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## **Difference, Cognition, and Causality: Maurice Scève's *Délie* and Charles de Bovelles's *Ars Oppositorum***

Both Maurice Scève's *Délie* (1544) and Charles de Bovelles's *Ars Oppositorum* (1511), explore various kinds of difference, as well as the relationship between difference, identity and similarity. The *Ars Oppositorum* is a work of prose philosophy in Latin which offers a very unusual version of the Aristotelian square of opposites: it is a discussion of how opposites can be used to produce knowledge.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, the *Délie* is a collection of love lyric influenced by Petrarchism. Despite these differences of genre, as I have shown elsewhere, the *Délie* and the *Ars* share an interest in the function of various kinds of difference both within and between pairs of opposite terms; in particular, both texts undermine antithetical difference by confusing it with other kinds of difference, thus

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<sup>1</sup> On the *Ars Oppositorum*, see Maurice de Gandillac, 'L'Art bovilien des opposés', in *Charles de Bovelles en son cinquième centenaire 1479-1979: Actes du colloque international tenu à Noyon les 14-15-16 septembre 1979*, ed. by Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: Guy Trédaniel, Éditions de la Maisnie, 1982), pp. 157-70; Joseph M. Victor, *Charles de Bovelles 1479-1553: An Intellectual Biography* (Geneva: Droz, 1978), pp. 73-87; and Jean-Claude Margolin, 'Sur L'Art des opposés de Bovelles', in *Logique et Littérature à la Renaissance: Actes du Colloque de la Baume-les-Aix, Université de Provence, 16-18 septembre 1991*, eds Marie-Luce Demonay-Launay and André Tournon (Paris: Champion, 1994), pp. 5-16.

challenging the categorisation of differences which was so central to Aristotelian logic.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, I will argue in this essay that both texts are also interested in the relation of ‘opposition’ (or difference) to causality and to cognition, to the natural and to the human. Both writers explore the role of the human subject in establishing difference, and suggest that human cognition may be very powerful, so that it even seems to usurp the function of natural causality. However, ultimately Scève and Bovelles diverge in their assessment of the *value* of difference, both in general and for the human subject in particular. I shall focus in this essay upon Scève’s ‘jealous sun’ dizains in which, I have argued elsewhere, the beloved lady alters relations of difference within the cosmos.<sup>3</sup>

My aim in reading a poetic text alongside a theoretical one is not to construct a univocal account of Renaissance conceptions of difference, or to

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<sup>2</sup> See my article ‘Opposites and Identities: Maurice Scève’s *Délie* and Charles de Bovelles’s *Ars Oppositorum*’. On antiperistasis in Scève and Bovelles, see Stephen Murphy, ‘Bovelles. Scève. Bruno. *Antiperistasis*’, *Allegorica* 14 (1993), pp. 39-52. Other discussions of Scève in the context of Bovelles’s thought are Jacqueline Risset, *L’Anagramme du désir: Sur la Délie de Maurice Scève* (Paris, Fourbis, 1995), pp. 91-100; Doranne Fenoaltea, “*Si haulte Architecture*”: *The Design of Scève’s Délie* (Kentucky: French Forum, 1982), pp. 84-92.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Opposites and Identities’.

consider philosophy as a source for poetry;<sup>4</sup> instead, I will locate not only the similarities but also the divergences between the *Délie* and the *Ars*. Indeed the generic differences between the two texts mean that they may have provided contrasting conceptual possibilities: thus they illuminate different possible ways of thinking about opposition and sameness in early sixteenth-century France. Some differences arise from the simple fact that, while love lyric explores particular terms which it often places in opposition to one another, the *Ars Oppositorum* sets out to analyse the principle of opposition. More specifically for the concerns of this essay, Bovelles, in common with much sixteenth-century prose philosophy, tends to refer to ‘man’ – or the human *intellectus* (understanding / perception) – in the abstract singular; by contrast, love lyric depicts both the subjective experience of a *ie* and also the desired *tu* or *elle*; as I will discuss, this divergence between the *Ars* and the *Délie* is central to their contrasting perceptions of difference in the human subject.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf Hans Staub’s reading of the *Délie* in the context of the thought of Nicholas of Cusa, an important influence upon Bovelles: *Le Curieux Désir: Scève et Peletier du Mans, poètes de la connaissance* (Geneva: Droz, 1967).

