalized statement which is almost an accounting tally, setting up a painful play on different registers of value: *De la main qui l'arrache, il reçoit tout son prix* (71; From the hand that rips him away, he receives all his value). Then the verse moves to the first person voice as the coral speaks up and recounts a miniaturized autobiography:

> Si cette Onde où je fus formé
> Dans son liquide sein m'eust toujours enfermé,
> Je n'étois qu'une vile et méprisable Plante:
> Maintenant que plus fortuné
> Parmi les Diamans je voy que l'on me vante;
> Je dois ce nouveau prix à la main bienfaisante
> Qui m'arracha es lieux où je suis né (71)

> If this wave where I was formed
> Had always hidden me in its liquid breast
> I was only a vile and despicable plant
> Now, more fortunate
> Amongst Diamonds I see they set me
> I owe this new value to the kindly hand
> Which tore me from the place where I was born.

The *Triomphe* pairs the coral with the grafted plants, and its *blason* continues the horticultural/familial language of that verse, declaring "radicato nulla, sradicato
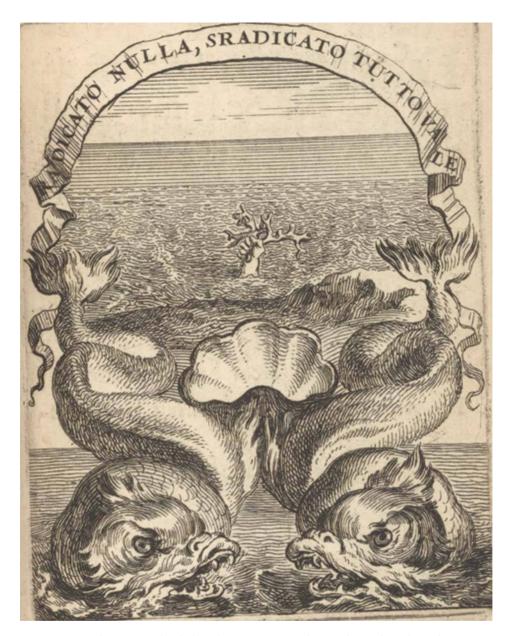
FIGURE 4   Coral. *Le Triomphe de la Religion sous Louis le Grand: représenté par des inscriptions et des devises: avec une explication en vers latins et François. 1687. p. 69 Engraving.*
General Research Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

tutto vale" (70; "not when rooted but when uprooted does it gain its price"). As in the case of the diamond, the coral's conversion narrative overhauls the notion of value; the object itself is worth nothing until an emotional operation is brought about by the intervention of the "main bienfaisante." This is no invisible hand that

regulates the triumphant economy but rather the precise and strategic gesture of a very identifiable monarch.

Rei Terada notes that "[t]he ideology of emotion diagrams emotion as something lifted from a depth to a surface" (11). Here, the coral's uprooting means that it seems to speak from the briny depths of its emotion, articulating an unshakable truth about the king in the same way as the sword Excalibur that rises from the surface of the water. The text gives the Protestant child/coral an interior from which it speaks its pathetic autobiography, recalling the important interiorization effects that Nicholas Paige has shown to be central to seventeenth-century autobiographical texts.[18] What we hear in the coral's speech is of course an affect imposed upon the child by exterior forces. The ventriloquizing text makes the child grateful for Catholic intervention. But the text voices this emotional statement untrammelled from the depths not just of the sea but of the subject. The depth-effect cast by the text works to authenticate and enforce our sense of an authentic emotion speaking forth.

