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Peregrinations

Mapping Desire in Chaucer's "To Rosemounde," Shakespeare's "Rape of Lucrece," and Donne's "A Valediction: Of Weeping"

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> Ma dame, ye ben of al beautè shryne,
> As fer as cercled is the mappemounde
> > Chaucer, "To Rosemounde"

> The face, that map which deep impression bears
> Of hard misfortune, carved in it with tears
> > Shakespeare, "Rape of Lucrece"

> On a round ball
> A workman that hath copies by, can lay
> An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,
> And quickly make that, which was nothing, all
> > John Donne, "A Valediction: Of Weeping"

The poets Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, and John Donne were aware of the existence of medieval world maps. Evidence from their writings clearly shows that the poets were familiar with the genre and had seen cartographic examples of it. They may also have read prose descriptions of the whole world that sometimes journeyed with, and sometimes journeyed separately from, cartographic *mappaemundi.* The poets each used such maps metaphorically in their poems about women, juxtaposing woman-as-map in their reader-viewer's inner eye in poetic contexts they created to represent male desire. That desire is figured in a would-be lover's lament that turns to satiric complaint in Chaucer's "To Rosemounde" and in a conqueror's lust that turns to violent

assault in Shakespeare's "Rape of Lucrece," while in Donne's "A Valediction: Of Weeping," it is expressed with tender empathy in an increasingly complex, metaphorical meditation on the tears shed by both lover and beloved on an occasion of parting.[1] In order to understand this thematic sexualization of the *mappaemundi*, it is relevant first to consider the contemplative and educational functions of world maps in medieval Christian culture.

Medieval *Mappaemundi*: Spiritual Contemplation and Political Imagination

In the Middle Ages, world maps served multiple purposes, including spiritual contemplation and political education. Medieval Christian world maps expressed a religious worldview, often depicting key moments in the faith in the midst of geographical representations of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Adam and Eve drawn in the east were meant to remind viewers of the Fall; Christ's Cross depicted in Jerusalem was intended to remind them of redemption. The use of *mappaemundi* in Christian devotional contexts, especially monastic meditation, has been confirmed in recent scholarship.[2]

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[1] These poems can be found in standard editions: Geoffrey Chaucer, "To Rosemounde" in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed., ed. Larry Benson (Oxford and Boston: Oxford University Press and Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), 649; William Shakespeare, "The Rape of Lucrece" in *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 1720-43; and John Donne, "A Valediction: Of Weeping," in *John Donne's Poetry: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007). All of these poems are also available online in the *Luminarium* anthology: http://www.luminarium.org/.

[2] This argument was convincingly presented in J.B. Harley and David Woodard, *The History of Cartography, Vol. 1: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), esp. chap. 18 "Medieval *Mappaemundi*," and in Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* (London: British Library, 1999). Edson draws on framing ideas original to German historian Anna-Dorothee von den Brinkner, which have been most recently and fully articulated in von den Brinkner's book, *Studien zur Universalkartographie des Mittelalters* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008). See also Von den Brincken, "Monumental Legends on Medieval Manuscript Maps: Notes on Designed Capital Letters on Maps of Large Size (Demonstrated from the Problem of Dating the Vercelli Map, 13th C.)," *Imago Dei* 42 (1990), 9-25, where the author aptly observes: "The medieval map is a documentary and also a narrative authority for the historian: it reflects the knowledge as well as the view of the world."

Hugh of St. Victor's treatise on how to draw Noah's ark, and how to superimpose a map of the world over it, for instance, exemplifies a tradition of Christian contemplative map-viewing in twelfth-century Europe.[3] When considered in the course of the development of T-O maps, from Isidore of Seville's map in the *Etymologies* to the Psalter Maps, it is clear that Hugh intended world-map making (as well as world-map viewing) to further the spiritual progress of contemplative Victorines in his Parisian monastery. Hugh of St. Victor's purpose may be fruitfully compared to Baudri of Bourgueil's in his twelfth-century poem to the Countess Adela, which shows a shift in emphasis: from imagining the world-map for the sake of spiritual progress toward the divine to imagining it for the sake of intellectual edification for political reasons.[4]

In the poem, Baudri imagines the walls of the bedchamber of the Countess hung with tapestries depicting pagan mythology, biblical history, and the Norman Conquest; a bed surrounded by statues of Philosophy, the Seven Liberal Arts, and Philosophy; a ceiling showing the constellations and the planets in the night sky; and a floor consisting of a mosaic *mappamundi.* Mary Carruthers has observed that, in Baudri's poem, "monastic orthopraxis" is being made to serve a new function:

> The poem was composed at Adela's command for the education of her children (lines 55-65 1360-68). It was thus a commissioned work, designed specifically for tutoring noble children, likely including the future king Stephen [of England] and Henry [bishop of Winchester]. It describes a decorated bedchamber, supposed (in the poem's fiction) to be Adela's, in

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[3] Hugh of St. Victor, "A Little Book about Constructing Noah's Ark," tr. Jessica Weiss, in Mary Carruthers and Jan Ziolkowski, eds., *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 67ff.

[4] See Monika Otter, "Baudri of Bourgueil, 'To Countess Adela,'" *The Journal of Medieval Latin: A Publication of the North American Association of Medieval Latin* 1 (2001), 60 (of pp. 60-141). For the standard Latin edition, see *Baldricus Burgulianus [Baudri of Bourgueil], Carmina*, ed. Karlheinz Hilbert (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1979). For a Latin and French dual-language, edition-translation, see Jean-Yves Tilliette, ed. and tr., "Rhétorique et poétique chez les poètes latins médiévaux: Recherches sur Baudrí de Bourgueil" (Univ. de Paris IV, diss., 1991).

the form of a dream vision granted to the author. It is thus the type of picture and poem closely associated with monastic orthopraxis. To use such conventions for teaching laity is typical of 12ᵗʰ-century clerical literature; the adaptations are especially clear in this poem.[5]

The presence of a tapestry of the Norman Conquest and a *mappamundi* on the floor, over which the Countess and her children would walk, suggests that the daughter of William the Conqueror wanted her children to understand themselves as rulers of England and the world.