## i) Cognition and Causality: The *Intellectus* And Nature In The *Ars Oppositorum*

Both Scève and Bovelles are deeply interested in the role of the human in relation to opposition. Two key questions emerge in relation to this. Firstly, what role does human perception or understanding play in opposition? That is, what effects does the human gaze or the human mind exert upon opposition? And, secondly, how are human subjects affected by opposition? In other words, are human beings subject to opposition?

Bovelles states in his first chapter that oppositions can stem either from nature or reason: his first subheading states (using a spatial image typical of Bovelles's writing) that 'we call opposites things placed facing each other, turned towards one another, separated by the distance of *either a natural or a rational line*'.<sup>5</sup> Opposites include, for Bovelles, all things placed in relation to one another 'either by nature or by understanding/perception (the *intellectus*)' (p. 36). Oppositions of substance (*substantia*) and / or the thing (*res*) stem from nature, whereas oppositions of

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<sup>5</sup> 'Opposita dicuntur contra se posita, in alterutrum conversa, *interstite aut naturali aut rationali dyametro distantia*': ed. by Pierre Magnard, (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1984), p. 36. I refer throughout to Magnard's edition; translations into English are my own, although I have consulted Magnard's French translation. All italics are my own.

reasoning (*ratio*) stem from the *intellectus*.<sup>6</sup> Bovelles's first chapter emphasises at some length that the *intellectus* cannot alter the nature or substance of things – it cannot divide them or put them together; the *intellectus* cannot 'create' or 'engender' anything. Instead the human *intellectus* adds *rationes* ('reasonings') to things, producing conceptions which stem from the mind rather than simply from nature.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the process of human reasoning embedded in Bovelles's square of opposites – while described as creative<sup>8</sup> – seems to be one of *cognition* rather than genuine *creation*.

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<sup>6</sup> Bovelles also discusses the *intellectus* in the *Liber de Intellectu* and the *De Sapiente* in particular (both published together with the *Ars* in 1511). I restrict myself here to the *Ars Oppositorum*, where the *intellectus* is discussed in its relation to opposition.

<sup>7</sup> 'For the *intellectus* cannot change the nature or substance of things, nor can it divide them or put them together ... the *intellectus* creates nothing and engenders nothing ... The *intellectus* has, however, although sterile and infertile as far as substance is concerned, some force and fertility of its own, by which it can be called creator of *rationes* (reasonings); it adds, you see, to the things themselves its own *rationes*, which it derives, contains and grasps. The conception which is in the human *intellectus* is the fruit and offspring of the human *intellectus* and the mind's own work, not the work of nature alone': 'Nam intellectus rerum naturam et substantiam immutare non potest, neque enim illas dividit aut componit ... intellectus ... nil creat gignitque nichil ... Habet tamen intellectus licet substantia sterilis atque infecundus propriam aliquam vim et fecunditatem, qua rationum opifex dicitur; proprias quippe rebus ipsis addit rationes, illas haurit, continet et complectitur. Is enim conceptus qui humano inest intellectui fecunditas est et partus humani intellectus ac peculiare mentis opus, non opus simplicis nature' (pp. 44-6).

<sup>8</sup> It produces 'a productive development of discourse': 'fecunda quedam orationis propagatio' (p. 32).