The text operates a number of switches: the move from the birth family (the liquid breast of the sea recalling the mother of the Protestant child) to the national family presided over by the king; the makeover fantasy of the move from vileness to shiny jewel; the textural move from being a soft plant bathed in a liquid to a hard stone; lastly and most importantly, the reimagining of a jewel prized in a global market as something whose value depends instead on its emotional tie to one solitary figure, the king.[19] The benevolent hand that tears the little child/plant/stone from its place of origin sweeps the coral's exchange value aside and in its place points to a personalized love story between subject (object) and king, an affective bond similar to the English story traced by Brandon Chua in an essay in this volume. Turning the child into a material object erases the pains of family and sectarian history and replaces it with a "natural history" normalizes and sentimentalizes the king's violence. The strange movement of textures is important to this figuration of emotion. The soft Protestant coral who was sentimentally attached to his birth family is contrasted with the stony rigor of the subject who renounces family to stand with the king and to belong to him alone. The coral is the cornerstone of a collection that only the collector-in-chief is allowed to touch.

Both the diamond and the coral underline the fact that the emotional journey the Protestant makes in the *Triomphe de la Religion* is above all one of metamorphosis. The coral's story is not just about kidnapping, but also about textual borrowings and movements. The images of the text are themselves appropriated from book IV of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, just as the plant's tag was a regrafting of Virgil in France. When Perseus rescues Andromeda from the sea monster by deploying the Medusa's head as a weapon (a moment spun over and over again in early modern court cultures in paintings by Rubens, Poussin and Lorrain among others), he brings about a strange and tumescent metamorphosis that came to be known as the "Origin of Coral." The seaweed on which Perseus lays the frightful head hardens at its touch, becoming coral, and Ovid notes that coral continually makes this metamorphosis, moving from a plant under water to a rock above the surface. Coral, then, signifies through change, a change that allows us to trace a violent history and its apparent redemption in beautiful objects, or perhaps beautifully docile subjects.[20] The victor Perseus, the

great hero, makes coral out of his enemy, just as our great hero Louis has done by improving on the disagreeable natural state of the Protestant. Like Perseus, Louis can make a spectacular horror — the Medusa's head or the forced conversion and separation of the Protestant family — into something sweetly decorative that produces delight in those who look upon it. The *Triomphe* shows the origin of coral reworked, because in the story it tells we are meant to ignore origin (that is, to efface the vile and distasteful Protestant birth family) and to embrace the glorious Catholic future of both the child and of France.

Coral was a particularly apt object for thinking through change of all kinds, and perhaps most importantly economic change. In the *Triomphe*, the coral's story is principally about shifts in value: once down on his luck, the coral is now "plus fortuné" (71). The "real" or material story of coral likewise provides a useful figure to trace a shift in French approaches to land and natural wealth. Like the diamond, the coral — considered a plant until the early eighteenth century — was not a native French resource although the French were developing a growing taste for it. For collectors and curators of curiosity cabinets, coral spoke to a scientific fascination with change and transition, since it could be imagined as variously animal, vegetable, or mineral.[21] Coral was an ornament that derived its value precisely from philosophical and scientific discourses on change and transition.[22]

Coral also surfaces in a number of French court portraits from this period. Pierre Mignard's 1682 painting of Louise de Kérouailles (National Portrait Gallery, London) displays Charles II's mistress surrounded by treasures from overseas trade, notably a child slave brandishing a piece of coral. The slave's hand clutching the coral stands in chiastic counterpoint to our Protestant coral welcoming the hand of the king. Both child-corals sentimentalize a change of extreme social violence. Another Mignard portrait strewn with coral shows the marquise de Seignelay, daughter-in-law of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis's great minister and secretary of the navy (1691, National Gallery, London). It was Colbert's orchestrations of the waves that allowed coral to signify so much for seventeenth-century France. In 1668 Colbert brought Ottoman Algeria to sign a peace treaty allowing French coral fishing to flourish unimpeded along the famously dangerous north African coast.[23] Like the Indian diamonds in the rough, foreign coral required a particular French intervention to become a prized object.

To praise Louis through a ventriloquized coral, then, was not merely to gesture towards a particular aesthetic taste for jewelry settings or portraiture, but also to evoke the formidable trading and military power of France which had already exercised a sweet violence with regard to neighboring territories and their bounty and was keen to continue to do so. The *Triomphe*'s lapidary articulates a violent effacement of difference both within national borders — Protestantism — and, less directly, outside them, so that Indian diamond mines and Algerian coral fields are all remade in a French style as French treasures. As Benoist's paranoid-Protestant history shows so well, the status of the material object was intimately connected to national triumph and to the affective metamorphoses that absolutist triumph sought to compel.