This function of the *mappaemundi* in not only spiritual contemplation and political imagination also can be seen in careful analysis of the thirteenth-century Psalter Maps (*c.* 1230s), which might have been produced for Henry III (1207-1272). In his intriguing study, *The King's Two Maps: Cartography and Culture in Thirteenth-Century England*, Daniel Birkholz sees the two maps of his title as two cartographic genres: maps of the world and maps of the realm. He makes the case that scholars have over-emphasized the religious interpretations of *mappaemundi* to the exclusion of possible political interpretations, and he specifically argues that the Psalter Maps can be considered "regnal maps."[6]

If the Psalter Maps have both devotional and political purposes, so too may the *mappaemundi* in medieval universal chronicles, such as the fourteenth-century *Polychronicon* of Ranulf Higden. Indeed, is possible to consider the plurality of meaning in the visual rhetoric of the maps accompanying the Latin *Polychronicon*, which can be interpreted with the aid of the prose description of the known world in Book I. These graphic and prose maps were roughly contemporaneous with Chaucer's "To

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[5] See Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 213-20. She adds that Adela, a friend of Anselm and Ivo of Chartres, was "a learned lady and, though a lay person, greatly involved in ecclesiastical affairs as a patron, friend, and diplomat" (213).

[6] Daniel Birkholz, *The King's Two Maps: Cartography and Culture in Thirteenth-Century England* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

Rosemounde": it is clear from his poem that Chaucer had considered a world map in the same genre as Higden's at least long enough to use it metaphorically; he may even have seen a *Polychronicon* map himself. Similarly, Shakespeare knew a double world map in the same genre as Petrus Plancius' *Orbis terrarum* (1590, 1594), which dates to the same period as Shakespeare's "Rape of Lucrece" (1594) and profitably may be considered alongside it.

Interestingly, though Donne was aware of both flat maps (e.g. "Hymne to God my God in my Sicknesse") and globes that represented the New World, the metaphoric conceit in his poem "A Valediction: Of Weeping" returns to the common, medieval T-O *mappamundi*, suggesting a return to a contemplative Christian view of the world – even of the world contained in a woman's tiny tear-drop.

The purpose of considering the medieval cartographic and prose *mappaemundi* as contexts for the sexual metaphors in these three poems of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Donne is not to prove that the poets had direct knowledge of the specific examples cited. Rather, it is to indicate that the poets were generally familiar with the genre, in both graphic and prosaic forms, and their functions, and that they were influenced by similar models – if not the maps that are extant today. With a deeper understanding of the impression that the genre made on the poets, it is possible to better understand how the poets are mapping desire in their use of sexual metaphors and themes, and thus to better see the purposes fulfilled in each of their poems.

Mapping Desire in Chaucer's "To Rosemounde"

Found by W.W. Skeat in the Bodleian Library, on a flyleaf of the fifteenth-century MS Rawlinson Poet. 163, fol. 114 (which is the only known manuscript in which the poem survives), Chaucer's "To Rosemounde" has been interpreted in diverse ways. Scholars have debated the identity of the lyric speaker (a courtly lover, an old man, Chaucer himself), Rosemounde (an unknown lady, the speaker's lady, Chaucer's mistress, a little

girl, Richard II's queen), the date of the poem's composition (early in Chaucer's career – before 1380; in the period of the *Troilus* – 1380-88; or later in Chaucer's career – 1380-96), and its tone (sincere, ironic, parodic, humorous, mixed, etc).[7] However, other than summary reviews of the poem in chapters on Chaucer's lyrics, the poem has not received much recent critical attention. Yet in this neglected poem, Chaucer makes a vivid, original comparison between a woman's body and a *mappamundi*. What effect does Chaucer hope to produce in the thoughts and feelings of his audience when he does so?

By recalling the contemplative and educational functions of the *mappamundi* genre in medieval Christian culture, some interpretive possibilities emerge. On the one hand, the lyric speaker of the poem could be looking at Rosemounde like Christian contemplatives looked at medieval world-maps, in order to make spiritual progress. Certainly, elevated forms of *fin amor* aspired to motivate knightly adherents to spiritual progress, and perhaps Chaucer's lyric speaker – with his expressions of unfulfilled longing – participates in this tradition. On the other hand, the speaker could be looking at Rosemounde like noble children looked at world maps, to obtain a broader political education and, in due time, stake their dynastic claims and boundaries in those parts of the world mapped for their benefit. In addition to his role as poet, Chaucer was a civil servant, closely allied with John of Gaunt, son of Edward III and duke of Lancaster, who was Chaucer's patron (and later, brother-in-law); he was thus familiar with English politics. More than other poets of the fourteenth century, he would have had the opportunity to see the way world maps were used in England. Thus informed by prior

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[7] See Helge Kökeritz, "Chaucer's Rosemounde," *Modern Language Notes* 63:5 (1948): 310-318; Russell Hope Robbins, "Chaucer's 'To Rosemounde,'" *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 4 (1971): 73-81; and Edward Vasta, "*To Rosemounde*: Chaucer's 'Gentil' Dramatic Monologue" in *Chaucerian Problems and Perspectives: Essays Presented to Paul Beichner, C.S.C.*, eds. Edward Vasta and Zacharias Thundy (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1979), 97-113. Mine is the first study to focus on the significance of the *mappamundi* metaphor in the context of the interpretive functions of world maps in the Middle Ages.

experience with the contemplative and political functions of world maps, he could use his knowledge to accomplish his own ironic purposes in "To Rosemounde."

The worldliness that emerges in the poem's tone from stanza to stanza suggests that, although Chaucer's speaker begins in a high-minded place, contemplating Rosemounde's beauty like a medieval contemplative might a *mappamundi*, he ends in a rather lower place. Indeed, Chaucer develops the semantic range of possibilities suggested by his own metaphor. In the first of the poem's three stanzas, Chaucer introduces his metaphor with apparent seriousness:

> Ma dame, ye ben of al beautè shryne,
> As fer as cercled is the mappemounde;
> For as the cristal glorious ye shyne,
> And lyke ruby ben your chekes rounde.
> Therwith ye ben so mery and so iocounde,
> That at a revel whan that I see you daunce,
> It is an oynement unto my wounde,
> Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce.

The lyric speaker addresses the as-yet unnamed woman as "Ma dame" and says she is the shrine of all beauty, encircled as far around as is the "mappemounde." In *The Middle English Dictionary*, Vol. 5, Hans Kurath shows that the word used here entered Middle English from medieval Latin (*mappa mundi*) and Old French (*mappemonde*), and he notes that Chaucer's contemporary, John Gower, uses the word in his *Confessio Amantis* (Book VII, line 530), which Kurath dates to 1393. Dating Chaucer's "To Rosemounde" to 1380 suggests that Chaucer's usage is one of the first in English.[8] This Anglicized form of the term does not survive in present-day English, though it persists in the Scots dialect as "the mappamound," meaning, "the world, the globe."[9]

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[8] "Mappamounde," *The Middle English Dictionary*, vol. 5, ed. Hans Kurath (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 160.