However, later in the *Ars* (especially in chapters 4 and 7), Bovelles suggests that opposites are *not* natural. Although Bovelles stated in the first chapter that opposites can be ‘rational’ *or* natural, in the fourth chapter he says that in nature all things are in relations of identity to themselves rather than relations of opposition to other things; indeed the fourth chapter is entitled ‘That all things have been made by nature in identity, and none in opposition’.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Bovelles tends to write as if the production of oppositions might even *affect* nature. Whereas things in nature are ‘in their own place’ and never move from it, relations of opposition force things into places which are not their own (like earth into the place of fire and vice versa), and put different things into the same place (pp. 58-60).

Chapter 7 aligns opposition with the *intellectus* by contradistinction to nature: all oppositions result from the *intellectus* rather than from nature, and ‘the intellect is the opposition of the entirety of nature’.<sup>10</sup> The *intellectus* is presented as a domain in which all things are opposed, by contrast with the

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<sup>9</sup> ‘Quod omnia a natura in identitate sint facta, in oppositione nulla’ (p. 58).

<sup>10</sup> ‘Si a natura nulla est oppositio, superest ut omnis oppositio sit ab intellectu’ (heading of first subsection, p. 80); ‘intellectus est totius nature oppositio, natura vero omnium identitas’ (heading of second subsection, p. 80).

domain of nature in which all things are separated and identical.<sup>11</sup> The *intellectus* is a ‘judge’ (*iudex*) of all things and of their oppositions and differences. Moreover, the domains of the *intellectus* and nature are not entirely independent. The judging by the *intellectus* is *necessary* to nature.<sup>12</sup> The *intellectus* is represented as a sun (p. 88) or a light which illuminates nature (p. 84);<sup>13</sup> without this ‘light’, nature would be in a state of ‘chaos’, ‘confusion’ and ‘mixity’ (p. 84).<sup>14</sup> The introduction by the *intellectus* of opposition thus seems to *affect* nature.

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<sup>11</sup> See in particular the subsection heading ‘Omnia in mundo sunt separate et eadem, coniuncta vero sunt, et opposita in intellectu’ (p. 82)

<sup>12</sup> See also Bovelles’s *De Sapiente*, as well as Pierre Magnard’s ‘L’Idéal du sage dans le *De Sapiente* de Charles de Bovelles’, in *Charles de Bovelles en son cinquième centenaire 1479-1979: Actes du colloque international tenu à Noyon les 14-15-16 septembre 1979*, ed. by Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: Guy Trédaniel, Éditions de la Maisnie, 1982), pp. 101-8.

<sup>13</sup> On solar imagery in Bovelles’s *De Sapiente*, see Cesare Vasoli, ‘Thèmes solaires du *De Sapiente*’, in *Charles de Bovelles en son cinquième centenaire 1479-1979: Actes du colloque international tenu à Noyon les 14-15-16 septembre 1979*, ed. by Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: Guy Trédaniel, Éditions de la Maisnie, 1982), pp. 109-28.

<sup>14</sup> Bovelles does not explain clearly how this depiction of nature as confusion fits with his representation of *opposition* as a *mixing* of things which is contrasted with the *separation* or *non-mixing* of things in *nature*: see in particular, pp. 80-1. Bovelles’s spatial metaphors are often deeply complex. The notion of a light dividing Chaos recalls God but Bovelles has earlier made it clear that he does not mean the divine *intellectus*, which in any case ‘is nature itself’ (p. 45).