Objects, rhetoric, affects

Rei Terada's trenchant reading of emotions beyond the subject describes the "contradiction in attributing emotion, or at least strong and clear emotion, to anything other than a subject. Emotion and subjectivity seem to be deeply connected" (2). So what does it mean for a diamond or a coral to express an emotion, or for a plant or an oyster to be described as though they are emotionally endowed? The *Triomphe*'s emblems destabilize our sense of what is a subject and what an object (material or otherwise). They call for us to deploy a broader, more materially-inflected vocabulary of affect rather than a language of emotion in discussions of early modern feeling. In drawing attention to what Lynn Festa has called (in an elegant exploration of eighteenth-century thing-tales) "the intricate, intimate connections between subjects and objects" (111), they underline the often painful relations between people, between exterior countenance and interior emotion, between compulsion and agency. In endowing material objects with meaning and memory and emotion, the *Triomphe* reminds us that people, like the objects we now admire in museums, were also the polished artifacts of absolutism.

The reascription of people as things has a long and painful history, hinted at in the etymology of plagiarism that I described earlier. In a reading of the "master's voice" trope in early American literature, Henry Louis Gates has argued that in slave tales, slaves have no subjectivity since they are legally objects, and "objects can only reflect the subjectivity of their subject" (156). The master's voice and opinions are always heard in the expressions of the slave. The *Triomphe*'s coral finds himself in a similar position to that of the slave; indeed, the coral's unsettling gratitude for its removal from its birth family recalls a similar political paradiastole written almost a century later, Phillis Wheatley's "On being brought from Africa to America" (1767), in which the slave poet announces that "'Twas mercy brought me from my *Pagan* land" (53; emphasis in original). The *Triomphe* is able to imagine Protestants as subjects only by making them into Catholic objects and allowing those objects to reflect the king. The *things* displayed in the text's collection are endowed with subjectivity — that is, with emotion — only because of the kindly sunshine bestowed by the king, and only in order to praise better he who is no subject but the monarch, and who in the ultimate switch himself displaces God, curiously absent from this text.

In searching for a way to get beyond the subject as the bearer of an interiorized emotion, Terada asks for "not a theory of subjectivity but a theory of kinds of emotion as kinds of rhetoric" (47). Fittingly for a Jesuit-orchestrated text, the *Triomphe* provides perfect territory for such an exploration.[24] Both the diamond and coral appear in the text thanks to the figure of prosopopoeia, in which an absent or dead person is imagined to speak, or an inanimate object is brought to life. (We might assume that the French "translator" of the original text, Fontenelle, was chosen because of his deft deployment of that figure in his *Dialogues des morts* published a few years earlier). For Paul de Man, famously, prosopopoeia is "the trope of autobiography" which ushers in a "thematic pathos" ("Autobiography" 76). Our coral is the perfect illustration of that emotional wave.

But de Man's discussion of various forms of animation suggests that the emotional movement of prosopopoeia can also be abruptly called to a halt. It is subject to very particular rules. In a related essay on trope in lyric poetry, de Man writes that "Anthropomorphism freezes the infinite chain of tropological transformations and propositions into one single assertion or essence which, as such, excludes all others. It is no longer a proposition but a proper name, as when the metamorphosis in Ovid's stories culminates and halts in the singleness of a proper name" ("Anthropomorphism" 241). The movements celebrated by the *Triomphe* are also brought to a painful halt. Its suggestive metamorphoses and migrations must always come to rest in the singleness of the intended result of the Revocation, the Protestant who is moved — *mobilized* — to become Catholic and in so doing compelled to stay put in France.