Beyond the familiarity with the genre implied by the use of the French term "mappemounde" and the poet's innovative metaphorical use of it, it is clear that Chaucer was familiar with the genre of world maps. Sylvia Tomasch has argued, for example, that Theseus' "ampitheatre" in the Knight's Tale is best understood as having been modeled on a *mappamundi*.[10] In addition, there were large-scale world maps at Oxford University, which Chaucer may have seen. He may also have been familiar with world maps included in psalters or historical chronicles.[11]

A few scholars have stated or implied the that Chaucer knew Ranulf Hidgen's *Polychronicon* **(Fig. 1)**, either in the Latin *compilatio* or the English translation that John Trevisa, a nearly exact contemporary of Chaucer, completed in 1387.[12] All manuscript copies of the Latin and English *Polychronicon* start with Book I, which contains a prose description of the then-known world with a special focus on England. The geographical survey in Book I of the *Polychronicon* clearly indicates that Higden compiled the *Polychronicon* for an English audience. The history book is compiled from many earlier chronicles, which emphasize the aims of *ecclesia* and empire – the Church and the Roman state – and England appears in some ways to be portrayed as the natural inheritor of certain world-conquering aims that belonged to other countries.

[9] For discussion of "mappamound" in the Scots dialect, see the Scots Language Center: http://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/view/id/4558.

[10] Sylvia Tomasch, "*Mappae Mundi* and 'The Knight's Tale': The Cartography of Power, The Technology of Control," *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*, ed. Kathryn L. Lynch (New York and London: Routledge, 2002) 193-224.

[11] Rodney Thomson, "Medieval Maps at Merton College, Oxford," *Imago Mundi* 65.1 (2009): 84-90, esp. 87-89.

[12] On the Latin *Polychronicon*, see John Taylor, *The Universal History of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966); on the English *Polychronicon*, see Jane Beal, *John Trevisa and the English Polychronicon* (Tempe, Ariz.: ACMRS and Turnhout: Brepols, 2012). For a discussion of Chaucer and the *Polychronicon*, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "Orientation and Nation in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*" in *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*, ed. Kathryn Lynch, *Basic Readings in Chaucer and his Time* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 102-134, esp. 115-118.
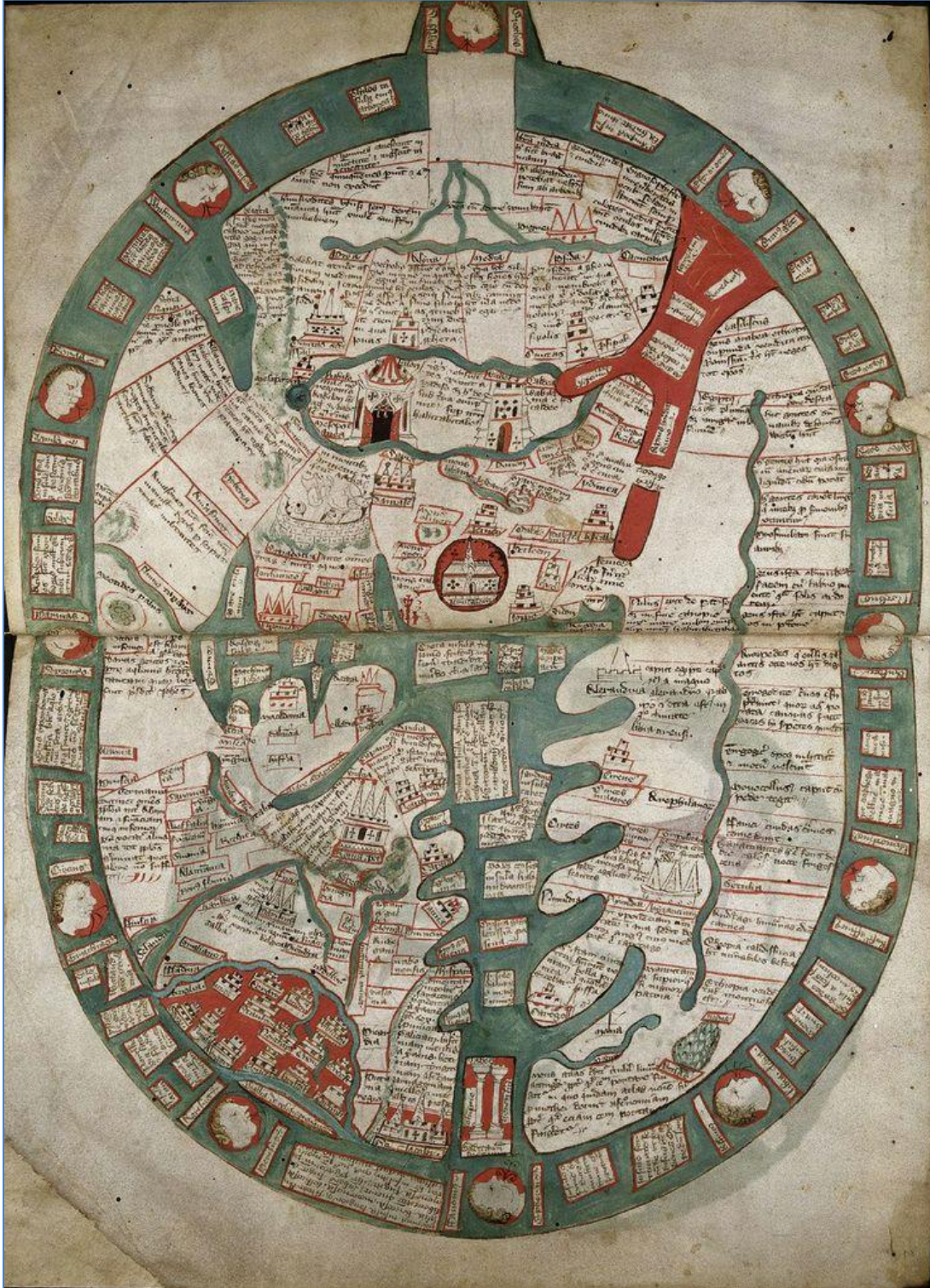
Figure 1 *Mappamundi* from Ranulf Higden's Latin *Polychronicon.* British Library, Royal MS 14.C IX, ff. 1v-2. Photo: Wikipedia.