Furthermore, although Bovelles repeatedly says that opposition is impossible in nature and exists only in the *intellectus*, the *intellectus*'s opposition of things is repeatedly presented as if it had a strong and violent effect upon nature. Both chapters 4 and 7 emphasise that opposition is a violence – or a force (*vis*) – inflicted upon things, and that it acts against nature (pp. 58-60, 80-2). The terms *violentum / violenta* and *contra naturam / nature contraria* are repeated. Nature does not permit opposition, and does not permit earth and fire to swap places, and yet in some sense the *intellectus* does bring things into places other than their natural ones, as if it could reorder space and the cosmic hierarchy: ‘with just as much rest and peace as fire remains high, with this much immobility and peace earth is at rest immobile below. And with as much quarrel and difficulty fire is maintained below, as with force and discord the earth is at rest above. Identity, therefore, and the peace of both elements, is that fire be high and earth be low. On the other hand, the quarrel and discord of both is that fire be placed and positioned below and earth above.’<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> ‘quanta quiete et pace ignis sursum immobilis perseverat, tanta immobilitate et pace terra deorsum quiescit immobilis. Et quanta lite atque difficultate ignis continetur in immo, tanta vi et discordia terra quiescit in summo. Identitas igitur est et utriusque pax elementi: ignem esse in summon et terram in immo. Utriusque vero lis et discordia ignem in immo et terram in summo sisti et collocari’ (p. 58).

There is a strong sense of the power exerted by the human *intellectus* upon the world: Bovelles tends to write as if cognition really could affect nature, as if cognition could almost be causality. Perhaps one might even read his emphasis that the *intellectus* ‘creates nothing and engenders nothing’ as betraying doubts concerning the absolute separation of cognition and causality.<sup>16</sup> There is a rather uncertain relation between cognition and change, between the *intellectus* and nature; there is a sense that cognition and creativity might overlap in function.

## **ii) Cognition And Causality: The Lady’s Gaze And The *Je* In The *Délie***

Bovelles presents human understanding or perception (the *intellectus*) as a light which violently introduces difference into the world, which puts things into unnatural places and different things into the same place, and which reverses the cosmic hierarchy. This provides some startling comparisons and contrasts with Scève’s ‘jealous sun’ dizains. I have argued in a previous article that Scève represents his lady as a bright light who, through her

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<sup>16</sup> In the second ‘circle’ of Le Fèvre de La Boderie’s *Encyclie*, the teacher-Muse corrects the *secrétaire*’s mistake in confusing cognition and natural change, and lists the differences between them.

brightness, first, introduces difference into the sun, making it different from itself, and, secondly, alters the relations of difference between the day and night, so that both seem to co-exist in the same place, or to occupy the place of the other.<sup>17</sup> Importantly for my comparison with Bovelles's *intellectus*-light, it is the lady's status as light which brings about this introduction and modification of difference, and which thus alters nature. Indeed, although the 'jealous sun' topos and related images are common in Petrarch's poetry and in sixteenth-century French love lyric, the *Délie* places a particular emphasis upon *light* in this context, whereas, for example, Du Bellay – in his *Olive*, published five years after the *Délie* – evokes the *heat* of the sun and its benefits for nature.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, the light of the lady can also be thought of as a site of perception or cognition. It may be her eyes which are suns: they are 'deux Soleils' (D269).<sup>19</sup> Indeed there is a strong sense of similarity between the eye and the sun both within the *Délie* and in other contemporary texts. It was

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<sup>17</sup> 'Opposites and Identities'.

<sup>18</sup> 'J'ay veu, Amour, (et tes beaulx traictz dorez / M'en soient tesmoings,) suyvant ma souveraine, / Naistre les fleurs de l'infertile arene / Apres ses pas dignes d'estre adorez: / Phebus honteux ses cheveux honorez / Cacher, alors que les vents par la plaine / Eparpilloient de leur souëfve halaine / Ceulx là qui sont de fin or colorez': *L'Olive*, ed. E. Caldarini (Geneva: Droz, 1974); first published in 1549, s. XVII.