These historically significant movements are counterpointed by a quieter figure celebrated in the text's preface. Facing the king's portrait in the room where Quartier gave his speech stood "[L]a Religion dans une attitude qui faisoit voir sa tranquillité. Elle avoit les yeux arrestez sur ce Monarque, pour donner à connoître que c'est à luy qu'elle est redevable de sa paix et de son repos" (21–22; "Religion, in a stance that showed her tranquility. Her eyes were arrested on this monarch, to show that it is to him that she owes her peace and rest"). This figure of a peaceful Religion is where emotion's movement stops. Religion's tranquility seems to set her apart from the anxious gratitude of our figured Protestants. Yet as the formulation of Religion's relation to the monarch makes clear, she too is a figure whose attributes are granted only by the king, and she owes him her peace and rest. The "gifts" of the king are above all affective; they point to a kind of forced affective labor (Hardt, 1999). If Benoist feared Catholics bearing gifts, then this kind of immaterial gift represents the most alarming Catholic present of all.

The king-given rest of Religion is counterpointed by the absolute stillness of a Copernican sun which is celebrated at the end of the text: "Sans entreprendre un tour immense, / [i]mmobile en ce lieu" (127; "Without taking an immense turn, immobile in this place"). The kingliness of that sun is then made explicit in the simile, "Tel Louïs attaché chez un peuple fidelle" (127; "Thus is Louis attached to a faithful people"). Yet the emblems of the text have shown us that in fact the king's stillness depends absolutely on the compelled movement of others.[25] The king stands, and his subjects scurry, many, ultimately, out of France itself.

Too often, liberal narratives of religious conversion and political personhood assume conversion is a question of choice, drawing on canonical autobiographical accounts from Augustine onward that portray the interior self's ideological struggle and subsequent new orientation. Such conversion tropes depend on the notion that emotion inheres only in the individual subject and that conversion must then unlock a sincere expression of the self. Yet we have seen in the *Triomphe* how emotional expressions that purport to issue from an authentic self might instead be rigged to suit the emotional and political regimes in which they take place. In attending to the multiple conversions of the *Triomphe*, I want to suggest that affect with its attention

to transpersonal and labored movements is a more useful vocabulary than emotion for thinking through the changes experienced by early modern believers. Paying attention to early modern affect provides a forceful perspective on the compulsions and coercions, agency and obligation that inhered to life under absolutism. It allows us to trace not just the differences between Protestant and Catholic but the ways in which one might be *moved* to become one or the other.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 I cite Gabriel-François Le Jay, *Le Triomphe de la Religion sous Louis le Grand* (1687). All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

2 Given that I am tracing the movement of texts and objects from one context to another, it behooves me to say that I appropriated this fragment from Terada (11).

3 For a brief account of affect as interpersonal force and its early modern origin, see Hardt, "What Affects Are Good For."

4 The scholarly literature on the Edict and its Revocation is voluminous and sometimes overly sectarian: for a succinct overview of the period and questions of toleration across Europe, see Kaplan. On France's conflicts in particular and the legacy of Nantes, see Luria; Whelan and Baxter.

5 For an account of the decorations, see Loach.

6 "La traduction des vers Latins est de l'auteur des Dialogues des Morts" (12).

7 In this period the language of *douceur* frequently bristles with aggression: one can be aggressively sweet. See Méchoulan; on the gendering of *douceur* see Seifert 113.

8 On the significance of precious objects for thinkers of the French Catholic Reformation, see Course.

9 Plants from all parts of the world, brought back by botanists and travelers, were rehomed in the *jardin du roi*, and Louis's chief minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert also arranged for huge purchases of plants from the south of France to liven up Versailles (Mukerji 176). The palace of Versailles was itself a graft of an earlier form of sophisticated living, first cultivated at the financier Nicolas Fouquet's château Vaux-le-Vicomte. Fouquet, a famed plant collector, rerooted all sorts of foreign fruits in France, but was eventually convicted by Louis XIV for embezzlement (graft rather than grafting); with

Fouquet exiled, the young king then seized the styles fostered by Fouquet as well as the skilled workers who made them possible, and in a showy display of what art could do to improve nature had teams of designers and laborers move from Vaux and work to turn the seemingly unredeemable lands around Versailles into a horticultural extravagance. On this transition, see Goldstein*;* on new horticultural technologies of grafting, see especially 208–9.