Thus, Higden's re-writing of earlier chronicles within his own frequently, if implicitly, reveals nationalistic ambitions to extend the rule of the English in the world.[13] Of equal interest is that some of the extant Latin copies of the universal history still circulate with a *mappamundi* near the beginning.[14]

Higden writes that the "mappa mundi" is *described* ("describitur") in Book I. John Trevisa translates by saying that the "mappa mundi" is *portrayed* and *painted* ("purtrayed and i-peynt") in Book I. Trevisa then repeats that *the shape of the wide world is painted therein* ("the shap of the worlde wide is y-peynted ynne").[15] Trevisa's language particularly suggests that he had seen a painted world map at the beginning of a Latin *Polychronicon* manuscript and that he saw the prose description of the world in relation to, and perhaps as an extension of, the cartographic depiction of it. While no direct evidence survives, it is of course possible that Chaucer may have as well.

Some of Chaucer's readers may also have read the *Polychronicon* in Latin or English.[16] Chaucer's use of the word "mappamounde" suggests that he expects his audience to be

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[13] For example, see discussion in Elizabeth Rambo, *Colonial Ireland in Medieval English Literature* (Selinsgrove, Penn.: Susquehanna University Press, 1994). Higden himself was once summoned from his monastery in Chester by the English King Edward III, and ordered to bring his chronicles with him, presumably to answer questions pertaining to the politics of the government of the day. Other readers of his work, whether in the original Latin or in English translation, could certainly pick up on the connection between mapping the world and ruling the world. See Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden,* 1. This point will be significant when we turn to consider the sexual metaphors in Shakespeare's "Rape of Lucrece."

[14] The more than twenty extant world maps attached to the surviving Latin *Polychronicon* manuscripts are of three types: circular, oval, and mandorla. For an overview of the map types and relations to one another, with illustrative images, see Jim Siebold, "Higden World Maps":
 http://www.myoldmaps.com/late-medieval-maps-1300/232-ranulf-higdens-polychro/232-higden.pdf.

[15] See Book I, chap. 3 in the dual-language edition of Ranulf's Latin and Trevisa's English *Polychronicon*, 9 vols., ed. Churchill Babington and J. Rawson Lumby (London: Longman, 1865-86; repr. Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1975), 27, which is available online:
 https://archive.org/stream/polychroniconra00lumbgoog/polychroniconra00lumbgoog_djvu.txt.

[16] See also A.S.G. Edwards, "The Influence and Audience of the *Polychronicon*: Some Observations," *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, Literary and Historical Section* 17 (1980): 113-119.

familiar enough with the genre to comprehend his metaphor, which has two parts: the lyric speaker's lady is "beauty's shrine" and an "encircled world map."

> Ma dame, ye been of al beauty shryne,
> As far as cercled is the mappamounde
> (My lady, you are of all beauty enshrined [or: the shrine],
> as much encircled as is the map of the world) [lines 1-2]

A "shrine," of course, is a place of worship, a place where sacred objects, representing spiritual realities, may be enclosed and venerated. By enclosing beauty in the lady's body, the poet employs the language of the "religion of love," as he does later on.[17] Christ's sacred body analogously and metaphorically enshrines the *orbis terrarum* on Hugh of St. Victor's Ark map; on the Ebstorf Map, the center of the Christian world, Jerusalem, is located at his *omphalos*, and his arms embrace his Creation.[18] This somewhat common cartographic image might suggest that Chaucer saw a parallel between Christ embracing his Creation in a *mappamundi* and Rosemounde enshrining beauty in her own body. Chaucer's use of a "religion of love" trope might be conventional, but the image of the "encircled" world map as a figure for a woman's body is new to English poetry.

This double metaphor also suggests that, just as world maps depict the ocean encircling the *orbis terrarum*, so the lyric speaker of Chaucer's poem longs to encircle the lady. The third line, which speaks of how the lady shines like "glorious crystal," suggests that this encircling may be effected literally by the lady's jewels or emotionally

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[17] C.S. Lewis, *Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936; repr. New York: A Galaxy Book, 1958), 2.

[18] The thirteenth-century Ebstorf Map was a large-scale *mappamundi*, considerably larger than the Hereford Map. Although the Ebstorf Map was destroyed in World War II, images of it survive as does information about its dimensions (3.5. x 3.5 meters) and history. For an introduction to the map, see G. Pischke, "The Ebstorf Map: Tradition and the Contents of a Medieval Picture of the World," *History of Geo and Space Sciences* 5:2 (2014), 149-54. Available at https://www.hist-geo-space-sci.net/5/155/2014/hgss-5-155-2014.html.

by her high spirits: her cheeks are compared to rubies (line 4); her mood is deemed "merry" and "jocund" (line 5). The reference to the way the lady is "encircled" may also be a subtle expression of the speaker's own desire to encircle the lady in his arms.

His desire, however, goes unmet, and it generates the poem's complaint. The speaker repeats three times in the poem, once at the end of each stanza, "ye to me do no daliaunce." At the end of the first stanza, the speaker watches the lady dance, and just the sight of her is medicine for his wounded heart. This again is the language of the "religion of love": the lyric speaker sees himself as wounded by love and the lady, saint-like, as his spiritual healer (a common trope). However, his admiration fails to produce the desired result, for the lady will not "dally" with him.

"Daliaunce" is an ambiguous word in the poem and has three meanings in Middle English: "serious or spiritual conversation," "small talk" or "polite conversation," and "amorous flirting," even "sexual union."[19] Given that the speaker compares his lady to a "shrine" and a world map, both significant in contemporaneous contemplative traditions, it might seem that Chaucer had the first sense in mind. Yet, as "daliaunce" is repeated at the end of subsequent stanzas, it becomes clear that Chaucer is moving through each of these meanings. After concluding the first stanza with the more rarified sense of the term, the speaker uses it in the sense of ordinary conversation at the end of the second stanza. At the close of the third stanza, Chaucer employs the term's sense of flirting – as amorous conversation that is not leading to the speaker's desired sexual union with Rosemounde.

> For thogh I wepe of teres ful a tyne,
> Yet may that wo myn herte nat confounde;
> Your seemly voys that ye so smal out-twyne
> Maketh my thoght in Ioye and blis habounde.

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[19] See "daliaunce" in the *Middle English Dictionary* online (hosted by the University of Michigan): https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=byte&byte=37398656&egdisplay=compact&egs=37406173&egs=37410722.

So curteisly I go, with lovë bounde,
That to my-self I sey, in my penaunce,
Suffyseth me to love you, Rosemounde,
Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce.