<sup>19</sup> Throughout this essay I cite Gérard Defaux's edition of the *Délie* (Geneva: Droz, 2004).

commonplace to refer to the sun as an eye, and also to the eye as a light; thus Scève refers to the sun as the ‘Œil du monde’ (D303) and to the eye as a ‘lumiere’ (D7, D13). The eye was widely believed to cast light during the process of vision.<sup>20</sup> In Leone Ebreo’s *Dialoghi d’amore*, the ‘grand bréviaire du platonisme lyonnais’ and an important intertext for the *Délie*,<sup>21</sup> Philon explains at length that both the eye and the sun both illuminate and see (as do the human intellect and the divine intellect):

Comme l’entendement humain est comparé à l’intellect divin, pource que l’un et l’autre void et illumine, et comme l’œil est comparé au Soleil, à voir et illuminer egalement, et aussi comme l’œil se compare à l’entendement humain en deux choses (asavoir, illuminer et voir): aussi le Soleil, pource qu’il void et illumine les choses, ressemble le divin intellect.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1976).

<sup>21</sup> Verdun-L. Saulnier, *Maurice Scève (ca. 1500-1560)* (Geneva / Paris: Slatkine, 1981), first published in 1948-9, vol. I, pp. 209, 249; T. Anthony Perry, *Erotic Spirituality: The Integrative Tradition from Leone Ebreo to John Donne* (University, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1980), pp. 35-52; Kathryn Banks, ‘The Cosmic, the Human, and the Divine: The Role of Poetic Images in Guillaume de Saluste Du Bartas’s *Sepmaine* and Maurice Scève’s *Délie*’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2005), pp. 108-68.

<sup>22</sup> *Dialogues d’Amour*, ed. by T. Anthony Perry, transl. by Pontus de Tyard (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1974); translation first published in 1551, p. 168.

Similarly, for the French philosophical poet Isaac Habert, the process of light being cast by the eye was sufficiently similar to that of light being cast by the sun to allow examples from one process to account for something about the other: to explain why one sometimes perceives three suns or moons, Habert says that the sun is reflected in a wet cloud because its rays are sent back to it just as are the rays from our eyes when we look at a river or mirror.<sup>23</sup> Bovelles himself develops a lengthy analogy between the celestial bodies and the human faculties, in which the sun – an ‘eye’ – corresponds to man or to human reason.<sup>24</sup> Thus one could argue that in the *Délie* the powerful lady – who introduces difference to the world – is not only a light but also a gaze; thus Scève’s description of his lady-light recalls Bovelles’s description of the perception of the *intellectus* more generally.

However, whereas Bovelles refers to *the* human *intellectus*, in the *Délie* there are of course *two* human loci (if indeed ‘human’ is an accurate description of the cosmic and divinised lady-light). Moreover, the human gaze of the *je* is much less empowered than that of the lady. Like the sun,<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Les Trois Livres des meteores* (Paris: J. Richier, 1585), ff. 19v-20r.

<sup>24</sup> Vasoli, ‘Thèmes solaires’, p. 114-6.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Opposites and Identities’.

the *je* is subjected to darkness by the lady.<sup>26</sup> In addition, his perception or understanding is frequently violated precisely by her more powerful gaze. The lady undermines his gaze: ‘Les yeulx, desquelz la clarté tant me nuyt, / Qu’elle esblouyt ma veue entierement’ (D386); ‘Par ton regard ... / Tu m’esblouis ... la veue (D115). She obscures not only his gaze but also his cognition in the form of *pensée*, *sens*, and *congnoissance*:<sup>27</sup>

Ce bas Soleil, qui au plus hault fait honte,  
 Nous a daingné de sa rare lumiere,  
 Quand sa blancheur, qui l’yvoire surmonte,  
 A esclercy le brouillas de Fourviere:  
 Et s’arrestant l’une, et l’aultre riviere,  
 Si grand’ clarté s’est icy demonstrée,  
 Que quand mes yeulx l’ont soubdain rencontrée,  
 Ilz m’ont perdu au bien, qui seul me nuict.  
 Car son cler iour serenant la Contrée,  
 En ma pensée a mys l’obscurc nuit (D128)

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<sup>26</sup> Other contemporary poets also imply that the *je* and the sun are similarly challenged by their encounter with the lady, but often suggest that the *je* survives his encounter with the lady where the sun failed to do so: see, for example, sonnet IX of Jacques Peletier Du Mans’s *Amour des Amours*, ed. by Jean-Charles Monferran (Paris: Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1996), pp. 29-30; sonnet XI of the *Premier Livre des Sonnets pour Hélène*, in Ronsard’s *Amours*, ed. by Françoise Joukovsky (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 286.