10 Goldstein points out that the most important treatise on grafting from these years, written by Louis XIV's chief gardener Jean de La Quintinie, drew on the vocabularies of genealogy and classical tragedy (210).

11 The ventriloquized object was a not uncommon figure of political praise in this period. A 1670 poem known as the "Plainte des Statues," for example, featured statues owned and mistreated by reckless aristocrats begging the young Louis XIV to take pity on them and take them into his private collection for their own protection, which of course Louis subsequently did with gusto, taking into the royal collections clusters of artworks gathered by earlier aristocratic collectors. See Ibbett.

12 On the trope, see Skinner.

13 Jean de La Bruyère, "De la mode." On the figure of the *curieux*, see Moriarty 161–62.

14 On Louis's diamond mania, see Dejean 161–76.

15 This twin sense of the diamond's force is central to the tradition of medieval and later lapidaries on which our emblematic diamond draws. A 1582 English lapidary, for example, noted that diamonds "give victorie in contention," and help "resist poyson and witchecrafte," both advantages that might have been useful at Louis's court. Cited in Evans (144).

[16] On French diamonds, see Pointon 44.

[17] On Tavernier's diamonds, see Beasley.

[18] Paige.

[19] For a similar emotionally significant paradiastole involving the riches of the sea, see the early seventeenth-century poet Théophile de Viau's ode to his patron Buckingham, "À Monsieur le Marquis de Buckingham," in which the narrator speaks of the earth that lets itself be ransacked to give glories to the noble lord, and a barbarous sea that tears amber, pearl and corals from its greedy bosom in order to heap riches upon him (151–54). Théophile's articulation of this paradiastole showcases the emotions deployed in patronage rhetoric; if scholars of early modern France have for some time worked through the sociological structures of patronage relations, the emotional landscape of such a world remains to be mapped. That the coral's origin is *maternal* of course fits the sentimental autobiographical mode, but it might also be interesting to note that the physicist Robert Boyle in a 1672 essay on the origins and virtues of gems frequently describes the origin of gemstones as being a "stony Womb" (158).

[20] See Taussig's virtuoso reading of coral as "matter out of place" which draws on Hannah Arendt's reading of Benjamin's quotations out of context to think through petrification and mutation (255–61).

[21] The Irish collector Sir Hans Sloane, whose collection was to form the kernel of the British Museum, was particularly proud of a coral branch he owned that looked like a human hand. Other collectors insisted on the notion that coral, with its scarlet arterial branches, invoked the interior of the human body, bringing two seventeenth century explorations, of the sea and the body's interior, together (Pointon 108). On coral collections but especially the broader significance of collecting submarine treasures, see Delbourgo.

[22] It was also an object specifically associated with children, being widely used in children's teething rings from the fifteenth century on: Boodt's *Le Parfait joaillier*, a treatise on jewels from 1644, notes that coral "faict pousser les dents aux enfans, si l'on le leur faict mordre continuellement auec les gencives" (397; "makes children's teeth grow, if one makes them bite it continually with their gums"). In the earliest known painting of the Anglo-French baby who would one day be the English king Charles II (1630, National Portrait Gallery, London) the child (an elder cousin of the as yet unborn Louis XIV) wields a teething coral hung around his chubby neck on a string of diamonds, a King Charles spaniel on his lap.

[23] The coral fisheries along the north African coasts had long been the objects of great rivalry among the European powers. Before the sixteenth century they had been largely controlled by Italian interest, but by the mid sixteenth century the French Compagnie du Corail took the upper hand along the Algerian coast. By 1633, the *bastion de France* there boasted some 800 French inhabitants ranging from officers to coral fishers. On the coral trade, see Savary des Brûlons (1575).

[24] On the centrality of rhetoric in French Jesuit education and thought, see Fumaroli.

[25] The author recalls Margaret Thatcher's famous 1980 line to those waiting for her to change her mind, "You turn if you want to; the lady's not for turning."

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