Nas never pyk walwed in galauntyne
As I in love am walwed and y-wounde;
For which ful ofte I of my-self divyne
That I am trewe Tristam the secounde.
My love may not refreyd be nor afounde;
I brenne ay in an amorous plesaunce.
Do what you list, I wil your thral be founde,
Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce.

As a close reading of these lines shows, the tone of the lyric also shifts significantly in each stanza. Whereas the opening stanza focuses on the sight of the lady's beauty, and the speaker's diction is elevated, the second stanza concerns the speaker's sorrow, somewhat alleviated by the sound of the lady's voice, and his confession of love. From the second stanza's first line, its diction is inconsistent in connotation, as it depicts the speaker crying a barrel-full of tears ("teres ful a tyne"). This homely phrase marks a shift from the earlier, refined word-choices of the first stanza, though subsequent lines in the stanza refer to the lyric speaker's courtesy, love, and penance (very much in keeping with the vocabulary common to medieval courtly love romances).

It is with the first line of the last stanza that it becomes clear that Chaucer is being ironic. He is intent on inverting a poem in praise of a lady's beauty to effectively mock the lyric speaker and the conventions of the poetic *blazon*. The image of a fish "walwed" in sauce is crude.[20] The speaker's comparison of himself to the Tristan of Arthurian

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[20] Among other possibilities, the vehicles of the metaphor – a pike and its sauce – could refer to the tenors of a man's penis and a woman's bodily fluids, which increase during sexual arousal. The reference to the "galauntyne" sauce may remind readers of Chaucer's description of the Cook, from the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, whose "mormal" (suppurating ulcer) is mentioned directly before the fact that the Cook makes a "blankmanger" (white sauce) with the best of them. Chaucer the satirist is not above crude comparisons, including sexual ones. Indeed, Chaucer uses much blunter sexual metaphors and references

romance is a gross exaggeration: as far as the reader knows, the speaker has only seen Rosemounde at a dance and heard her soprano voice in a way that filled his thoughts with joy and bliss; the reader has no reason to believe that he suffered for years in love with a noblewoman like Isolde. Finally, the description of how the speaker "burns always in amorous pleasure" is a generic reference to natural, sexual desire – or perhaps just plain old sinful lust. At this point, the speaker (and the reader with him) are far from contemplation of "beauty's shrine" and the "encircled world-map" with which the poem began.

Yet reading the beginning of the poem in light of its ending suggests that the "mappamounde" reference foreshadows the conclusion. The practice, among French and English nobility, of making, keeping, and considering medieval world-maps for political purposes – to educate their children about the extent of their kingdoms in the known world (and thus imply what else might be conquered)[21] and to visually represent their possession of those realms – has a parallel in the lyric speaker's perspective. He is sexually frustrated by Rosemounde, whose body he wants but does not have, like a nobleman might want territory he sees on a map, but does yet possess. The lyric speaker's initially high-minded desire is presented as a would-be lover's lament that turns to satiric complaint. The desire is revealed in the end to be an innocuous lust, one that the poet uses primarily to mock a poetic genre: it does not

in the Wife of Bath's Prologue than he does in "To Rosemounde." As Vasta has observed of "To Rosemounde," "Modern judgments universally find the ballade's language incompatible with its courtly intention; the poem speaks of weeping a tubful of tears and of wallowing in love like a boiled fish submerged in a thick sauce. For C. S. Lewis, who takes the poem as serious, this incompatibility is its failure; for Davies, Donaldson, Robbins, and Reiss, who take the poem as comic, the incompatibility is its success. In either case, whether expressed seriously or in a bantering mood, words and sentiments are mismatched ... No "gentil" sensibility, addressing matters of refined love, could write of weeping tears by the tubful or of wallowing in love like a pike in pickle-sauce" (Vasta, "To Rosemounde: Chaucer's "Gentil" Dramatic Monologue," 97).

[21] See discussions in Otter, Carruthers, and Birkholz, cited in footnotes 4, 5, and 6 (above). See also Rambo, cited in footnote 14 (above).

directly harm the lady, Rosemounde, "the rose of the world," and only frustrates the speaker.

Mapping Desire in Shakespeare's "Rape of Lucrece"

Sexual desire is presented quite differently in Shakespeare's "Rape of Lucrece" (1594), in which a man's lust is represented as violent and subject to the moral critique of the poet.[22] Shakespeare uses map and globe metaphors three times in the poem in relation to Lucrece's body: he compares her body to a "map of death" (l. 403) as Tarquin looks at her before he rapes her; he compares her breasts to "ivory globes circled with blue" (l. 407) in the next stanza; and then, after the assault, when she is telling her family what happened to her, Shakespeare speaks of how she turns away her "face, that map which deep impression bears / Of hard misfortune, carved in it with tears" (l. 1712-1713). The second instance is the most striking. In this poem, Tarquin's "contemplation" takes the political imagination of *mappaemundi* to an extreme, which is terrifying to the woman-like-a-map whom he contemplates: Lucrece.

Shakespeare based his tragic poem on a historical event. In 508 BCE, Sextus Tarquinus, the son of the Roman king, raped Lucretia, the wife of Collatinus, one of the king's aristocrats. Because of this dishonor, Lucretia committed suicide. When her body was paraded in the Roman Forum by the king's nephew, a revolt ensued, led by Lucius Junius Brutus. This resulted in the banishment of the royal family and the establishment of the Roman Republic. Shakespeare sums up this history in an "argument" (or

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[22] For a general introduction to this poem, especially as a type of performance, see George Wright, "Hearing Shakespeare's Dramatic Verse" in *A Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. David Scott Kastan (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 256-276. On the idea that Shakespeare performs a purposeful critique of the rape depicted in the poem, see Daniel Koketso, "Battering Ram, Ivory Wall: Phallic Symbols of Aggression in Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*," *Marang: Journal of Language and Literature* 26 (2015): 143-154. On the idea that Shakespeare's moral critique is intended to provoke sympathy in his readers, see Samuel Arkin, "'This map which deep impression bears': Lucrece and the Anatomy of Shakespeare's Sympathy," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 64:3 (2013): 349-371.

preface), one which follows the dedication of the poem to Henry Wriothesly, Earl of Southampton, and precedes the poem itself. [23]

In his preface, Shakespeare adds that Lucrece was renowned for her chastity, that her husband, Collatinus, boasted of her virtue to Tarquin, and that Tarquin, when he saw Lucrece's beauty for himself, became enflamed with lust. Although he was shown generous hospitality by Lucrece, and went home, Tarquin returned later the same night and "violently ravished her" ("Argument"). Shakespeare's statement in his preface foreshadows the much more detailed account of the rape that Shakespeare gives later in the poem. There, he depicts the Lucrece's breasts as two globes, and Tarquin as the "foul usurper" of Lucrece's husband.