<sup>27</sup> See also D7, D51, D92, D269, D354

Au recevoir l'aigu de tes esclairs

Tu m'*offuscas et sens, et congnoissance* (D80)

Thus, while one 'human' light or gaze exerts an effect upon nature, another site of human perception – the *je* – has his light or gaze undermined by the same gaze which affects the natural world.<sup>28</sup>

### iii) Difference And The Human Subject In The *Délie*

Furthermore, the *je* also suffers a sort of 'confusion' or 'mixing' or 'division'. Images of melting and burning are familiar from other Petrarchist poetry but Scève is often particularly insistent upon developing these images of self-disintegration. For example, in D373, his eye dissolves and melts into tears, which become a river which freezes him and in so doing – somewhat

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<sup>28</sup> Other implications of this are discussed in my 'The Cosmic, the Human, and the Divine: The Role of Poetic Images in Guillaume de Saluste Du Bartas's *Sepmaine* and Maurice Scève's *Délie*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2005), Part II, and my book under preparation, *Cosmos and Image in the French Renaissance*.

paradoxically – ‘me confond’, that is to say, ‘mixes’ and metamorphoses him.<sup>29</sup>

A son aspect mon œil reveremment  
 S’incline bas, tant le Cœur la revere,  
 Et l’ayme, et craint trop perseveramment  
 En sa rigueur benignement severe.  
 Car en l’ardeur si fort il persevere,  
 Qu’il se dissout, et tout en pleurs se fond,  
 Pleurs restagnantz en un grand lac profound,  
 Dont descent puis ce ruisseau argentin,  
 Qui me congele, et ainsi *me confond*  
 Tout transformé en sel Agringentin (D373)

His eye also ‘dissolves’ in D200, and, in D13, his body is reduced to cinders which the wind threatens to scatter. In several dizains, the lady-sun ‘melts’ the *je*:

Comme gelée au monter du Soleil,  
 Mon ame sens, qui toute se distille  
 Au rencontrer le rayant de son œil (D290)

Je me deffis à si belle rencontre,  
 Comme rouse au lever du Soleil (D223)

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<sup>29</sup> Gérard Defaux explains that this verb comes from the Latin *confundo*. He provides the following possible meanings for it: *mêler*, *brouiller*, *render méconnaissable*, *métamorphoser* (vol. II, p. 407).



Comme neige au Soleil, je me fondz (D118)

Thus, in the *Délie*, the human subject is subjected by the lady-sun to a sort of fragmentation or *division* of the self, and a sort of *mixing* of himself. This recalls some of the terms used to describe the effects of the *intellectus*-sun upon nature in Bovelles's *Ars*. Opposition brings about a *divisio* in nature. In addition, although paradoxically nature is presented in chapter 7 as mixed unless illuminated by the *intellectus*, elsewhere we are told that nature can remain 'unmixed' only because it is involved in identity rather than opposition (which, as we have seen, is produced by the *intellectus*).<sup>30</sup> In other words, the opposition introduced by the *intellectus*-light brings with it both mixing and division. Thus in both the *Délie* and the *Ars*, a human light (the lady or the *intellectus*) inflict not only opposition but also, by the same token, mixing and division. However, in the *Ars Oppositorum*, terms like 'mixing' and 'division' apply to what occurs in some sense to *nature*: they are associated with the discussions of cosmic things being in their own place or an unnatural place. By contrast, in the *Délie*, although the sun is subjected to complex relations of difference, terms suggesting division and mixing refer to the effects of a perception or gaze not so much upon nature as upon

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<sup>30</sup> Pp. 66, 76. See n. 13.

the poetic subject. Furthermore, division and mixing describe the state of the poetic subject *within* himself rather than in his relations to other terms.