> Her breasts, like ivory globes circled with blue,
> A pair of maiden worlds unconquered,
> Save of their lord no bearing yoke they knew,
> And him by oath they truly honoured.
> These worlds in Tarquin new ambition bred;
> Who, like a foul usurper, went about
> From this fair throne to heave the owner out. (ll. 407-13)

Shakespeare here, as elsewhere in the poem, makes it clear by his word-choice that Tarquin's act of rape is an act of ambition and the greatest of Christian sins, pride. It will violate the marriage covenant between Lucrece and Collatinus. At this moment in the poem, Tarquin's intended violence is about to break Lucrece's "oath" (l. 410) to chastely and faithfully honor her marriage-bed.

Shakespeare was certainly conversant with maps, globes, and the metaphoric use of geographical language current in his own culture.[24] (Even the name of the theater, "The

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[23] The story of the sexual assault of survives in multiple chronicles and histories. Shakespeare knew the accounts in Ovid's *Fasti* and Livy's history of Rome and drew on these for the composition of his poem. Not all details in these accounts are considered by modern historians to be accurate, but the rape of Lucretia and subsequent overthrow of the Roman monarchy in favor of a limited democracy are established facts.

Globe," wherein his company performed, supports this point.) His comparison of Lucrece's breasts to two "ivory globes circled with blue" (l. 407) further suggests that he was familiar with globes, but also might indicate that had seen a world-map like Petrus Plancius' "Orbis Terrarum," which was printed in one version in 1590 and in another version in 1594.[25] **(Figs. 2, 3)** Petrus Plancius was a Belgian cartographer and clergyman whose maps served as direct inspiration to explorers of the "new world," including Henry Hudson. Petrus Plancius was himself a founder of the Dutch East India Company.[26] Without rehearsing the well-known history of the violence perpetuated during the era of European exploration and colonization, it is nevertheless possible to see that Shakespeare understood that mapping worlds and conquering worlds were related ambitions – and he used that relationship in his sexual metaphor in the "Rape of Lucrece."[27]

Directly following the stanza in which the cartographical metaphors appear, Shakespeare deploys two more, thereby putting the reader-viewer in Tarquin's position

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[24] For discussion, see Rhonda Lemke Sanford, *Maps and Memory in Early Modern England: A Sense of Place* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), esp. chap. 1, "Maps and their Representation in Early Modern English Literature."

[25] Images of these maps are in the public domain and are widely available on the web. They can be found in Wikipedia and Wikimedia. See
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1590_Orbis_Terrarum_Plancius.jpg and
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1594_Orbis_Plancius_2,12_MB.jpg.

[26] For an overview of Petrus Plancius' life, see Steve Philips, "Petrus Plancius" in *The Complete Dictionary of Scientific Biography* 24 (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008), 110-111. For discussion of details in his *mappamundi*, see Carl Enkell, "The Representation of the North of Europe in the Worldmap of Petrus Plancius of 1592," *Imago Mundi* 8 (1951): 55-69.

[27] See John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), which provides an analysis of how Shakespeare understood the relationship between mapping "otherness" and the desire for / exercise of conquest, esp. as inherited from classical precursors, and how Shakespeare's understanding is evident in multiple works in his corpus, including *Titus Andronicus, Othello, The Merchant of Venice, Anthony and Cleopatra,* and *The Tempest.*
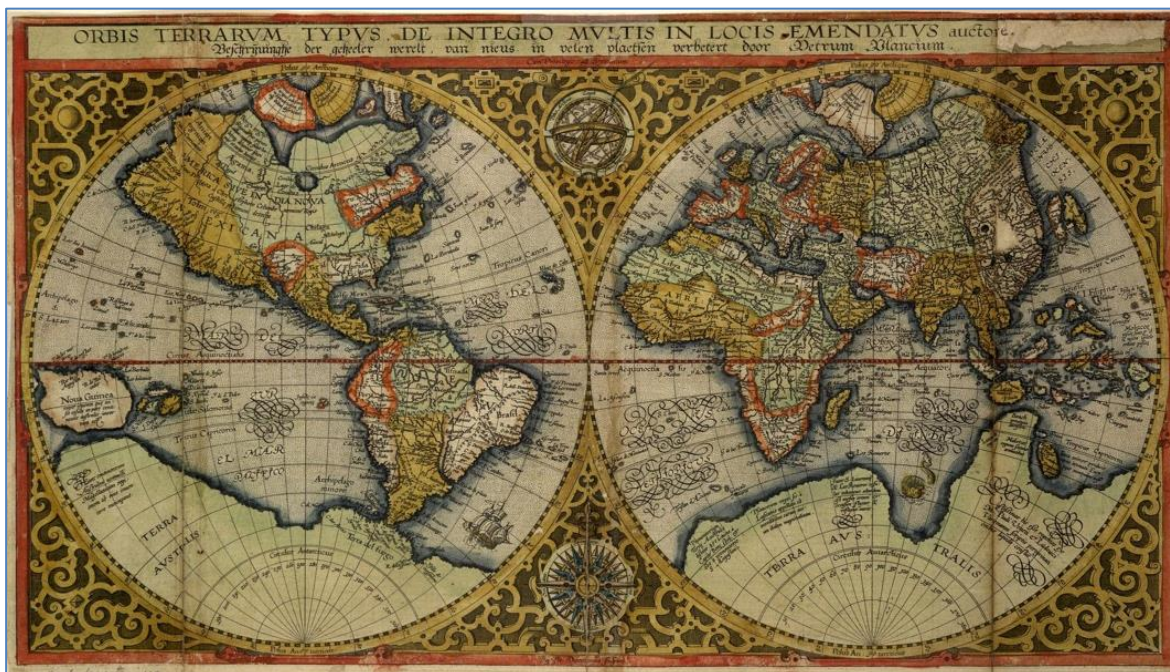
Figure 2 Petrus Plancius, *Orbis Terrarum* (1590). Photo: Wikipedia.