#### **iv) Difference in the *Ars Oppositorum*: Violence, the Trinity, and the Human Subject**

The ‘division’ and ‘mixing’ of the *je* may have its positive aspects (for example, ‘si belle rencontre’, D223 quoted above), but it is often presented in quite anguished terms. Like the sun, the *je* has his light darkened, and is subjected to difference. Furthermore, while the lady’s infliction of difference may make the sun ‘jealous’, she has a particularly negative impact upon the human subject, who melts and is burnt and so on. By contrast, in the *Ars Oppositorum* the human subject has a more privileged experience of difference. The human soul does experience a sort of separation from itself but this is expressed in very positive terms. Bovelles writes that the substance of the human soul – in common with divine and angelic substances alone – can experience true wisdom or *sapientia*.<sup>31</sup> This *sapientia* involves separation (*discretio*) of the human soul from itself but this is thought of as multiplication or development (*propagatio*), which contrasts with Scève’s trickling or blowing away. This process in the *Ars* is

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<sup>31</sup> pp. 46-8. See also *De Sapiente* and ‘L’Idéal du sage’.

undeniably positive: not only is it something shared with the divine but it also involves gaining knowledge of the self; by contrast, as we have seen, the *je* in the *Délie* laments the undermining of his gaze or understanding, in other words, of his ability to know. Furthermore, although the human *intellectus* is in some sense divided, Bovelles states that it is the only sublunary ‘thing’ which is indivisible and unitary: ‘it is evident ... that under the heavens only the human *intellectus* is indivisible, truly one and immortal.’<sup>32</sup> The *intellectus* as described by Bovelles thus has a radically different experience of selfhood and knowledge from that of the human subject in the *Délie*.

Fernand Hallyn, in his discussion of Bovelles’s *De Sapiente (On the Wise Man)* – which was published with the *Ars* in 1511 and which further explores Bovelles’s notion of human *sapientia* –, suggests that the multiplication of Bovelles’s human subject points to a gap inherent in representation and resemblance, that is, to the gap of difference, which, according to Hallyn, the metaphysics, the aesthetics, and the art of Bovelles’s period were all striving to suppress.<sup>33</sup> Hallyn’s analysis makes

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<sup>32</sup> ‘Manifestum est ... sub celis solus humanus intellectus esse impartibilis vere unus atque immortalis’ (p. 82).

<sup>33</sup> ‘Le Microcosme ou l’incomplétude de la représentation’, in *Romanica Gandensia* XVII (1980), pp. 183-92.

use of Freud, and is informed by modern theories of subjectivity. Indeed, for the modern reader familiar with psychoanalysis, it may be easier to accept Hallyn's notion of representation than Bovelles's alignment of self-knowledge with self-unity: in Lacan's famous mirror-stage, it is by perceiving oneself that one becomes subject to fragmentation and loses one's infant wholeness. However, Bovelles's own writing does not point to this psychoanalytic conception of the human subject: if this conception is indeed suppressed, then the suppression seems very effective. Hallyn observes that Bovelles's multiplication of the human subject as 'homo-homo-homo' constitutes a 'chain' which could be infinitely extended, like any chain of signifiers; its triple nature is, Hallyn suggests, arbitrary. However, as far as Bovelles is concerned, the human soul takes the form of a circle rather than a chain (p. 185); moreover, the tripling of the 'homo' is far from arbitrary, since it bestows upon man the Trinitarian number and therefore supports Bovelles's suggestion that difference within the human *intellectus* resembles that within the divine.