Figure 3 Petrus Plancius, *Orbis Terrarum* (1594). Photo: Wikipedida.

of imagining a *blazon* of Lucrece's beauty as she sleeps and, through precise diction, morally critiquing Tarquin's intentions:

> What could he see but mightily he noted?
> What did he note but strongly he desired?
> What he beheld, on that he firmly doted,
> And in his will his wilful eye he tired.
> With more than admiration he admired
> Her azure veins, her alabaster skin,
> Her coral lips, her snow-white dimpled chin.
>
> As the grim lion fawneth o'er his prey,
> Sharp hunger by the conquest satisfied,
> So o'er this sleeping soul doth Tarquin stay,
> His rage of lust by gazing qualified;
> Slack'd, not suppress'd; for standing by her side,
> His eye, which late this mutiny restrains,
> Unto a greater uproar tempts his veins. (ll. 414-27)

Tarquin's "willful eye" (l. 417) notes, desires, beholds, dotes on, and admires (etymologically, "looks to") Lucrece's body. This male gaze reduces Tarquin from a man to a beast, a lion over his prey, consumed by a "rage of lust" (l. 424). His eye "tempts his veins" (l. 427).

Tarquin stands over the world of Lucrece's body like a god, with a perspective only a divinity looking down from on high could have of a world, but he is not the Christian God in character or intent. He is so ambitious and prideful that he will exert his will over a woman who will resist him, but will be powerless to stop him.[28] Shakespeare

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[28] From the 1980s to the turn of the 21st century, contemporary feminist scholars have theorized the problem of treating women's bodies as territory for conquest. When literary and cultural scholarship in the 1980s specifically focused on race, gender, and class as paradigms for interpretation of the treatment of women's bodies, a landmark book was published that has continued to be influential: Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Women of Color Press, 1983). Related work was published in the 1990s, including Chilla Bulbeck's book, *Re-orienting Western Feminisms: Women's Diversity in a Postcolonial World* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), which challenged the hegemony of white, western feminist thought in her exploration of the life experiences of

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emphasizes the moral problem of a tyrant, Tarquin, regarding a woman's body, Lucrece's, as a world for conquest.

Mapping Desire in Donne's "A Valediction: Of Weeping"

John Donne's poem, "A Valediction: Of Weeping," is a fitting contrast to the lust and violence depicted in Shakespeare's "Rape of Lucrece." Donne's poem suggests that a man's ability to empathize with the world embodied in each one of a woman's tears can shift his spiritual orientation from a desire for possession and conquest to a loving desire for mutual strength and encouragement in a time of grief. The poem is addressed from lover to beloved at a moment of parting.[29]

> Let me pour forth
> My tears before thy face, whilst I stay here,
> For thy face coins them, and thy stamp they bear,
> And by this mintage they are something worth,
> For thus they be
> Pregnant of thee;
> Fruits of much grief they are, emblems of more,

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women of color, and Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohantys, ed., *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1997), which deals extensively with violence against women's bodies in the developing world. At the turn of the century, new work by feminist scholars stressed the importance of women's voices and the relationship between feminist and postcolonial theory, which together critique patriarchal and colonial control of women's bodies: see Chandra Mohanty *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Duke University Press, 2003); Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Indiana University Press, 2009), and renowned scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (Columbia University Press, 2010).

[29] Scholars have debated whether readers should interpret this poem as one that John Donne wrote for his wife, Ann More. The three uses of the word "more" in the poem may pun on Ann's maiden name, and in the context of the subject (love and sorrow at a time of parting), it seems likely that Donne is referring to his own beloved, his wife, Ann. Helen Gardner expresses this view in her edition of *Songs and Sonnets* (Oxford, 1965), 188. For the opposite view, see David Novarr, "'Amor Vincit Omnia': Donne and the Limits of Ambiguity," *Modern Language Review* 82:2 (1987): 286-292, esp. 287-288. For the view that Donne is reacting against the conventions of the Petrarchan love poetry in this poem, see Barbara Estrin, "Donne's Injured "I": Defections from Petrarchan and Spenserian Poetics," *Philological Quarterly* 66 (1987): 175-193.

When a tear falls, that thou falls which it bore,
So thou and I are nothing then, when on a diverse shore.

On a round ball
A workman that hath copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,
And quickly make that, which was nothing, all;
So doth each tear
Which thee doth wear,
A globe, yea world, by that impression grow,
Till thy tears mix'd with mine do overflow
This world; by waters sent from thee, my heaven dissolved so.

O more than moon,
Draw not up seas to drown me in thy sphere,
Weep me not dead, in thine arms, but forbear
To teach the sea what it may do too soon;
Let not the wind
Example find,
To do me more harm than it purposeth;
Since thou and I sigh one another's breath,
Whoe'er sighs most is cruellest, and hastes the other's death.

As H.J.C. Grierson observes, "The entire poem is constructed around the image of a tear."[30] In the opening stanza, the tear is a coin, a womb, a medallion and an ocean. In the second stanza, each tear is an entire world, a globe on which a mapmaker depicts the world. In the third stanza, those tears are depicted as being sourced in the inner seas of the beloved, who is "more than moon" (l. 19) in a higher "sphere" (l. 20), and thus a microcosm representing the macrocosm of the whole universe.

In what remains one of the best studies on the contexts for interpreting Donne's "A Valediction: Of Weeping," G.R. Wilson writes that the tear, which has:

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[30] H.J.C. Grierson, ed. *The Poems of John Donne* (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), 38. This edition was published online in 2012:
 http://www.oxfordscholarlyeditions.com/view/10.1093/actrade/9780199692378.book.1/actrade-9780199692378-book-1.

value only because it is *his* tear bearing *her* reflection, thus signifying the unity achieved by their love, undergoes a series of transmutations that give it an ever-increasing scope and magnitude. The final effect of this hierarchical progression is to establish the love embodied in the tear is the most important thing in the universe.[31]

The great worth of the tear is based on empathy, expressed by the lover for his beloved in the mutual distress over their separation. The tear, as Wilson further observes, begins as a physical reality that rises as the poem progresses to "Platonic eminence" achieved through the relation of "microcosm to macrocosm."[32]

Of course, both the man and the woman are weeping in this poem. The opening stanza begins with the lover's tears, provoked by the beloved's face and bearing her image, as Wilson notes. But in the second stanza, the beloved is also weeping: "each tear / which thee doth wear" (ll. 14-15). Both lover and beloved are crying so much, in such close proximity to one another, that the lover says: "thy tears mix'd with mine do overflow / this world" (ll. 17-18). In the third stanza, the lover admonishes his beloved not to drown him in her tears – as if Noah's flood were possible again merely from the excess of her inner seas of grief – and he compares her sighs to harsh winds, saying whichever of them sighs most is the "cruelest" (l. 27), hastening the other's death like a storm on the sea. So the purpose of the poem, in its conclusion, is revealed: to comfort the beloved in her distress, by the lover's confession that he shares the same distress, and to help them both stop weeping.