For Bovelles, then, the human subject – or rather the human soul – can achieve a privileged sort of self-difference, a 'separation' from the self which is shared only with the divine, and which sounds rather different from the *divisio* imposed upon nature by the *intellectus* and opposition. Indeed,

the *divisio* of nature is, as we have seen, sometimes painted in implicitly negative terms as a violence or force inflicted upon things. However, these negative terms are not distributed evenly throughout the *Ars*, and ultimately even the opposition within nature – while it cannot constitute the privileged *sapientia* of the human subject – does not seem to be conceived as negative. Indeed it is often described using the language of the Trinity. Thus in the opening chapter, Bovelles explains that the two extremes of an opposition – the monad and the dyad – ‘engender’ a third term, the triad; this ‘engendering’ of a third term clearly recalls the production of the Holy Spirit by the Father and the Son. This sort of language returns repeatedly. For example, in the medium point there is a trace of the creativity of the divine Trinity (p.40), and in the three circles which represent the extremes and the middle term, one can perceive the mystery of the Trinity (p. 51). Although chapters 4, 6 and 7 in particular emphasise the violence of opposition, the final chapters return to emphasising the circles, the triad, and the middle term, which can be described using Trinitarian language.

Thus, while the dyad of opposites might imply violence, this violence is apparently redeemed by the triad which is much more positively conceived. As a result, while difference occasionally appears violent and negative, in the case of the human soul it resembles Trinitarian difference,

and even in other cases it implicitly bears some resemblance to it. If all things cannot be quite so definitively created ‘in the image of God’ (*Genesis* 26-7) as man was, they nonetheless seem to bear some trace of his image.<sup>34</sup>

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Thus the argument that Bovelles suppresses negative conceptions of difference is difficult to ground in Bovelles’s own writing. However, another early sixteenth-century text – the *Délie* – shares some of Bovelles’s apprehensions of difference and yet ultimately construes them with more negative implications. Like the *Ars Oppositorum*, the *Délie* plays with non-binary models of difference; however, ultimately these non-binary models imply a less positive experience of difference, particularly for the human subject. Both the *Ars* and the *Délie* suggest that a powerful light or gaze might function to create differences. However, in Bovelles’s *Ars* both the divine and the human can have a privileged relation to difference and to knowledge. By contrast, this *sapientia* seems to be an impossibility for the *je* in the *Délie*: he perceives the power of a cognitive and creative ‘light’ in the

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<sup>34</sup> This is a particular inflection of the notion that the cosmos and individual cosmic phenomena constitute images of God, an idea which justified the project of natural theology, that is the attempt to know God by studying the natural world.

figure of the lady, yet he suffers from this gaze rather than being similarly empowered. Scève may lack Bovelles's confidence in the positive nature of difference because of love lyric's depiction of the beloved with the traits of the divine. Indeed, in his *De Sapiente* Bovelles makes it clear that the movement of human cognition cannot be dissociated from the downward movement of the divine, which is a gift from God to man.<sup>35</sup> The *ie* in the *Délie* relates not to God but rather to a lady who, in accordance with love lyric's divinisation of the beloved, has usurped God's place and yet is cruel:<sup>36</sup> whereas the human subject in the *Ars* has a positive experience of difference because of his relationship with the angelic and the divine, the divinity of the *Délie* inflicts difference rather than redeeming it.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> 'Le mouvement anagogique de la raison ne saurait cependant être disjoint du mouvement condescendant de la lumière divine' ('L'Idéal du sage', p. 108).

<sup>36</sup> In particular, whereas in the *Délie* the lady is the desired sun, in the *De Sapiente* God is the sun 'vers lequel tend par nécessité tout désir ou savoir' (Vasoli, 'Thèmes solaires', p. 118).

<sup>37</sup> My doctoral thesis discusses, from a different angle, the relationship between Scève's depiction of the lady in the *Délie* and contemporary depictions of God; it also discusses the link between this and the suffering of the *je*. See 'The Cosmic, the Human, and the Divine', Part II.