This purpose is alluded to in the poem's title, "A Valediction." In English, a "valediction" is a leaving-taking or a bidding farewell. But etymologically, the English meaning is contingent on the Latin root words: *vale* ("be well") and *dicere* ("to speak or

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[31] G.R. Wilson, "The Interplay of Perception and Reflection: Mirror Imagery in Donne's Poetry," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,* 9:1 (1969), 107-121, esp. 120.

[32] Wilson, "Interplay," 120. In structure, Donne's poem is an inverse of Chaucer's "To Rosemounde": Chaucer's poem begins high and ends low; Donne's begins low and ascends to the heights of contemplation.

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to say"). In saying farewell, the lover is also speaking in hopes that all will be well with his beloved.

It is striking, in the overall development of the imagery and meaning of the poem, that Donne uses "a round ball" (l. 10), a globe on which a mapmaker has depicted the world, to picture forth the beloved's tear. His focus on Europe, Africa, and Asia – the tripartite division of the T-O maps found in Isidore's *Etymologies* – is chronologically at odds with developments in world-map making of Donne's day, for Renaissance maps frequently showed the "New World." Yet his focus is not at odds with an older, medieval Christian contemplative tradition in which *mappaemundi* were icons meant to intimate a divine perspective, as if the viewer looked at the world from God's perspective and loved the world ever more deeply, with a willingness to enter into the sufferings of the world and a desire to save the world from distress.[33]

Conclusions

Chaucer's "To Rosemounde" co-opts the idea of contemplating the world map for metaphoric use in the contemplation of a woman, a woman for whom the poem's lyric speaker feels a frustrated desire. The poem sexualizes map viewing and infuses it with a possessive desire that corresponds to other developments in Chaucer's world. The nature of the poet's frustrated desire takes on greater implications specifically when considered alongside maps included in the Latin *Polychronicon*, a fourteenth-century universal history of the world compiled by Ranulf Higden. As noted earlier, extant

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[33] As Wilson observes, "The intimately reciprocal reflections of the lovers in each other's eyes [tears] are, for example, a spiritual representation of unity far transcending the physical union that binds them together. Those reflections are, at the same time, but the visible manifestation of a far greater spiritual truth: the ideal love that exists in the celestial spheres. The eye perceives fact; the eye reflects truth; the mind weighs both … 'Donne's imagination seems obsessed with the problem of unity; the sense in which the lovers become one – the sense in which the soul is united with God. Frequently as we have seen, one type of union becomes a metaphor for the other.'" Wilson, "Interplay," 120, with a quotation from Cleanth Brooks, *The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1947), 18.

manuscripts of the *Polychronicon* have three different types of pictorial maps paired with a prose description of the geography of the known world: the explicit imperialist impulses transmitted in the prose description of Book I of the *Polychronicon*, and implicit in the pictorial world-maps, contextualize and problematize Chaucer's metaphoric viewing woman-as-map. The performance of meaning in the space of desire between the viewer and the viewed object presages rape, of the world and of woman, that occurs later in English Renaissance history and literature.

The violent possibilities latent in late-medieval English writing are actualized in the early modern period, particularly in Shakespeare's poem "Rape of Lucrece." This is a poem about a rape in which the body, breasts, and face of a woman, Lucrece – being viewed first by the soldier-conqueror Tarquin and later by men in her household (including her husband) – are made analogous to maps and globes. The imperialist impulse of ancient Rome is morally critiqued, as Shakespeare makes clear Tarquin's guilt and Lucrece's innocent vulnerability, and this clearly relates to early modern English imperialism.

In the poem, Tarquin's rape of Lucrece becomes a metaphor for having no right to exercise free will under a tyrannous government. Despite this, Lucretia's choices – to resist, to demand that her family take revenge, and finally, to take her own life – precipitate the reality of democracy. That Lucrece's dead body is used as propaganda to foment the rebellion that leads to the democratic state in Rome implies that women will continue to be acted upon in this new system of government, rather than given agency within it – even if their map-like bodies prophetically reveal the future.

The sexualization of map gazing takes on a different character in John Donne's "A Valediction: Of Weeping." In this poem, a man is about to go on a journey, as if he is a sailor from England embarking on a voyage of discovery to the New World, and he is bidding farewell to the woman he loves before he goes. In the second stanza, each of her falling tears is compared to a *mappaemundi*, which the speaker of the poem contemplates

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with love, longing, and empathy. The roundness of the tears corresponds to the roundness of globes, certainly, but the focus on the geography of the old world recalls the contemplative tradition that treated T-O *mappaemundi* as complex images that encouraged the viewer's spiritual progress toward the divine. Indeed, the woman's sorrow, the man's empathy, and the suffering they share suggest the possibility of redemption: love makes grief bearable, and grief will come to an end.

The spiritual orientation of the lover is motivated by a desire to love and comfort the beloved, not a desire to possess and control her. In "A Valediction: Of Weeping," Donne returns to the early medieval contemplative practice fostered by verbal and visual *mappaemundi*. In this return, Donne uses his metaphor to suggest that the lyric speaker's contemplation of the beloved is like that of God lovingly watching over his creation. As a poet, Donne imagines love at a time of parting as if from a divine perspective, seeing the whole world embodied in each tear: *imitatio Creatoris* / in imitation of the Creator. In the process of relating his poem, his imagination inspires his reader-viewers to see things from a similar perspective, one intended to effect their spiritual and emotional transformation.[34] ❧

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[34] On the idea that Donne desires to develop transformative empathy in his reader, see Katrin Ettenhuber, "'Comparisons are Odious'?: Revising the Metaphysical Conceit in Donne," *The Review of English Studies* 62 (2011): 393-413, who writes of the images of the compass in Donne's "A Valediction: Of Mourning" and the tear in "A Valediction: Of Weeping": "In the valedictions, by contrast, the far-fetched comparisons of the compass and the tear encourage the reader's active commitment – the sympathetic extension of the mind to the remote logical places which sustain the workings of the conceit, and of the relationship it seeks to solidify and support … It was by no means unusual for Donne to solicit such commitments and shows of faith from his readers" (410-411). She suggests earlier in her essay that, for Donne, "a relationship under threat can be 'strengthened' precisely through the act of working through obscurity; fidelity and commitment can be re-affirmed and emotional connections re-imagined as part of a journey across the rhetorical map – by a reader willing to go the distance with a remote catachresis" (399).